



Transformational Leadership & Service Podcast

Episode 19 Transcript

The Power of Words

Have you thought recently about the power of words? Well-placed words from teachers have been known to positively change the life direction of wayward, floundering students. Coaches use words to inspire maximum effort and performance. Politicians use words to frame local, regional, national and international vision.

Leaders everywhere must recognize the words we speak and write have tremendous potential power. Leaders' words can inspire and move others to action, or they can discourage and derail forward progress. The words leaders share should never be taken for granted. In large part, the ability to influence and impact others rests in our individual abilities to share the right words in the right way.

For more than twenty years, I have been collecting a vast array of quotations which have captured my attention and imagination. My collection includes quotes offered by recognizable names from history as well as others of whom you probably have never heard. I have hundreds and hundreds in my files. I thought you might enjoy a few of my favorites. I will resist the urge to offer commentary after each. Suffice it to say each of the quotes listed here spoke to me in some meaningful way. I hope you find value in each as well.

Commitment

"The world is a dangerous place to live, not because of the people who are evil, but because of all the people who don't do anything about it."

-- *Albert Einstein*

Preparation

"Before I get in the ring, I have already won or lost. The real part is won or lost somewhere far from the witnesses behind the lines, in the gym, out there on the road, long before I dance under the lights."

-- *Muhammad Ali (posted in the football training room at the University of Florida)*

"When I am getting ready to reason with a man, I spend one-third of my time thinking about myself and what I am going to say and two-thirds about him and what he is going to say."

-- *Abraham Lincoln*

"The best thing about the future is that it comes only one day at a time."
-- *Abraham Lincoln*

Risk-Taking

"Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream."
-- *Mark Twain*

Courage

"A hero is no braver than an ordinary man, but he is brave five minutes longer."
-- *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Discretion

"A good soldier knows *how* to fight. A great soldier knows *when* to fight."
-- *General Robert E. Lee*

Honesty & Integrity

"There's no right way to do the wrong thing."
-- *Dan Daniel, former President, ArvinMeritor (2-26-03)*

"Be more concerned with your character than your reputation, because your character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others think you are."
-- *Coach John Wooden*

Self-Importance

"If you get to thinking you're a person of some influence, try ordering someone else's dog around."
-- *Will Rogers*

Choosing Associates

"In life, son, you must stay away from people who can find the smell of cow manure in chocolate cake."
-- *Everett Padgett, High Point, NC (4-25-03)*

Making a Difference

"If you think you're too small to make a difference, you never spent a night in a room with a single mosquito!"

-- *Charles S. Way, Chairman, South Carolina Department of Commerce (5-4-00)*

Personal Choices

"You have brains in your head.

You have feet in your shoes.

You can steer yourself

In any direction you choose."

-- *Dr. Suess*

I hope you enjoyed considering these thoughts and words of others. Remember, many people pass judgment on us based on the words they hear us use. As a leader, I encourage you to choose your words wisely.