

## USEFUL QUOTATIONS AND WISDOM

Here is a set of memorable quotes about leadership and public service, from a wide range of sources. Turn to these for inspiration or when faced with a situation that requires a new approach or to face challenges or difficulties with a new mindset. The quotes are organized alphabetically by author's last name.

"True heroism is remarkably sober, very undramatic. It is not the urge to surpass all others at whatever cost, but the urge to serve others at whatever cost." Arthur Ashe

"The greatest pleasure in life is doing what people say you cannot do." Walter Bagehot

"A disposition to persevere, and an ability to improve, taken together, would be my standard of a statesman." Edmund Burke

"Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at all." Dale Carnegie

"Our greatest glory is not in never failing, but in rising every time we fall." Confucius

"In the end the great truth will have been learned, that the quest is greater than what is sought, the effort finer than the prize, the victory cheap and hollow were it not for the rigor of the game."  
Supreme Court Justice Benjamin Cordozo

“What is the use of living, if it is not to strive for noble causes and make the muddled world a better place for those who will live in it after we have gone.” Winston Churchill

“Men stumble over the truth from time to time, but most pick themselves up and hurry off as if nothing had happened.” Winston Churchill

“An artist is a man of action, whether he creates a personality, invents an expedient, or finds the issue of a complicated situation.” Joseph Conrad

“Try not to be a man of success, but rather a man of value.” Albert Einstein

“The opportunist thinks of me and today. The statesman thinks of us and tomorrow.” Dwight D. Eisenhower

“What do we live for if it is not to make life less difficult for each other?” George Eliot

“The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposing ideas in mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function.” F. Scott Fitzgerald

“Genius is the ability to put into effect what you have in your mind.” F. Scott Fitzgerald

“Everything can be taken from a man or a woman but one thing: the last of the human freedoms to choose one’s own attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one’s own way ... Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our own response. In our response lies our growth and freedom.” Victor Frankl (from his book Man’s Search for Meaning.)

“Adversity has the effect of eliciting talents which, in prosperous circumstances, would have lain dormant.” Horace

“It is neither wealth nor splendor, but tranquility and occupation, which give happiness.” Thomas Jefferson

“The moral sense, or conscience, is as much a part of man as his leg or arm.” Thomas Jefferson

“Great works are performed not by strength but by perseverance.” Samuel Johnson

“What really counts is not the immediate act of courage or of valor, but those who bear the struggle day in and day out – not the sunshine patriots, but those who are willing to stand for a long period of time.” John F. Kennedy

“There will always be dissident voices heard in the land, expressing opposition without alternatives, finding fault but never favor, perceiving gloom on every side, and seeking influence without responsibility.” John F. Kennedy

“Thus it is our task in our time and in our generation to hand down undiminished to those who come after us, as was handed down to us by those who went before, the natural wealth and beauty which is ours.” John F. Kennedy

“For in the final analysis, our most basic common link, is that we all inhabit this small planet, we all breathe the same air, we all cherish our children’s futures, and we are all mortal.” John F. Kennedy

“For one true measure of a nation is its success in fulfilling the promise of a better life for each of its members. Let this be the measure of our nation.” John F. Kennedy

“I am certain that after the dust of centuries has passed over our cities, we, too, will be remembered not for victories or defeats in battle or politics, but for our contribution to the human spirit.” John F. Kennedy

“Finally, whether you are citizens of America or citizens of the world, ask of us the same high standards of strength and sacrifice which we ask of you. With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God’s work must truly be our own.” John F. Kennedy

"It is from numberless diverse acts of courage that human history is shaped. Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope. And crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples can bring down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance." Robert F. Kennedy

"Few are willing to brave the disapproval of their fellows, the censure of their colleagues, the wrath of their society. Moral courage is a rarer commodity than bravery in battle or great intelligence. Yet is the one essential vital quality for those who seek to change a world that yields most painfully to change." Robert F. Kennedy

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy." Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

"The time is always right to do what is right." Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

"Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith let us to the end dare to do our duty as we understand it." Abraham Lincoln

"We accord a person dignity by assuming that they are good, that they share the human qualities we ascribe to ourselves." Nelson Mandela

"I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it ... The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear." Nelson Mandela

"The greatest honor that can come to a man is the appreciation and high regard of his fellow man." H.G. Mendelson

"Public managers are explorers who, with the help of others, seek to discover, define, and produce public value." Mark Moore, (Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, from his book Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government.)

“Public managers have a bundle of assets entrusted to their stewardship.” Mark Moore

“The task of public managers is to judge in what particular ways assets entrusted can be redeployed to increase value or the enterprises for which they are responsible.” Mark Moore

“Operational managers should seek, find, and exploit opportunities to create public value. Greater public value can be produced by: 1) increasing the quantity or quality of public activities per resources expended; 3) making public organizations better able to identify and respond to citizens’ aspirations; 4) enhancing the fairness with which the public sector organizations operate: and 5) increasing their continuing capacity to respond and innovate.” Mark Moore

“Managers need to exhibit a certain kind of consciousness: they need to be imaginative, purposeful, enterprising and calculating. They focus on increasing the value of the organizations they lead to the broader society. In search of value, their minds range freely across the concrete circumstances of today, seeking opportunities for tomorrow.” Mark Moore

“Those who would lead public organizations need an appropriate managerial temperament – a cool inner concentration which combines the psychological strength and energy that come from being committed to a cause coupled with a capacity for diagnosis, reflection, and objectivity.” Mark Moore

“I expect to pass through this life but once. If, therefore, there be any kindness I can show, or any good thing I can do for any fellow being, let me do it now ... as I shall not pass this way again.” William Penn

“The weapon of the brave is in his heart.” Proverb

“A decision is the action an executive must take when he has information so incomplete that the answer does not suggest itself.” Arthur W. Radford

“Luck is the residue of design.” Branch Rickey

“You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You must do the thing you think you cannot do.” Eleanor Roosevelt

“Men are not prisoners of fate, but only prisoners of their own minds.” Franklin D. Roosevelt

“It’s not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles or where the doer of deeds could have done better.

The credit belongs to the person who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes up short again and again, because there is no effort without error or shortcoming, but who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, who spends himself for a worthy cause; who at the best knows, in the end, the triumph of high achievement, and who, at the worst, if he fails, at least he fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who knew neither victory nor defeat.” Theodore Roosevelt

“Nothing happens unless first a dream.” Carl Sandburg

“People are always blaming their circumstances for what they are. I don’t believe in circumstances. The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstance they want, and if they can’t find them, make them.” George Bernard Shaw

“More men fail through lack of purpose than lack of talent.” Billy Sunday

“People often say that this or that person has not yet found himself. But the self is not something that someone finds. It is something that one creates.” Thomas Szasz

“Don’t ask yourself what the world needs, ask yourself what makes you come alive. And then go and do that. Because what the world need is people who come alive.” Howard Thurman

“It is better to deserve honors and not have them than to have them and not deserve them.” Mark Twain

“I was seldom able to see an opportunity until it had ceased to be one.” Mark Twain

“All you need in life is ignorance and confidence, and then success is sure.” Mark Twain

“Good friends, good books, and a sleepy conscience: this is the ideal life.” Mark Twain

“Make it a point to do something every day that you don’t want to do. This is the golden rule for acquiring the habit of doing your duty without pain.” Mark Twain

“There is no cause half so sacred as the cause of a people. There is no idea so uplifting as the idea of service of humanity.” Woodrow Wilson

“One cool judgment is worth a thousand hasty counsels. The thing to be supplied is light, not heat. Woodrow Wilson

“Every country is renewed out of the unknown ranks and not out of the ranks of those already famous and powerful and in control.” Woodrow Wilson

“The man who is swimming against the stream knows the strength of it.” Woodrow Wilson