

THE 10 COMMANDMENTS OF LEADERSHIP

BY BILL STAINTON

INTRODUCTION

I'm constantly amazed at the people who make leadership so much more complicated than it needs to be.

Look, I'm not saying leadership is easy. It's not. But it's just not that complicated. If you can master a few basic principles (principles that, in many cases, are just part of being a decent human being), you'll be ahead of most of the crowd.

I call the principles in this little book *The 10 Commandments of Leadership*. Will they give you everything you need to know? Probably not. (That's why John Maxwell has *21 Irrefutable Laws*, *5 Levels*, *12 Daily Practices*, and *26 Critical Lessons* for Leadership!) But these 10 principles (and, in particular, the bonus 11th!) will help you to build a solid leadership platform that others will be happy, eager, and excited to follow.

To your success,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Stanton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

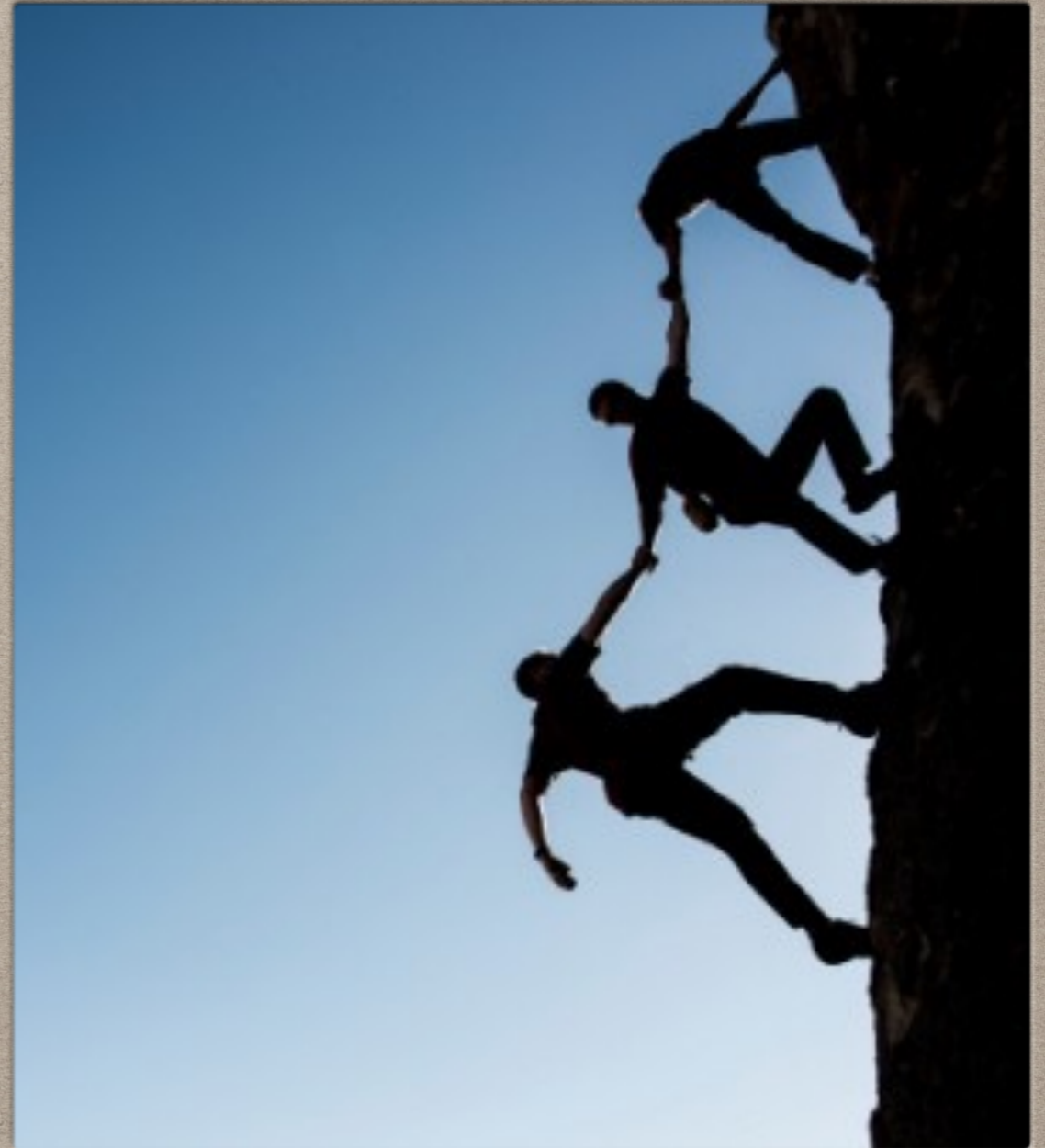
1. THOU SHALT HAVE A DESTINATION

Followers, it turns out, like to know where they're going. Even more important, they like to know that their *leader* knows where they're going. It's your job as the leader to set the destination. Call it a vision, a goal, a mission—the terminology is largely semantic. It comes down to the Promised Land, the Better Future. The leader with a compelling, well-communicated destination will always have followers.



2. THOU SHALT DEVELOP THY FOLLOWERS

Great leaders strive to create an environment in which each member of their team can develop to his or her highest potential. This is not the same as saying "leaders create leaders." That may be a part of it, but not everyone aspires to leadership. Find out what your team members want, and then help them achieve it.



3. THOU SHALT TAKE THE BLAME

Poor leaders avoid responsibility. When things go wrong (and they will), they look for a scapegoat, somebody to blame. In short, poor leaders run away from the problem. Great leaders run *toward* the problem, meet it head-on, and take responsibility.



4. THOU SHALT SHARE THE CREDIT

This is the flip side to Commandment #3. Great leaders share the credit with their team—even if, deep down inside, they feel the credit is really largely theirs. Great leaders know that success is almost never a solo performance. They also know that there are few better ways to build team loyalty than by taking the blame and sharing the credit.



5. THOU SHALT GIVE SPECIFIC, IMMEDIATE PRAISE

In order to reinforce desired behavior in their team members, leaders actively look for it (“catch them doing something right”) and then praise it immediately—and specifically. They let their team member know exactly which behavior is being rewarded, and why that behavior makes a difference to the team and the goal.



6. THOU SHALT NOT INSIST ON BEING THE SMARTEST PERSON IN THE ROOM

Some “leaders” put their ego before results by insisting on being the smartest person in the room. This inhibits differing thoughts, opinions, and options. And that’s no way to produce great results. Bottom line: if, as a leader, you find that you’re always the smartest person in the room, you need to hire better people.



7. THOU SHALT LISTEN

A corollary to Commandment #6. Great leaders realize the value of *actively* listening to their team members—which also means making sure the quiet ones are heard. They trust that their team members have valuable ideas—ideas that they’ll never hear if they do all the talking.



8. THOU SHALT GIVE THEM THE "WHAT," BUT THOU SHALT LET THEM GIVE THEE THE "HOW"

Your job as a leader is to set the course (see Commandment #1), but to let your *team* come up with the route. They'll feel empowered—and you'll very likely find that they come up with ideas and solutions that would never have occurred to you.



9. THOU SHALT NOT CRITICIZE OR BERATE IN PUBLIC

This should be common sense, but, sadly, it's not. There are few things more demoralizing to a team member than to be taken down in front of his or her peers. And you're never going to get the best from a demoralized team member.



10. THOU SHALT CONTINUE TO LEARN AND GROW

Great leaders are lifelong learners. And not just about leadership. Not just about their industry. Great leaders learn for the sake of learning. They know that when they learn—when they learn *anything*—they grow, and when they grow, they can make a greater difference—to their teams, to their organizations, to their families...and to themselves.



11. THOU SHALT LEAD WITH INTEGRITY

This is a Bonus Commandment—but if you can truly achieve this one (and few leaders can), you'll be among the elite, the top 1%. Integrity encompasses honesty, openness, trust, and character. To me, the highest praise anyone can say about a leader—or a person—is that he or she "lives with integrity."

