

Living Integrity-Fighting Corruption

Ten Quotes to Support Moral Courage and Good Practice

Strategic Interactions 2022

Dear Colleagues in integrity and anti-corruption,

We want to invite you to look over the 10 short quotes below which we have put together to support the integrity of staff and leaders in organizations. These quotes have been instrumental for our work to promote integrity and confront specific corruption over the years in the international Church-Mission Community. Six quotes are from the book [*Transparency: How Leaders Create a Culture of Candor*](#) and four quotes are from Judeo-Christian scriptures.

As part of our commitment to engage in “strategic interactions” with colleagues like you around the world, we would like to invite you to:

--read the 10 quotes and consider some applications for you

--briefly respond to one or more quotes by writing one or two paragraphs (examples at the end)

--share another core quote and-or resource if you wish (examples at the end)

-- email us your response to be shared on one or more integrity websites

We believe you will find these quotes helpful in your respected settings as well as the forthcoming comments by colleagues from around the world. Please feel free to share them with your colleagues and networks too! And thanks for sending your brief responses! You are not alone!

Warm greetings,

Kelly and Michèle

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Dr. Kelly O'Donnell and Dr. Michèle Lewis O'Donnell

Consulting Psychologists, Member Care Associates, Inc.

1. “Don't be intimidated. Eventually everything is going to be out in the open, and everyone will know how things really are. So don't hesitate to go public now. Don't be bluffed into silence by the threats of bullies. There's nothing they can do to your soul, your core being. Save your fear for God, who holds your entire life-body and soul-in his hands.” **Jesus Christ, Mathew 10:26-28, *The Message***

2. "But at any time an organization makes a seriously wrong decision, its leaders should call for an intensive postmortem. Such learning opportunities are too often overlooked. The tendency is simply to call on the public relations department to spin the matter, to make another inadequately thought-out decision, and perhaps to scapegoat, even fire, a few staff members. Because most companies cover up their mistakes instead of learning from them, systemic flaws in information flow tend to remain to do their damage another day." (pp. 22-23) ***Transparency: How Leaders Create a Culture of Candor (2008)***. Warren Bennis, Daniel Goleman, James O'Toole, and Patricia Ward Biederman

3. "But legislation alone [Sarbanes-Oxley Act] cannot make organizations open and healthy. Only the character and will of those who run them and participate in them can do that....If a culture of collusion exists instead of a culture of candor, participants will find ways around the rules, new or old, however stringent." (p. 8) ***Transparency: How Leaders Create a Culture of Candor (2008)***. Warren Bennis, Daniel Goleman, James O'Toole, and Patricia Ward Biederman

4. "Get yourself ready! Stand up and say to them whatever I command you. Do not be terrified by them, or I will terrify you before them. Today I have made you a fortified city, an iron pillar and a bronze wall to stand against the whole land-against the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests and the people of the land. They will fight against you but will not overcome you, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the LORD. **Jeremiah 1:17-19, NIV**

5. "Sociologist Myron Glazer has studied several hundred whistleblowers in government and industry, and found that almost inevitably the person who exposes the wrongdoing suffers, usually in being shunned, demoted, fired, or otherwise punished." (p. 10) ***Transparency: How Leaders Create a Culture of Candor (2008). Warren Bennis, Daniel Goleman, James O'Toole, and Patricia Ward Biederman***

6. "Although whistleblowers are often exiled from their organizations for their unwanted candor, Glazer's study revealed that they almost always found the courage to speak out in their deep commitment to the core values of the organization. Even when labeled traitors by their colleagues, such tellers of unsettling truths often feel passionate loyalty to the organization and act because they feel the secret activity violates its mission and ethical core." (p. 10) ***Transparency: How Leaders Create a Culture of Candor (2008). Warren Bennis, Daniel Goleman, James O'Toole, and Patricia Ward Biederman***

7. "If dissidents aren't called crazy, they are portrayed as disloyal-and treason after all, is a capital offense. The charge of disloyalty is as easy for leaders to bring against followers as it is difficult for the accused to counter and disprove. Moreover, as loyalty is typically an admirable trait, it is also a convenient blind for cowardly followers to hide behind." (p. 79) ***Transparency: How Leaders Create a Culture of Candor (2008). Warren Bennis, Daniel Goleman, James O'Toole, and Patricia Ward Biederman***

8. "There's trouble ahead when you live only for the approval of others, saying what flatters them, doing what indulges them. Popularity contests are not truth contests-look how many scoundrel preachers were approved by your ancestors! Your task is to be true, not popular....Your true being brims over into true words and deeds." **Jesus Christ, Luke 6: 26, 45 *The Message***

9. "But leaders have to do more than ask for the counsel of others. They have to hear it. All of us would do well to reflect on how receptive we are to the suggestions and opinions of others and alternate points of view. One motive for turning a deaf ear to what others have to say seems to be sheer hubris: leaders often believe they are wiser than all those around them. The literature on executive narcissism tells us that the self-confidence top executives need can easily blur into a blind spot, an unwillingness to turn to others for advice." (p. 26) ***Transparency: How Leaders Create a Culture of Candor (2008). Warren Bennis, Daniel Goleman, James O'Toole, and Patricia Ward Biederman***

10. "As we have found again and again, one of the dangerous ironies of leadership is that those at the top often think they know more than they do. There seems to be an inexorable filtering out of bad news that often leaves those in the highest positions with potentially disastrous information gaps. Our research, for instance, shows the higher leaders rise, the less honest feedback they get from followers about their leadership. Direct reports understandably hesitate to enumerate the boss's leadership failings. And so top leaders easily lose touch with the ways others see them and many remain poor listeners, abrasive, tuned out, or otherwise clueless about their own limitations. The routine keeping of accurate information from the leader may lead to groupthink in decision making." (p. 38) ***Transparency: How Leaders Create a Culture of Candor (2008). Warren Bennis, Daniel Goleman, James O'Toole, and Patricia Ward Biederman***

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Arpit Waghmare, Operation Nehemiah

6. "Although whistleblowers are often exiled from their organizations for their unwanted candor, Glazer's study revealed that they almost always found the courage to speak out in their deep commitment to the core values of the organization. Even when labeled traitors by their colleagues, such tellers of unsettling truths often feel passionate loyalty to the organization and act because they feel the secret activity violates its mission and ethical core." (p. 10) *Transparency: How Leaders Create a Culture of Candor* (2008).

"This one really got me thinking and resonating: The challenge is to truly make organisational values have true authority over leadership decision making. Easier said than done because often values are articulated and even expressed in such fuzzy impotent ways with no edge...that they remain just words on a document.

Kelly O'Donnell, Member Care Associates

Resource Guide to Good Practices in the Protection of Reporting Persons (2015). United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. "Making it safer and easier to report wrongdoing is also an important part of creating an organizational ethos that is more resistant to corruption. Corrupt links between business and government are more difficult to establish when organizations themselves make it clear that reporting is welcome and that retaliation against those who report wrongdoing will not be tolerated. Encouraging staff to challenge poor practices and report suspected wrongdoing strengthens an organization's resilience against malpractice.

Unfortunately, in many workplaces, workers become vulnerable if they report to anyone other than their employer because of implicit or explicit duties of confidentiality or a sense of loyalty. Members of the public who report information about corruption to the authorities may lack the legal status to be protected, even when they face intimidation or threats." (page 2)

Robert Osburn, Wilberforce International Institute

Response to all the quotes. "I was the very reluctant leader of a team of eight campus ministers who had reached the boiling point because of corruption in the highest levels of our organization. The human cost of the corruption and abuse had been too obvious for too long, even as most board members and staff in the nationwide organization preferred a "see no evil/hear no evil" approach. The pot boiled over on that day in June, nearly 30 years ago, when I called and asked our Christian organization for the fax numbers of board members so that I could fax them a letter exposing the evil at the top of the organization. It was extremely unpleasant to have to threaten to take the organization to court after they initially refused the list of fax numbers. But, they finally gave them, the letter was faxed, and within several weeks the person responsible was mercifully excised from the organization."

Roberto Laver, Fides International

3. "But legislation alone [Sarbanes-Oxley Act] cannot make organizations open and healthy. Only the character and will of those who run them and participate in them can do that....If a culture of collusion exists instead of a culture of candor, participants will find ways around the rules, new or old, however stringent." (p. 8) *Transparency: How Leaders Create a Culture of Candor* (2008). Warren Bennis, Daniel Goleman, James O'Toole, and Patricia Ward Biederman

"This statement applies not only to organizations but also societies at large. If the anticorruption reform movement is revealing something, it is that changes in laws are clearly insufficient to bring about integrity. They can even be counterproductive, by giving the illusion of change to gain benefits as international aid. In fact, most countries and organizations have adequate rules and policies but these fail to be followed and implemented. Good institutions rest on strong values and norms, that need to be inculcated and modelled in practice. As an African political scientist noted: "culture is the mother, institutions are the children". We need a stronger focus on building stronger civic and community values, especially among young people."

8. "There's trouble ahead when you live only for the approval of others, saying what flatters them, doing what indulges them. Popularity contests are not truth contests-look how many scoundrel preachers were approved by your ancestors! Your task is to be true, not popular....Your true being brims over into true words and deeds." Jesus Christ, Luke 6, 26, 45 *The Message*

"In my professional experience, I've often witnessed the "go along to get along" in many work environments. Colleagues that prefer to remain silent in the face of abuse and injustice by leaders and supervisors, or will cozy up to the boss to gain approval and preferential treatment. Leaders that promote conformity and loyalty at the expense of truth, just to maintain their position. It seems to be that this has become the organizational culture in so many institutions, including churches. While not easy by any means, our Lord's message has served as encouragement and hope in my professional journey."

Gershon Mwit, [Leadership Institute of Kenya](#) [note-- Dr. Mwit commented on each of the 10 quotes and addressed his comments primarily to Christians.]

"Quote 1: Fear Not. *To wage a decisive war against impersonal beings like governments, churches and organizations demands deeper convictions of the Holy Spirit, which are rare. The source of fear is the absence of love. The demand here is Tough love from the cross to be applied in the war against corruption.*

Quote 2: Oh Ye hypocrites. *Biblically, the solution to transparency is Confession, repentance, forgiveness, restitution, reconciliation and restoration to allow the healing of broken relations to take place. Anything short of that is simplistic, hypocritical, and self-deceiving.*

Quote 3: The Law and Grace. *Registration and the law belongs to the flesh. It is anchored on the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and pride of life (1 Jn. 2: 16). They are limited in dealing with corruption. The answer lies in deep convictions of the Spirit and the Special Graces of God in believers. The war is not with flesh and blood (6:11-12).*

Quote 4: The Fear of the Unknowns. *Fighting the good fight of faith demands special divine courage and weapons bestowed only, to those ready for sacrifice and if need be, death for the kingdom of God.. This is what Jesus referred to when he said: Beware of believers who go round saying 'peace, peace' everywhere, when there is no peace. I am of the opinion that this is the just war believers fear to enter into due to its consequences.*

Quote 5: Whistle Blowing. *Whistle blowing is for the few who are committed , dedicated and enthused in doing so. This spirit has its origin in those empowering words of Jesus: 'When He said: When the Son sets you free, ye shall be free indeed.' I have blown many whistles in my Christian life, whose consequences of doing so are both blessings and curses, with more blessings than curses in the final analysis.*

Quote 6: Measure of Spirituality Maturity. *Though in body, yet we are spirit and mind as well. We are filled with special abilities which the world does not know. It is the creation power and authority, politics, military and economic are not aware. And God said: 'Let there be light and light appeared' and God said, 'let us make man in our image.' Christians are co-creators and coworkers with God. Our sin is to limit God in what He can do for us and others through us.*

Quote 7: Fear of Embarrassment. *False loyalty like false humility hides in shallow and murky waters of embarrassment and phobia. When Christian overcome the sin of ignorance and stupidity, they are lifted to a higher ground where they can see God as He is. When King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted (Isaiah 6:1). Blindness to the truth is responsible of the suffering world as it wallows in mud of ignorance, foolishness and fear of nothing. Christians live in the light of the word of the word of God, so they do see everything clearly to avoid deceptions and chaos in their lives.*

Quote 8: Temporary Appreciation, Praise and Recognition. *Because one cannot see the end results clearly, he settles halfway between the journey as though he has reached his final destination. Half way settlement like the Children of Israel on their way to the promised land settled in the desert, so is a believe who cannot persistently press on. Pressing on for the everlasting gift of life is Christian mission here on earth. The allurements of earthly goods is settlement in the desert, a false promise and settlement.*

Quote 9: Defending the Truth at Any Cost. *The Fear to stand firmly and even alone in defense of what is true, pure, right and of good report is a demonstration of immaturity in one's faith in Jesus Christ. On the other hand to stand firmly to defend the truth at any cost is a measure of commitment, dedication and concentration in the just war against corruption, war worthy of all acceptance by all believers everywhere for the Glory and Kingdom of God. The story of Gideon in the war against Midianites when he invited 22,000 warriors and won the war with 300 soldiers only illustrates the war against corruption. We do not need many fighters--all that is needed is commitment.*

Quote 10: The Unapproachable Leader, Leading as Knowing/Unknowning Leader. *Such a leader makes decisions that are supported by falsehood and absence of credible information. He leads while misleading his followers. Such leaders dilute truth, misinterpret laws to suit his likes and dislikes, hence creating loopholes for corrupt deals in his leadership. He lives alone in his leadership with no one, close enough to fellowship or share deep matters of her leadership with."*