

DR. MYLES

MUNROE



The

POWER  
of CHARACTER in  
LEADERSHIP

*How Values, Morals, Ethics, and Principles Affect Leaders*

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of CHARACTER in  
LEADERSHIP

DR. MYLES  
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WHITAKER  
HOUSE

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## THE POWER OF CHARACTER IN LEADERSHIP: How Values, Morals, Ethics, and Principles Affect Leaders

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Hardcover ISBN: 978-1-60374-954-1 • Trade paperback edition ISBN: 978-1-60374-955-8  
eBook ISBN: 978-1-60374-979-4  
Printed in the United States of America  
© 2014 by Myles Munroe

  
Whitaker House  
1030 Hunt Valley Circle  
New Kensington, PA 15068  
[www.whitakerhouse.com](http://www.whitakerhouse.com)

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data (Pending)

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# INTRODUCTION

## Contemporary Leadership and the Crisis of Character

*“Whatever failures I have known, whatever errors I have committed, whatever follies I have witnessed in public and private life have been the consequences of action without thought.”*

—Bernard Baruch, businessman and advisor to U.S. presidents

In the dynamic drama of contemporary leadership playing on the world stage today, there are many “characters” who lack character. Moreover, the trail of history is littered with many would-be great men and women who harnessed the reins of power in various fields—political, social, economic, corporate, athletic, spiritual, and more. They wielded great influence and/or control over the lives of others; many felt the weight of material wealth and fame—only to have it all disintegrate and blow away like dust in the wind because of their tragic deficiencies of character.

A lack of strong leadership has made a mess of our world. Every country on earth is challenged by an absence of resolute leadership as it struggles under precarious times. Politically, economically, and socially, our nations are experiencing turmoil and moral decay—characterized by crime, religious conflicts, economic uncertainty, the unequal distribution of resources, political corruption, civil unrest, the disintegration of the family, cybercrime, poverty, disease, famine, sexual abuse, greed, racial clashes, ethnic “cleansing,” global terrorism, and war.

Our twenty-first century world seems to be an experiment in global self-destruction. We need strong leaders who have the courage to grapple with perplexing issues and seemingly overwhelming problems, as well as the ability

to discover and implement workable solutions. More than anything else, what we require today are competent, effective, visionary leaders in all walks of life.

## **The Missing Element: “Moral Force”**

The leaders who have emerged today seem to believe that the primary qualities needed to address our troubled, demanding times are the following: great vision; academic and intellectual superiority; dynamic oratory and other communications skills that have the power to persuade; management expertise; and the ability to control others. However, time and again, history has shown that the most important quality a true leader should and must possess is the moral force of a noble and stable character.

There are about two hundred countries in the world today, and each one has leaders on the national, regional, and local level. Many nations also have aspiring leaders who run for public office each year. In addition, corporations and businesses, religious institutions, nonprofit organizations and community groups, and other enterprises in society all have leaders. Many people, in a variety of fields—economics, government, law, business, education, medicine, science, entertainment, sports, and so forth—are leaders or are training to be leaders.

We have all these skilled people in positions of power, with an ample supply of potential leaders. Yet the leaders who are trying to keep their nations, companies, organizations, and families from sinking are either lacking, or deficient in, that vital element of character.

Across the globe, we have seen leaders fall apart, ethically and morally. Many leaders start strong (or appear to), only to end up “crashing and burning.” A number of leaders have operated under a reputation of integrity that was only a façade. While they appeared competent and well-adjusted on the outside, they lacked real substance within. They were missing the element of moral force, and their ethical poverty eventually became evident. The public didn’t know who these leaders really were—until the leaders became enmeshed in scandal due to their reckless conduct, often finding themselves facing legal consequences for unlawful financial practices, theft, extortion, cheating, perjury...and the like.

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*The public didn't know who their leaders really were—until the leaders became enmeshed in scandal.*

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Meanwhile, other people in positions of power have been hindered by incompetence because they have never learned solid leadership principles and how to implement them. Others are capable, but they still aren't helping to address the needs of their society because they would rather destroy a corporate competitor or nullify a political opponent than work together with other leaders to address serious problems and find solutions.

## Leadership Is Central in Our World

The contemporary crisis of character in leadership is alarming because, to a great extent, leaders determine the direction, security, and prosperity of cultures, societies, and nations. The following concepts demonstrate the central role of leadership in human society.

- **Nothing happens without leadership.** Leaders establish governments, start businesses, make scientific discoveries and advances, disseminate religious and philosophical ideas, and otherwise foster human culture.
- **Nothing succeeds without leadership.** Leaders develop ideas, carry out endeavors, and keep projects going.
- **Nothing is altered or transformed without leadership.** Unless an individual or a group of people begin to think differently or act differently, circumstances usually remain the same—or become worse.
- **Nothing develops without leadership.** Leaders take initiative to implement innovations, build on what has come before, and expand on prior successes.
- **Nothing advances without leadership.** Leaders are enterprising and forward-looking. They are often eager to enhance a society's quality of life through improved efficiency, greater convenience, and the introduction of new products and services.

- **Nothing improves without leadership.** Leaders see potential in situations and conditions where others see no hope and have no vision of the way things *could be*.
- **Nothing is corrected without leadership.** To fix errors and solve problems, someone has to take responsibility to see that adjustments are made. Leaders help societies to make a course correction when they have veered onto a destructive path.

Leadership is therefore key to human preservation, growth, and change. No matter what condition a society or nation finds itself in, it didn't arrive there by accident. Someone led them there.

Every person on earth is being guided, influenced, or manipulated by someone. Directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously, we are continually being led by those who are our "official" leaders, as well as those who have become our de facto leaders by their influence over us. That is why our current problems won't be solved without a renewed emphasis on the foundational elements of positive and effective leadership. Countries, corporations, institutions, organizations, departments, and so forth will be effective and successful only insofar as their leaders are effective and successful. When leaders in all realms of life make a commitment to strengthen their leadership, they will enable their society to improve, survive, and progress.

*"We know that leadership is very much related to change.*

*As the pace of change accelerates, there is naturally a  
greater need for effective leadership."*

—John Kotter, renowned businessman, professor, and author

## Who Has Been Leading Us?

I have spoken at universities where I've met administrators, professors, and students. I have been a consultant to corporate gurus and government leaders. I have been interviewed on hundreds of television shows. In the process, I have met many well-known leaders. Yet, with a few exceptions, the famous and influential people I have encountered have not impressed

me with their leadership because it did not appear to include the essential ingredient of character.

Who has been leading our nations? Unfortunately, we have been influenced by many leaders and institutions that lack the quality of moral force—and their attitudes and actions are being absorbed by the culture at large.

Below is a sampling of leaders and organizations in various realms of life that, at the time of the writing of this manuscript, have been associated with ethical controversies, sexual and financial scandals, or criminal activity. In essence, they were victims of our society's crisis of defective character. Many leaders on the world and national stage who should be about the business of building up their nations are instead violating the public trust, breaking the law, and committing crimes against humanity. They are finding themselves in the headlines—and appearing before judges and other tribunals.

Some of the issues represented in this list are complex, while others are straightforward. At the time this book went to press, the outcomes of several of these situations were yet to be resolved—either by legislatures or courts. In some cases, not all the facts have been made public to allow for a full assessment. Yet these examples from the last several decades illustrate the range of ethical and moral crises in leadership with which the United States and nations around the world are being confronted.

### ***Government and Politics***

- The administration of U.S. President Barack Obama is dealing with several controversial ethical issues. Mr. Obama was admonished by the press, members of the U.S. Congress, and the public regarding the Justice Department's subpoenas of the phone records of reporters from the Associated Press while the department gathered intelligence related to a leak about a terrorist threat. A similar controversy flared in relation to phone records from Fox News in regard to Justice's investigation into a leak about North Korea.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, the president came under fire for the National Security Agency's ongoing practice of monitoring the phone records of ordinary Americans while looking for possible terrorist activity.<sup>2</sup> In

addition, the White House was criticized after revelations that the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) gave certain conservative groups extra scrutiny when they applied for tax-exempt status. All of these issues are ongoing.

- Anthony Weiner of New York resigned his seat in the U.S. Congress after it was disclosed that the married congressman had sent sexually explicit text messages and photographs to women. He then ran for mayor of New York City, refusing to drop out of the primary race, even after a subsequent “sexting” scandal, despite political pressure to do so.
- President Bill Clinton was impeached by the U.S. House of Representatives for perjury and obstruction of justice related to his testimony about the Monica Lewinsky scandal. He remained in office when the impeachment votes for both charges failed in the Senate.
- Ronald Reagan’s presidency was tainted by the Iran-Contra affair, in which the National Security Agency sold arms to Iran in exchange for American hostages, even though an embargo against Iran was in effect. Some of the money from the sale then went to Nicaraguan “Contras” to support their fight against the Sandinista government. This was in violation of the Boland Amendment, which was passed by Congress to prohibit military aid to the Contras. National Security Advisor Rear Admiral John Poindexter resigned, and charges were filed against fourteen people, though six were later pardoned by President George H. W. Bush.<sup>3</sup>
- Richard Nixon became the first U.S. president to resign his office in the wake of his participation in a cover-up of illegal activities authorized by members of his staff during his reelection campaign. The year prior to Nixon’s resignation, his vice president resigned his office due to political corruption involving bribery and extortion, as well as tax evasion.
- The former president of Brazil, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, is being investigated for his alleged role in a scheme to buy votes from members of the Brazilian Congress during the time he was in office.<sup>4</sup>

- The newly elected president of Kenya and his deputy president, William Ruto, face trial by the International Criminal Court for “crimes against humanity, including murder and rape.”<sup>5</sup> The *Wall Street Journal* reported, “The court alleges Mr. Kenyatta and his deputy president, William Ruto, incited gang violence that left more than 1,000 people dead following his predecessor’s disputed election in 2007. Both men deny the charges.”<sup>6</sup>
- The Yugoslav war crimes tribunal of the United Nations “convicted six Bosnian Croat political and military leaders...of persecuting, expelling, and murdering Muslims during Bosnia’s war.” The convictions may be appealed.<sup>7</sup>
- Manuel Noriega, the former dictator of Panama, served a prison sentence of almost two decades in the United States for drug trafficking. He then served a brief time in jail in France for money laundering and was required to surrender nearly three million dollars held in his French bank accounts. France then permitted that he be extradited to Panama to serve prison time there for murder.<sup>8</sup>

### ***Business and Economics***

- JPMorgan Chase & Co. agreed to pay \$410 million in response to charges of price manipulation: “The bank’s energy unit, JP Morgan Venture Energy Corporation, was accused of raising electricity rates in [California and Midwest] markets between September 2010 and November 2012 through ‘manipulative bidding strategies,’ according to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.”<sup>9</sup> Previously, the company lost \$7 billion after it “engaged in risky trades (derivatives).” This loss had led to various investigations into the company’s practices and procedures.<sup>10</sup>
- Employees at Halliburton, the contractor for British Petroleum (BP) in the Deepwater Horizon oil well project, destroyed evidence concerning the 2010 explosion and massive oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico that killed eleven people. Under a plea bargain, the U.S. Department of Justice charged the company with a misdemeanor, fined it \$200,000, gave it three years’ probation, and required that the company cooperate with the department’s ongoing

investigation of the Deepwater incident.<sup>11</sup> Halliburton has been involved in other ethical controversies, including the charge by the Securities and Exchange Commission that the subsidiary of a company owned by Halliburton “bribed Nigerian government officials over a 10-year period, in violation of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA).”<sup>12</sup>

- In the Deepwater incident, “BP agreed to pay \$4.5 billion in penalties and pleaded guilty to 14 criminal charges related to the explosion.”<sup>13</sup> The company apparently ignored advice from the Halliburton engineer to install a safer pipe and failed to test the cement sealing to see if it had been successful.<sup>14</sup>
- Former Wall Street mogul Bernie Madoff operated “the biggest Ponzi scheme in history...[he] bilked his clients of billions of dollars and fooled regulators for decades....”<sup>15</sup> Madoff was convicted of securities fraud, investment advisor fraud, wire and mail fraud, money laundering, filing false documents with the Securities and Exchange Commission, making false statements, perjury, and theft from employee benefit funds. He was sentenced to 150 years in prison.<sup>16</sup>
- Over the course of decades, the Vatican Bank has been decried and investigated for functioning according to an internal culture of corruption, including alleged money laundering and ties with the Mafia. In 2013, there was a shakeup of leadership at the bank after a new money laundering scandal.<sup>17</sup>
- The former chairman of the mammoth Hong Kong-based Carrian Group received a three-year sentence for bribing bank officials to obtain loans the equivalent of \$238 million in U.S. dollars.<sup>18</sup>
- The German company Siemons agreed to a settlement of €330 million with the Greek government for alleged bribery in connection with contract bids for the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens.<sup>19</sup>
- Among other companies involved in child labor scandals, the clothing company GAP released a report in 2004 in which they acknowledged breaches of child labor laws and workplace safety.<sup>20</sup>

- Through revelations by former tobacco executive and whistleblower Jeffrey Wigand, it was disclosed that cigarette companies like Brown & Williamson had been intentionally attempting to addict consumers to nicotine.<sup>21</sup>

## *Sports*

- The spotless public image of golf champion Tiger Woods was tarnished when his multiple extramarital affairs became public. His wife divorced him, and he lost several lucrative endorsement deals worth \$100 million. Woods received therapy for sexual addiction and returned to the sport.<sup>22</sup>
- In 2007, New England Patriots coach Bill Belichick was fined \$500,000 and the team was fined \$250,000 in the so-called Spygate scandal involving the videotaping of opposing teams' coaching signals. The Patriots also had to forgo a potential first-round draft pick.
- Champion cyclist Lance Armstrong and Olympic sprinter Marion Jones are among many athletes who have admitted to using illegal performance-enhancing drugs. Armstrong's seven Tour de France titles were taken away, and he was banned from professional cycling for life.<sup>23</sup> Jones was stripped of her three Olympic gold medals and sentenced to six months in prison, two years' probation, and community service for lying about her drug use to a federal agent, as well as for her participation in a check fraud operation.<sup>24</sup>
- Jerry Sandusky, former assistant football coach at Penn State University, received a thirty- to sixty-year prison sentence after being convicted of 45 counts of child sexual abuse.<sup>25</sup>
- Baseball star Pete Rose, a former Cincinnati Reds player and manager, was indicted for repeated gambling on baseball games and was banned from baseball for life. He also served five months of jail time and community service for income tax evasion.<sup>26</sup>

## *Religion*

- Numerous sexual abuse allegations have been lodged against Catholic priests in nations around the world. Charges have been filed in

various cases, and there has been fallout over cover-ups and inaction by Church officials.<sup>27</sup>

- Atlanta megachurch pastor Bishop Eddie Long was accused of sexually abusing four teens. Bishop Long has stated that he is innocent, and he settled out of court with the plaintiffs.<sup>28</sup> Concerning a separate case, twelve former church members filed a lawsuit against Long and financial adviser Ephren W. Taylor for losses in an alleged Ponzi scheme.<sup>29</sup> The Securities and Exchange Commission has filed a lawsuit over the scheme in U.S. District Court against Taylor, his company, and his former chief operating officer.<sup>30</sup>
- Once-prominent televangelist Jimmy Swaggart lost credibility and influence when he became enmeshed in a sex scandal involving a prostitute.<sup>31</sup> Televangelist Jim Bakker was also caught up in a scandal due to his adulterous relationship with a former church secretary. In addition, he spent time in prison for mail and wire fraud and conspiracy in relation to his ministry's fund-raising.<sup>32</sup>
- Ted Haggard resigned as pastor of his church in Colorado and as president of the National Association of Evangelicals after a homosexual affair with a male prostitute, as well as illegal drug use.<sup>33</sup>

### ***Arts, Entertainment, and Media***

- Mel Gibson, formerly one of Hollywood's most popular and influential actors, was divorced by his wife after more than thirty years of marriage and seven children, for "irreconcilable differences," though infidelity may have played a role; his wife was awarded half his fortune.<sup>34</sup> Gibson was also convicted of hitting his girlfriend, resulting in a sentence of three years' probation, counseling, and community service.<sup>35</sup>
- *New York Times* reporter Jayson Blair was fired for unethical reporting. The *Times'* public editor, Margaret Sullivan, stated that Blair "lied and faked and cheated his way through story after story—scores of them, for years. He fabricated sources, plagiarized material from other publications, and pretended to be places he never went." The reporter's conduct hurt the *Times'* reputation for accuracy and honesty.<sup>36</sup>

- Author James Frey admitted to fabricating facts in his best-selling memoir *A Million Little Pieces*, setting off a controversy about what constitutes memoir and the line between fact and fiction.<sup>37</sup>
- Singing superstar Whitney Houston died tragically of accidental drowning when she was in the midst of a professional comeback, with “the effects of heart disease and cocaine found in her system... contributing factors.”<sup>38</sup>

### ***Charity/Nonprofit***

- Greg Mortenson, coauthor of the best-selling book *Three Cups of Tea: One Man’s Mission to Promote Peace One School at a Time*, was cited for mismanagement of his charity Central Asia Institute, as well as the misuse of funds. The attorney general of Montana, where the charity is located, stated, “Mr. Mortenson may not have intentionally deceived the board or his employees, but his disregard for and attitude about basic record keeping and accounting for his activities essentially had the same effect.” Mortenson was not charged with any criminal activity, and he agreed to repay \$1 million to the charity.<sup>39</sup>
- *Three Cups of Tea* describes Mortenson’s humanitarian work in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The book was coauthored by David Oliver Relin. In a controversy unrelated to the charity mismanagement, there were allegations that Mortenson had included fabrications in his book, while Mortenson asserted only some literary license was taken. Coauthor Relin, whose integrity was effectively never in question in the matter, had acknowledged in his introduction to the book that there might be unavoidable inaccuracies in relating Mortenson’s experiences. He wrote, “His fluid sense of time made pinning down the exact sequence of many events in this book almost impossible.”<sup>40</sup> The controversy placed stress on Relin vocationally, as well as financially, as he defended himself in a civil lawsuit over the book that was brought against Mortenson and himself. A judge dismissed the suit. Relin committed suicide in 2012; his family stated that he had “suffered from depression.”<sup>41</sup>

- The former head of the United Way, William Aramony, spent six years in prison for his part in embezzling between \$600,000 and \$1.2 million from the charitable agency. He used the money to support a “lavish lifestyle” and a young mistress.<sup>42</sup> Aramony was convicted of “among other things, conspiracy to defraud, mail fraud, wire fraud, transportation of fraudulently acquired property, engaging in monetary transactions in unlawful activity, filing false tax returns, and aiding in the filing of false tax returns.”<sup>43</sup>
- The charitable organization Feed the Children fired its founder and director, Larry Jones, for alleged misconduct. Jones filed a wrongful-termination lawsuit, and the organization filed a countersuit, “accus[ing] Jones of taking bribes, hoarding hardcore pornography...using a charity employee as a personal nanny...misappropriating charity funds, pocketing travel money, and keeping gifts from appearances.”<sup>44</sup> Jones maintains his innocence. He and Feed the Children reached an out-of-court settlement in which Jones apparently received some compensation but was not reinstated as head of the organization.<sup>45</sup>

These are some examples of public figures, companies, and government agencies that have been associated with issues and scandals involving character, ethics, and the violation of the law. Many more examples could be cited. Revelations of such scandals have become commonplace—they are reported almost every day in newspapers, on broadcast and cable news, on the Internet, on Facebook, and via Twitter.

From a leadership standpoint, these situations illustrate several realities: (1) Character problems are widespread among leaders in many fields of endeavor. (2) A leader’s character flaws often end up hurting innocent people. (3) No matter how many accomplishments a leader achieves, no matter how much money he makes, and no matter how high he goes up the ladder of success, if he is deficient in character, his talent and skill are no guarantee he will stay on top, or that he won’t pay a great price.

Ask Bill Clinton. Ask Bernie Madoff. Ask Lance Armstrong. Ask Jim Bakker. Ask Mel Gibson. Ask Greg Mortenson. Their character flaws caught up with them. For some, it tainted their reputations. For others, it

virtually destroyed their lives, as well as the lives of others. For this reason, the critical issue of character must be addressed, as nations, regions, and local communities; businesses and corporations; civic organizations; religious groups; political parties; armed forces; educational institutions; and families continue to search for quality and qualified leaders to take the helm of responsibility and guide them to a better life and a promising future.

Though the above are high-profile cases that became national and global scandals, the disintegration of character today is found in every type of leadership and on every level of society—including the local level and “ordinary” people’s lives. It is found in our homes, with leaders (spouses and parents) who have extramarital affairs, use illegal drugs, abuse alcohol, rack up gambling debts, enter into risky financial investments in hopes of finding a fast track to wealth, abuse family members, and engage in other destructive actions. It is found in our local companies, with workers who embezzle money, steal equipment, or are lazy on the job. It is found in our schools, with teachers who engage in sexual relations with their students, or with students who cheat on exams and engage in bullying through social networks—and sometimes even bring guns to school and shoot their classmates and teachers. It is found in our universities, with professors who plagiarize scholarly works and undergraduates who pay other students to write their term papers.

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*No one should think he is too smart or too safe to avoid consequences of a lack of character.*

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Perhaps you are thinking, *I’m not in danger of losing my job or being sentenced to prison*. However, if we as leaders ignore the necessity of character development—if we allow character defects to influence us—we risk failure in our personal lives, our leadership, and our future. No one should think he is too smart or too safe to avoid consequences of a lack of character.

## A Psyche of Distrust

One disturbing result of the crisis of character in leadership is that it has created a psyche of distrust among the general public. There are, of

course, many earnest, hardworking people of integrity in all walks of life who strive to do the right thing and are helping to uphold the society in which they live. But while the nations of the world desperately need strong, authentic leaders, too many people in positions of authority are self-absorbed. They operate according to misplaced priorities or opportunistic motives. They fail to offer anything of lasting value to their families, associates, clients, customers, or fellow citizens. Instead, they abuse and misuse them. Ethically deficient leaders are leaving a legacy of fear, skepticism, and confusion among those who follow them or are otherwise affected by their leadership.

For example, will the time come when we can watch a race at a track-and-field meet or a cycling event and not secretly ask ourselves if the champion won because he used performance-enhancing drugs? We often harbor the notion that the winner must have cheated somehow. Or, even though we may make allowance for some unintended memory lapses, when will we be able to read a memoir and not have to wonder if some or most of it has been fabricated? Sadly, we have become wary of the validity of such accounts. Or again, when a large corporation is successful, when will we be rid of lingering suspicions about its business practices and how it turned a profit? We question whether big corporations can make money and still be ethical.

## What Happened to Character in Leadership?

Why are today's leaders so deficient in character? A major reason is that, across the globe, much of leadership training—both formal and informal—fails to emphasize or even include the concept of character as an essential element of leadership. In addition, many governmental and corporate leaders, along with supervisors, bosses, and others in authority, are not mentoring their colleagues and employees in important principles of character development (though they still expect honesty and integrity from them). Instead, as we will see, other elements of leadership have been given priority—titles, position, power, intelligence, skills, gifts, talents, educational qualifications, knowledge, competence, and charisma or other personality traits.

In the process, we have produced...

- charismatic leaders without character
- gifted leaders without convictions
- powerful leaders without principles
- intellectual leaders without morality
- visionary leaders without values
- spiritual leaders without conscience

The nations of the world do not lack people in leadership positions. They lack genuine leadership *in* their leaders. The result is that we have no shortage of individuals running our countries and businesses and organizations who have titles and high-level positions. They are well-dressed and well-groomed. They are excellent communicators. They are highly skilled in their fields. Yet, as we have noted, these qualities haven't prevented an epidemic of "character fallout" among leaders of various categories—whether presidents and prime ministers, CEOs and directors, priests and pastors, or spouses and parents.

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*The nations of the world do not lack people in leadership positions.  
They lack genuine leadership in their leaders.*

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## Telltale Signs

What great leaders can you name who are alive today? (If you weren't able to answer that question without giving it a lot of thought, you're not alone.)

As I write this, Nelson Mandela has been in the hospital for two months due to a lung infection. Mandela was the first democratically elected leader of South Africa and was instrumental in dismantling apartheid. He is now in his mid-nineties. Over the past few years, I have noticed that every time he is admitted to the hospital, people around the world hold their breaths, because no one knows how much longer he will be with us.

What is it about our image of this man that makes us afraid to lose him, even though we understand he is at an advanced age? Could it be that we do not want Mr. Mandela to die because he may be one of the last remaining bastions of true leadership—a man who stands as the definition of character, which we all personally long for and want to see evidenced in the leaders we desire to follow? Is he among the last in a line of historical figures who possessed a vital leadership quality that has very little to do with standard ideas of “power” but nevertheless has the ability to change the world?

I believe that Nelson Mandela’s strong convictions about human dignity and equality among the races are the reason people all over the world want him to live forever. Perhaps South Africans are afraid their country might fall apart after he passes. To me, people’s anxious reactions to the health of Mr. Mandela, aside from being expressions of human compassion and respect, are telltale signs that character in leadership is so rare that people feel we can’t afford to let go of one great leader.

## **The Future of Leadership**

What will be the future of leadership in our world? A familiar but significant truth applies to our present leadership crisis: You can lead people only as far as you have gone yourself. And many of our leaders have not stepped up to the starting line of character development, let alone crossed over it.

Many well-known people who have failed ethically have issued apologies through the media. Even though admitting you were wrong (or that you “made a mistake”) and saying you are sorry is a good start, if it is heartfelt, it doesn’t necessarily indicate a resolve to change your behavior and act responsibly in the future. You have to make a personal commitment to do that. You have to allow it to become an internal conviction—part of your personal code of ethics.

A future that includes strong, ethical leaders in our governments, businesses, educational institutions, civil organizations, and homes will be secured only by a return to character training and personal character

development as our *priority*. Leaders must embrace this challenge and actively seek to change their ways if our nations are to move from a mind-set of corruption and compromise to an outlook of conviction and character. Instead of seeking political power or economic power or entertainment power or sports power, leaders should pursue political character or economic character or entertainment character or sports character.

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*A future that includes strong, ethical leaders will be secured only by a return to character training and personal character development as our priority.*

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A new type of leader must begin to emerge within our governing institutions, our communities, our businesses, our places of employment, our families—and ourselves. Leadership that is weak in ethics and values has allowed our nations to fall apart. It has also initiated many of the problems we grapple with in the world. A return to character in leadership will enable us to begin to address these problems from a position of strength, resolve, and honor.

I have given talks on the power of character in leadership in various halls of government across the globe. Some leaders have literally wept as they've explained that no one has ever taught them about the part character plays in leadership. They were instructed on how to manage resources, but they were never taught how to manage their own lives—and how their application of such knowledge was crucial for effective and successful leadership.

Each of us must not only understand and implement the principles of leadership but also make a commitment to become established in character, adhering to a strong code of ethics. Then we must continually grow in the development of our character, so that we can have a positive and lasting impact on our generation and generations to come.

*"A sum can be put right: but only by going back till you find the error and working it afresh from that point, never by simply going on."<sup>46</sup>*

—C. S. Lewis

# How to Protect YOUR LEADERSHIP

# Influence & Power

You've worked hard to achieve your dreams and goals. Many others have done the same—only to lose it all in the end. Every day, we read about successful people in various walks of life who have lost their power and influence. They've been fired, forced to resign, or shamed out of public life. They no longer have a market for their gifts, and they may even face criminal proceedings. These leaders have lost the trust of their companies, constituents, nations, followers, and families. Many were surprised to discover that their talents alone were not enough to prevent their downfall.

Why did they fail in the end? Because they lacked the one quality that would have protected their leadership and given them enduring influence. Ironically, this quality is seldom taught to leaders today, either formally or informally. It is the quality of moral force, or *character*.

Every human being is a leader over some domain as he or she exercises gifts and influence. That domain might be the halls of government, the boardroom, the classroom, the community, or the home. In *The Power of Character in Leadership: How Values, Morals, Ethics, and Principles Affect Leaders*, you will discover what character is, what it means to develop moral force, and how to preserve your leadership influence so that it is both effective and enduring.

Business & Economics/Leadership



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ISBN 978-1-60374-954-1



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