

The Top 100 Leadership Quotes Of 2020

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Crisis does not make leaders, it reveals them. During no other year in my life did we encounter the amount of crises we did this past year. The following are just some of the many challenges facing our society during 2020:

- Closed churches
- Global pandemic
- People dying alone in hospitals
- Economic crises
- Racial riots
- Tragic deaths
- Tumultuous United States presidential election
- Numerous natural disasters
- Epidemic-level proportions of mental health issues such as loneliness, despair, anxiety, fear, etc....
- Increased domestic violence
- And much, much more

Needless to say, leadership was needed more than ever and often leadership did not show up.

However, many trusted voices stepped up and their thoughts were like a lighthouse shining a bright light through the dense fog of 2020. I have captured 100 quotes which helped this leader navigate through uncertainty.

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The following are **The Top 100 Leadership Quotes Of 2020** by section. A few quotes were older but requoted during this past year to serve various audiences.

God

- “We’ve got a generation of Christians growing up too soon. They’re trying to publish Bible studies on Facebook and they don’t even know who their Father is.” – Priscilla Shirer
- “God is so infinitely vast. This is His portrait. We paint with brushes. God paints with galaxies and a trillion stars. And the God of a trillion stars knows my name.” – Melissa from *I Still Believe*. For more leadership quotes from this film click [19 Leadership Quotes And Lessons From The Must-See Movie I Still Believe](#).
- "I know true peace and happiness comes from knowing Jesus. Jesus is the hope of the world, always has been, always will be. The hope of the world is not a vaccine. It's not a politician. It's not some stimulus package. It's not any of those things. The hope of world comes from knowing Jesus." – Dabo Swinney. For more from Coach Swinney click [10 Mantras Dabo Swinney Used To Build A Winning And Positive Culture At Clemson](#).
- "Your education will only take you so far. Your money will only take you so far. Your charisma will only open so many doors.... Your social and political connections will take you so far but if you become a man who daily cries out to God, God will take you to where you need to be. Prayer is the secret sauce." – Woodstock (Ga) First Baptist Church senior pastor Jeremy Morton from the Johnny Hunt Men’s Conference
- "Human beings make great friends but lousy gods." – Transformation Church senior pastor Derwin Gray
- “God is not a dead-beat dad. He takes care of His own. God gives us everything we need to be sustained - in a crisis, through a crisis, or from a crisis.” – Fellowship Bible Church senior pastor Crawford Loritts. For more from Pastor Crawford click [The One Sermon All Pastors And Christians Need To Hear Right Now During This Defining Time In Human History](#).
- “If you don't remember the lessons (from a crisis), you will experience a greater tragedy. Your heart will grow cold and you will compromise. You will transfer your hope to your resources rather than the source.” – Crawford Loritts
- “Even not passing the test is a message from God... The reality of dark experiences say this - God comes near to us not because of our strength and competence. He comes to us because of our weakness and dependance.” – Crawford Loritts
- “Leadership is moving people onto your agenda. Spiritual leadership is moving people onto God's agenda.” – Mike Linch. For more on how Pastor Mike led during COVID click [How Do You Reopen For Services? 10 Things NorthStar Church Did With Excellence](#).
- "Glorification will not happen until we take our last breath but God help me, I hope to be more like Jesus than I was before... That's the goal." – Nate Galloway
- “Today we are in a divided country. We’re divided racially, politically, and socio-economically. And Satan is laughing at us because that is exactly what he wants. Dysfunction, mistrust, and hatred for his kingdom flourish. Well, what is the answer then? I believe it has to start with those of us who claim to be Christians. We

have to come to the forefront and demonstrate the qualities of the One we claim to follow, Jesus Christ. We can't be silent. As Dr. King said many years ago, 'Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere!' But we can't go forward with judgmental, bitter spirits. We need to be proactive, but do it in the spirit of trying to help make things better. And it can't be just African-American churches. It has to be ALL churches taking a stand and saying, 'We are going to be on the forefront of meaningful dialogue and meaningful change.' We have to be willing to speak the truth in love but we have to recognize what we are not fighting against other people. We are fighting against Satan and his kingdom of spiritual darkness." – Tony Dungy. For additional content from this statement click [Tony Dungy's Words Are The Best Advice I Have Read On The Issues Of America.](#)

Culture

- "We're building a culture of accountability, trust, and togetherness. Entitlement will not be tolerated." – Boston Celtics head coach Brad Stephens
- "There is no differentiator in a knowledge economy. Strategies are no longer a differentiator. It's about execution. You can only execute if you have an unbelievable culture and team." - David DeWolf, President and CEO of 3Pillar Global
- "Culture can really be defined in ten words – This is who we are and this is what we do." – Seth Godin

Winning

- "You ask all my teammates, one thing about Michael Jordan is he never asked me to do something that he didn't (expletive) do. When people see this, they're gonna say, 'Well, he wasn't really a nice guy. He may have been a tyrant.' Well, that's you because you never won anything. I wanted to win but I wanted them to win and be a part of that as well. Look, I don't have to do this. I'm only doing it because it is who I am. That's how I played the game. That's was my mentality. If you don't want to play that way, don't play that way... Break." – Michael Jordan. For more from "*The Last Dance*" documentary click [43 Leadership Quotes And Lessons From Michael Jordan From The Last Dance Parts 1 & 2.](#)
- "What makes Coach (Andy) Reid a great play caller? 'He's not tied to any one thing,' an offensive coordinator texted me. He doesn't care about run/pass ratio or any of that b.s. He cares about getting his best players touches. It doesn't matter if it's a run, pass, screen, whatever. It may sound basic, but so many coaches are so tied to their scheme. Force-feeding a desired philosophy. He just feeds his playmakers. Always has. It's why he wins so much."- John Middlekauff from *The Athletic*
- "What makes Andy Reid great is his ability to adjust and adapt and make players reach their highest potential under his leadership. And that flexibility is what makes him special." – Sean McVay
- "You can't a game until you learn how to keep from losing." - Bill Belichick
- "You're only a success at the moment you perform a successful act. You've got to do it again." - Phil Jackson

- "I know that night in and night out the guy I play against will have more physical ability, but I feel like if I go out against a guy and play him 40 or 48 minutes a game or whatever, toe to toe, head to head, he is going to get tired or beat up or bored for two or three minutes. That will be enough to make sure he doesn't win the game for his team." – Wes Unseld
- "Your best player must set the intolerance for anybody who gets in the way of winning." – Jeff Van Gundy
- "Bad teams, no one leads. Average teams, coaches lead. But elite teams, players lead." – P.J. Fleck
- "You want to exert your will on the other team. On that night, they were just in the way. They were a mosquito and we were the windshield." - Tom Brady from Apple TV's *"In The Zone"*. For more quotes from this documentary click [Leadership Lessons From AppleTV's Greatness Code: 10 Common Threads Of Being "In The Zone"](#).
- "But the reality is that the line between success and surrender is often very thin and that many of the people we most want to emulate nearly capitulated to adversity at some point as well." – Michael Lombardi

Personal Growth

- "You can't steal first base." – Unknown baseball scout on the importance of starting well and adhering to a process.
- "Don't quit. The greatest compounding comes near the end, just when many people quit." – John Maxwell
- "Sir Isaac Newton developed geometry while in quarantine. *Don Quixote* was written from a prison cell... What can I do today, tomorrow to better myself and the people around me?" – Michael Lombardi
- "If you grow, reinvention is a natural byproduct of personal growth... When you get better, you'll reinvent yourself." – John Maxwell. For more from Dr. Maxwell click [John Maxwell's 10 Things Leaders Do When Leading Through Crisis](#).

COVID

- "This pandemic has revealed we are weaker than we thought. We don't have as many options as we thought. Now is the time to stop bragging about how competent you are and you can't solve this by yourself." – Crawford Loritts
- "The key to deliverance is the eradication of pride... Embrace the reality that I am needy. God has my full attention and I need God's full attention." – Crawford Loritts
- "Don't you think in time of sickness and distress is the time for us to manifest our faith in God? Don't you think in such times as these instead of closing the churches it would be well to open them daily that the people might at their convenient hours assemble therein and pray to God, the great Physician, to help the doctors to remove this disease?" – Pastor C. H. Watson when churches closed for two months in 1918 due to the Spanish flu.
- "Necessarily we shall be kept in our homes many hours that would otherwise be spent in recreation and amusement. Perhaps this circumstance will serve to remind us that in these sacred home-circles there is to be found the very finest of fellowship and the sweetest and most wholesome of all influences. And certainly, if we should improve these hours by

prayer and meditation, the seeming curse of this scourge would not be unmixed with blessing." – Pastor S.O. Cox taking an opposite stance when churches closed for two months in 1918 due to the Spanish flu

- “An interruption is when your internet goes down and the web page you were working on goes down. When it comes back, you resume and pick up where you left off. That’s an interruption. This is a disruption.” – Simon Sinek referring to COVID-19

Vision

- “When you’re a visionary, a dreamer, you lead future forward. You’re leading six months into the future when the people you’re leading are three months in the past. Then there’s total chaos because of a 9-month gap in the people you’re leading. Then you make the mistake of trying to get them there faster than they’re capable of and then you get mad at them for something they’re not capable of doing.” – Leonce Crump Jr. from *Courage To Lead 202*
- “A vision-caster is a fisher and you’re throwing a net of the vision hoping to catch the hearts of your people. People don’t catch vision. Vision catches them. The quality of the net and the skill of the caster matter greatly.” – Dharius Daniels from *ReThink Leadership*
- “Lead your way into the future. Don’t react your way into the future. This talks about your posture as a leader. The posture of the leader determines the posture of the team. Ask yourself, ‘Who do you want to be’ and reverse engineer into that.” – Carey Nieuwhof from *ReThink Leadership*
- "The first rule of success is to have a vision. If you don't have a vision of where you're going, if you don't have a goal of where you go, you drift around and never end up anywhere." – Arnold Schwarzenegger

Character and Consistency

- “The older I get the less impressed I am with famous. I am looking for integrity, some consistency, over the long haul. There is consistency there.” – Priscilla Shirer from *C3 Conference*
- "The great leaders throughout history are who they are consistently. It's magnified during times of peril and crisis. So it comes down to what are your core values? What are your standards? What crisis does is let those core values and standards shine through. If you're not living those from the heart, it's very difficult to summon those right now." – Shane Battier
- “Nothing in this world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful people with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan Press On! has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race.” — Calvin Coolidge
- “When something bad happens you have three choices. You can either let it define you, let it destroy you, or you can let it strengthen you.” – Theodor Seuss Geisel

Passion

- “Nothing great has ever been accomplished with half of someone’s heart.” – Levi Lusko from Passion 2020 Conference
- "I'm not a God-given talent. I ain't the best shooter. I'm not the best ball handler. Not the most athletic. But I battle. I fight." - The Miami Heat's Jimmy Butler

Marriage

- "If you can't speak to another woman in front of your wife the same way you speak to her when your wife is not around, something is wrong." – Derwin Gray

Church Growth

- “Churches don't grow because of vision. They grow because of biblical strategies.” – Bill Purvis
- “It is easier to teach nice people systems than to teach systems people to be nice.” – Ben Ellison
- "The 20-60-20 Principle I learned from [John Maxwell](#). 20% are your leaders are bought in to what your church is doing. 20% will never be on board. 60% are undecided. It is the job of the top 20% of leaders to bring the 60% undecided on board." - Piedmont Church senior pastor [Ike Reighard](#)

Decision-Making

- "Our lives are not determined by the dreams we dream. Our lives are determined by the choices we make." – Jeremy Morton from the Johnny Hunt Men's Conference
- “We cannot pay for world-class moments. We can only pay for world-class careers.” – Alex Ferguson
- "There's no play a coach can call from the sideline which he knows is going to work right. It's my job to find the guy that's going to be open. If I don't think someone's going to be open and I can get someone open, that's when I'm going to get the advantage." – Tom Brady from Peyton’s Places on ESPN+
- “The doers are the major thinkers. The people that really create the things that change this industry are both the thinker and doer in one person... You can’t connect the dots looking forward. You can only connect them looking backwards. So you have to trust the dots will somehow connect in your future.” – Steve Jobs
- "Strategy is doing something when there's nothing to do. Tactics is doing something when there is something to do. You have to put yourself in both places. When strategy is needed, we're not doing anything. We're thinking. When strategy is needed, you have to execute the plan." – Michael Lombardi.
- "The stock market is the only place where when everything goes on sale, people run." - Tony Robbins
- I asked Steve Robinson, retired Chief Marketing Officer of Chick-fil-A, “How do smart people think?” He replied, “Smart or wise?” I responded, “I guess that answers that question.”

Conflict

- “Conflict is inevitable. Drama is a choice.” – Shawn Lovejoy from *Courage To Lead* 2020. For more from Shawn click [42 Leadership Quotes From Shawn Lovejoy on Courageous Conversations and Healthy Conflict](#).
- “The safest place to be in a fire is where it’s already burned.” – Ike Reighard
- “No one ever died from too much encouragement.” – Truett Cathy
- "As a Christian, your enemy list is your prayer list... Pain carves the key that opens the door to your destiny." - Cole Ragsdale 9-21-20

Creativity

- “Creativity is unlearned. At age 5, 98% score as creative geniuses. At age 10, 30%. They trade dreaming for dogma, imagination for memorization. At age 15, 12%. Adults grade at 2%.” – Fellowship Church senior pastor Ed Young from C3 Conference

Mental Health

- “People are wrestling with despair. Despair is a form of hopelessness. Despair is the result of the premature anticipation of the non-fulfillment of the promises of God.” – Dharius Daniels from *ReThink Leadership*

Change

- “Existential flexibility is the capacity to make a profound shift in strategy to help advance your cause in the face of change. Most leaders will only have to go through this once. What’s interesting is everyone is going through it simultaneously.” – Simon Sinek from *ReThink Leadership*

Communication

- “There are three components which make a revolution: 1. An incredible idea at the right time. 2. A catalytic leader with a supporting community. No leader ever leaves alone. 3. A mechanism to communicate the original message.” – Danielle Strickland from *ReThink Leadership*
- “In the dugout coming off the field. Who does he talk to? How? Is he an off-the-field leader? Is he passive or not? In order to get this information, you have to be at the game.” – baseball scout Kevin Burrell on how to recognize leaders on the field.
- “Leaders who don’t listen will eventually be surrounded by people who have nothing to say.” – Andy Stanley
- "In many ways, the trajectory of humanity has been shaped by moments in which a single person approached a crowd with something important to say." - Jon Meacham August 31, 2020 *It Was Said* podcast trailer
- “The most treasured gifts in the world are kind words spontaneously tendered.” – Former Princeton Dean of Admissions Fred Hargadon

Teambuilding

- "He who travels the fastest travels alone." – *1917*. For more from this excellent movie click [14 Leadership Lessons From 1917 The Movie](#).
- "The ultimate gift the great quarterbacks have is, more than their talent, is their ability to make everybody better. That is the job of the great quarterback is you make the building better. You make the lineman better. You make the receivers better. You make the coaches better. You make the secretaries better. You make equipment guys better. The whole organization is better because of your greatness and how you approach your job. That's what Russell Wilson does." – Trent Dilfer on the January 6 The Herd With Colin Cowherd
- "The problem is not overpaying talented people. The problem is overpaying mediocre people." – Michael Lombardi

Intelligence

- "Hit me in the head with a hammer the next time I take a dumb guy. I want smart players. They get better and better and better. My first four picks with the Dallas Cowboys (were) all Academic All-Americans." – Hall of Fame coach Jimmy Johnson
- "People who are not just smart off the court and in preparation, they are smart in the moment action is happening... They're brilliant at the moment it's happening. That's unusual... When you have somebody who is playing the game and is not just smart about his or her play, but the play of a unit... That's the treasure and all those guys had it." - Coach Mike Krzyzewski on LeBron James, Kobe Bryant, and Zion Williamson during the April 9 The Herd With Colin Cowherd
- "We are drowning in information while starving for wisdom." – Jimmy Dykes

Elite Performance

- "Michael Jordan is the only player who can turn it on and off and he never turned it off." - Coach Roy Williams
- "You have to get used to being uncomfortable if you really want to be good at something because it's going to be difficult and you have to overcome adversity." – Nick Saban
- "There's a lot of people in the world who will take the challenge to climb the mountain. But when you get to the top of the mountain, you become the mountain because everyone is shooting at you to be where you are." – Nick Saban. To which Bill Belichick responded in the *Art Of Coaching*, "But the great ones get to the top of the mountain and say, 'You know what, I can be even better.'" For more from this HBO special click [38 Leadership Quotes And Lessons From Belichick & Saban: The Art Of Coaching](#).
- "Allow them to fail without cushioning the fall. Elite people figure it out. They do a great job of the process of elimination. They understand they have a unique gift." – Coach Lewis Preston when asked how parents of elite athletes should behave.
- "From the first day in practice (as a rookie), my mentality was whoever is the team leader on that team, I'm going after him. And I'm not going to do it with my voice cause I had no voice. I had no status. I had to do it with the way I play." – Michael Jordan

- “Sometimes trying to be great is lonely.” – Drew Brees
- "Professional athletes are A. elite athletes. They can do things no other human being can do. B. They're creatures of habit because their habits succeeded at every level." - Bill Polian, Inside Football Podcast August 12, 2020
- “The secret to have a successful present and future is to quit trying to have a successful past.” – Tim Kite from The Focus3 Podcast
- "The higher you climb performance-wise, the more likely it gets you'll have a stressful conclusion of the season." - Jurgen Klopp
- "Fubol on the highest intensity, on the highest level, when passion meets up with technique, is the best thing futbol can deliver. Competitiveness is just a joy to watch. Utilizing all the things we've learned over the years for a specific moment is just nice." - Jurgen Klopp. For more from Coach Klopp click [15 Amazing Leadership Quotes And Lessons From Liverpool FC's Jurgen Klopp](#).

Preparation

- "When the greatest moments in life happen they don't necessarily happen by chance. It's really an accumulation of all your understanding and knowledge of that thing all coming together in that one moment. In those times you don't have to think about it. You just do it. You become it." - Kelly Slater, Apple TV's "In The Zone"

Business

- "We're competing with sleep." - Netflix CEO Reed Hastings
- "My father was a subcontractor, and he would get paid on Fridays and be so happy that he had made \$800," he recalled to Forbes. "But I would watch the man that owned the house sell it and make \$80,000. So I always knew that there was more power in the man that owned the house rather than the man that actually was working on it and building it. So I always wanted to be the guy that owned the house." - Tyler Perry, USA Today 9-1-20
- “The first goal of new leadership is to convert the converted. Don’t bring in new people. Win over the influencers already there. This creates a groundswell.” – Michael Lombardi

Greatness

- “A great man is summed up in one sentence.” – John Maxwell
- “It’s easier to build strong children than it is to repair broken men.” – Frederick Douglas

Race Relations

- "If you care about this city, GO HOME and pray that someone like Reverend Beasley will come and talk to you and give you some instructions on what a protest should look like and how you affect change in America." - Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms. For more from Mayor Bottom on the first night of riots click [What Does A Leader Look Like? The Extraordinary Leadership Of Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms](#).

- "If they don't give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair." – former Alabama Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm

Great Books

- "Meetings are the setting, the arena, the moment when the most important discussions and decisions take place." – Patrick Lencioni from *The Motive*
- "Reward is on the other side of sacrifice. Response (sacrifice of energy) always precedes reward (the collection of resources). The 'runner's high' only comes after the hard run. The reward only comes after the energy is spent." – James Clear from *Atomic Habits*
- "The problem with being too busy to read is that you learn by experience (or by your men's experience), i.e. the hard way. By reading, you learn through others' experiences, generally a better way to do business, especially in our line of work where the consequences of incompetence are so final for young men. Thanks to my reading, I have never been caught flat-footed by any situation, never at a loss for how any problem has been addressed (successfully or unsuccessfully) before. It doesn't give me all the answers, but it lights a dark path ahead... Ultimately, a real understanding of history means that we face NOTHING new under the sun." – Former Secretary of Defense General Jim Mattis from *Call Sign CHAOS: Learning To Lead*
- "Love you more than you know for being so classy in everything you do. Your parents should be so proud. I love them for creating you. You are truly one of a kind." – text from New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft 30 minutes after Tom Brady advised him he would be leaving the team as recorded in *The Dynasty* by Jeff Benedict
- "If you want to what will move hearts and command multitudes today and in the future, there is only one thing to do: Study the past. In May 1953 Churchill said, 'Study history. Study history. In history lie all the secrets of statecraft,' and the same is true of statecraft's vital subsection, war leadership. If there is one quality that all the great war leaders possessed, it is that which the earl of St. Vincent ascribed to Horatio Nelson. St. Vincent did not much like his fellow admiral personally, but he readily admitted that Nelson 'possessed the magic art of infusing his own spirit into others.' Great leaders are able to make soldiers and civilians believe that they are part of a purpose that matters more than even their continued existence on the planet, and that the leader's spirit is infused into them." – Andrew Martin from *Leadership In War*

Brian Dodd

- "The number one motivator for people is comfort. I used to lead people from comfort to strategic discomfort. Now everyone is in discomfort. Therefore, I now lead people from discomfort to strategic comfort." – Brian Dodd
- "Excellence becomes average when it's all you have." – Brian Dodd