

# Introduction

Effective leadership begins with the process of reflection. This process focuses on identifying your leadership traits, aspirations, and goals. These quotes will serve as tools for beginning your leadership reflection journey.

## The Journey Begins

I began my leadership journey in 2007 after reading an interview of W.E.B. Dubois. I was inspired by his words, when he remarked that he pursued his doctorate in order to help his people race with the world. His words resonated with me because education had served as an indispensable tool for promoting social justice throughout my life. My life's work has focused on how to advance civil rights advocacy in the arenas of education, juvenile law,

and criminal justice. The message was clear—I would pursue my doctorate in Leadership and Public Policy to *help my community race with the world*. As an attorney, these words served as a leadership challenge. How would I create new pathways for access to justice and eradicating social inequities? I made a conscious choice to no longer sit on the sidelines but to take an active role in leading change. The training from my doctoral program provided me with new tools and strategies for becoming a leader and change agent. One such tool is reflective learning. On the first day of class, we were given a journal. I remember thinking: how will I have time to journal (in light of the many demands of my daily life—clients, cases, family)? I quickly learned that this inverse is true—how do I not have time to journal? I realized that journaling serves as an invaluable tool for identifying my core values, critically examining my actions as a leader, and developing my leadership compass.

## **Your Leadership Compass**

Leaders must be willing to understand where they have been in order to know where they are headed. Ongoing reflection through journaling serves as an indispensable navigational tool. It aids in identifying your core values, documenting your journey (successes and challenges),

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setting your course through goal setting, and offering a roadmap for your future course. For instance, I began to journal while reading Nelson Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom*. I captured quotes like:

Lead from the back—and let others  
believe they are in front.

Courage is not the absence of fear—it's  
inspiring others to move beyond it.

These quotes challenged me to think about the role of the leader in the context of large-scale social justice movements. I began to ponder: how do you build a shared vision of justice? How does one promote community-building? How do you mobilize and organize the masses?

I have continued this practice of leadership development through reflective learning since my pursuit of my graduate studies. This has enhanced my ability to lead by challenging me to engage in learning each day how to lead more skillfully and authentically. I begin each day with a quote and reflect on this quote throughout my day. In this collection, you will find quotes that inspired and motivated me in my work. This collection includes quotes from leaders in all sectors, from artists and entertainers to political figures and educators.

*Why is reflection an important part of your leadership development?*

Reflection will aid you in:

- Taking informed actions—being intentional.
- Understanding diverse practices—seeing through the eyes of others.
- Examining your reality—understanding why we believe what we believe.
- Becoming a leader/learner—gaining new insights.
- Increasing democratic trust in your organization—supporting partnerships and collaboration.
- Balancing power by acknowledging your assumptions and their impacts.

—Dr. Stephen Brookfield,  
*Becoming a Critically Reflective Leader*

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## How to Use This Book

Leadership is a journey often mistaken for a destination. On this journey, one learns many lessons: how to lead effectively, build new bridges, and establish a vision for the future. This is the foundation of leadership growth. On this journey, one must be willing to explore core values and how these values inform your understanding of leadership. This is the beginning of “knowing.”

### *Part 1: Leading Change—Planting People, Growing Justice (Why Lead?)*

This section focuses on your personal mission and vision. Since leadership is about influence, this section explores how you can influence change in the global community, organizations, professional associations, and beyond.

### *Part 2: Your Leadership Qualities (What Makes You a Leader?)*

This section provides key insights on core competencies of leadership. Effective leadership requires developing the necessary tools to lead change.

*Part 3: Your Leadership DNA  
(What Is Your Individualized Leadership Style?)*

This section offers an opportunity for critical reflection by exploring your individualized approach to leadership. It introduces an array of leadership styles in order to gain insights on how you lead best.

This collection of quotes serves as a source of inspiration and guidance on your leadership journey. Each quote functions as a critical reflection tool. As you take the time and reflect on each quote, you will gain new insights.

Ask yourself:

- How does this quote inform my definition of leadership?
- What lessons can I take away from this quote?
- How can I apply the lessons in my daily life?
- How did the featured leader apply the words in the quote?
- What lessons can you learn from their leadership legacy?

This type of reflection provides an opportunity for you to strengthen your leadership skills and share these lessons with others.