

# Inspiring Quotes About Leadership

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By Nicole Fallon Taylor, Business News Daily Assistant Editor September 9, 2015 10:51 am EST

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Whether they led a company or a country, history's best leaders understood the importance of providing the motivation and direction to achieve larger goals. Poor leaders lose the faith and trust of the people they lead, while great leaders seem to lead without effort. The character, actions and thoughts of a leader, good or bad, permeate an organization. Your goal should be to demonstrate the best qualities of a leader while encouraging the same from those who follow you. These 35 quotes about leadership will help you think about and guide your actions.



## The character of a leader

1. "A leader is one who sees more than others see, who sees farther than others see and who sees before others see." – *Leroy Eimes, author and leadership expert*
2. "A leader takes people where they want to go. A great leader takes people where they don't necessarily want to go, but ought to be." – *Rosalynn Carter, former first lady of the United States*
3. "Our chief want is someone who will inspire us to be what we know we could be." – *Ralph Waldo Emerson, essayist, poet and philosopher*
4. "Great leaders are almost always great simplifiers, who can cut through argument, debate and doubt to offer a solution everybody can understand." – *Gen. Colin Powell, former U.S. Secretary of State*
5. "The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires." – *William Arthur Ward, author*
6. "If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader." – *President John Quincy Adams*
7. "As we look ahead into the next century, leaders will be those who empower others." – *Bill Gates, co-founder of Microsoft*
8. "In the simplest terms, a leader is one who knows where he wants to go, and gets up and goes." – *John Erskine, author*
9. "The leaders who offer blood, toil, tears and sweat always get more out of their followers than those who offer safety and a good time. When it comes to the pinch, human beings are heroic." – *George Orwell, author*
10. "The greatest leader is not necessarily the one who does the greatest things. He is the one that gets the people to do the greatest things." – *President Ronald Reagan*
11. "A leader is a dealer in hope." – *Napoleon Bonaparte, military leader*

12. "Always do right. It will gratify some people and astonish the rest." – *Mark Twain, author* [\[What Is Leadership?\]](#)

## The actions of a leader

13. "Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others." – *Jack Welch, former GE chairman and CEO*

14. "Leadership is a combination of strategy and character. If you must be without one, be without the strategy." – *U.S. Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf*

15. "People ask the difference between a leader and a boss. The leader leads, and the boss drives." – *President Theodore Roosevelt*

16. "What you do has far greater impact than what you say." — *Stephen Covey, author, businessman and speaker*

17. "Leadership is the capacity to transform vision into reality." – *Warren G. Bennis, founding chairman of the Leadership Institute at the University of Southern California*

18. "To lead people, walk beside them. As for the best leaders, the people do not notice their existence ... When the best leader's work is done, the people say, 'We did it ourselves!'" – *Lao Tzu, philosopher*

19. "A good leader takes a little more than his share of the blame, a little less than his share of the credit." – *Arnold Glasow, humorist and author*

20. "The final test of a leader is that he leaves behind him in other men the conviction and the will to carry on." – *Walter Lippmann, writer, reporter and political commentator*

21. "The task of the leader is to get his people from where they are to where they have not been." – *Henry Kissinger, former U.S. Secretary of State*

22. "Earn your leadership every day." – *Michael Jordan, former NBA basketball player*

23. "The task of leadership is not to put greatness into humanity, but to elicit it, for the greatness is already there." – *John Buchan, novelist, historian and politician*

24. "Make sure you're not just waiting for someone else to fix things, or hoping that things will improve...Figure out what's going on and make a plan to improve things." – *Kenneth W. Thomas, author*

## The knowledge of a leader

25. "Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do, and they will surprise you with their ingenuity." – *Gen. George S. Patton*

26. "The challenge of leadership is to be strong, but not rude; be kind, but not weak; be bold, but not bully; be thoughtful, but not lazy; be humble, but not timid; be proud, but not arrogant; have humor, but without folly." – *Jim Rohn, entrepreneur, author and motivational speaker*

27. "Those who try to lead the people can only do so by following the mob." – *Oscar Wilde, writer and poet*

28. "The led must not be compelled. They must be able to choose their own leader." – *Albert Einstein, physicist*

29. "In periods where there is no leadership, society stands still. Progress occurs when courageous, skillful leaders seize the opportunity to change things for the better." – *President Harry Truman*

30. "Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower." – *Steve Jobs, co-founder and CEO of Apple*

31. "If you think you are leading and turn around to see no one following, then you are just taking a walk." – *Benjamin Hooks, former director of the NAACP*

32. "You cannot be a leader, and ask other people to follow you, unless you know how to follow, too." – *Sam Rayburn, former speaker of the House*

33. "You do not lead by hitting people over the head. That's assault, not leadership." – *President Dwight D. Eisenhower*

34. "Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power." – *President Abraham Lincoln*

35. "You manage things; you lead people." – *Grace Murray Hopper, U.S. Navy rear admiral*

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