

Leadership Spotlight

Let Actions, Not Words, Be Your Legacy

It's no use saying, "We are doing our best." You have got to succeed in doing what is necessary.

—Sir Winston Churchill

Great leaders often utter profound statements, some of which have endured for centuries and echoed upon many ears. Great quotes differ from infamous ramblings in that leaders' actions support what they have said. Words without action ring hollow.

As leadership challenges and opportunities are presented, recognized, and addressed, true leaders will beset themselves with pure intentions, commendable conduct, and fitting deeds. Words assist in the motivational and inspirational process of achieving a vision, but the leader's noble actions actually will accomplish it.

Communication undoubtedly is a critical skill when leading others and will impact the success or failure of leadership opportunities. But, it cannot be the only mechanism a leader uses to propel a vision from an idea to a fulfilled accomplishment.

When words are the only basis on which individuals try to inspire and motivate those under their command, their legacies as leaders will be failed ones. The words used in an attempt to prophesy a vision will endure as an example of a missed or failed leadership

opportunity. Unfulfilled campaign promises for social reform or tax reductions exemplify the failures of some politicians' attempts to masquerade as leaders when all they truly possess are words unsupported by action. Unsupported words solidify an individual's legacy as a mock leader.

To make positive and meaningful contributions to any community, including the criminal justice profession, people must lead by the example of their actions.

Leaders' words should compliment their actions. The popular phrase "If you talk the talk, walk the walk"

validates the notion that people want the assurance that their leaders are dedicated to supporting their promulgations, rather than just speaking about them. Followers always will be wary of leaders whose words differ from their deeds. Action, or inaction, will speak louder than words in the development of a leader's legacy. ♦

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