

The Winning Traits of Faith-Based Leaders

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The definition of faith in the truest sense of the word expands far beyond a belief in God or an acceptance of heaven or hell.

If I take a plane to Hawaii from Chicago, which I do twice a year with my family, while I might pray before we take off, my faith in the pilot, the aircraft and even air traffic control is also being exercised whether I mention it or not. Driving through the downtown area of Chicago often prompts a prayer or two when traffic is heavy, but my faith in the vehicle I'm driving and my trust in my own ability to navigate through the backup of cars is also very real. I'd never get on a plane if I have no faith or trust in the airline industry. I'd avoid all city traffic situations if I lacked courage and faith to drive in such situations.



How we think is controlling everything we do. Where we put our trust is a key component of that. We don't need to over spiritualize every single scenario of life. We act on what we believe more than on what we know. And the beliefs of top performers and leaders can teach us a lot.

In his book, *Crash the Chatterbox*, New York Times best-selling author Steven Furtick shares how common it is to live a life with negative "chatter" going on in our head 24/7. Our thoughts are a manufacturing plant for the kind of life we'll live.

So what are traits of some faith-based leaders?

1. They can shift between thoughts, circumstances and events quickly. A top performer has no time for drama drag. It takes faith to shift like a gazelle from one thing to the next. Moving through meetings, projects, conversations, emails and even tweets takes focus and believe it or not, faith. If we don't believe we can do a good job, we'll drag. If we're insecure about where we are going, we'll procrastinate. If we have constant "chatter" in our head that we don't shift through quickly, we'll end up in a constant state of confusion. Guard your mind like Fort Knox and be very selective where you let your thoughts wander.

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2. They have confidence in what they're doing and learn to ignore their critics. We all need trusted advisors who help us to go farther and be better. But every person with an opinion doesn't deserve to be in that trusted spot. Neither does every person with a Twitter account. I'm always amazed when someone with 29 followers will begin to slam and criticize someone who is doing so much good in the world. We're entitled to have our opinions. Free speech is also our God-given right. But powerful leaders and high performers know when to strategically ignore and move on. If we don't have faith or confidence in the things we're doing in business, we'll never achieve the level of success we were created for. We all need more faith than fear. It's up to us who we'll believe in but, when all is said and done, lack of confidence is one of the greatest reasons a powerful solution will fall to the ground and never reach the marketplace.

3. They know the value of self talk. How we talk to, about and with ourself daily is a big linchpin between the mediocre and the excellent. Anyone who wants to master his or her performance and go far in life must learn to direct the self talk. Furtick's book *Chatterbox* gives tangible tools on how to do this. Our bottom line and our daily output are completely dependent on our self talk. If we took a recorder and broadcasted the daily thoughts of some of the world's top leaders, we might all be shocked. They have learned the fine art of selective focus. Olympic athletes have come from devastating situations and environments. Top executives rise from very obscure and pain-filled pasts. Our self talk matters. The voice we believe matters.

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4. They can operate within constant change and not lose focus. A top producer and leader have to be able to focus. Many leaders talk about "having five brains" and being able to think multiple thoughts at one time. Focusing on multiple things at one time is a skill that we're either born with or we acquire. It's not a matter of attention-deficit disorder – although some of the most brilliant minds of our generation have admitted to such a diagnosis – but rather, the ability to categorize where our thoughts go, even thinking through several things simultaneously. Change is inevitable as a leader. If you hate change, don't even try leading. If you are uncomfortable with change, you either have to get past it or rethink your future if you are aspiring to be a powerful leader. Learning to operate within change and not losing focus is a key characteristic of a leader that is going places. Learning to selectively focus and being able to shift quickly without loss of momentum is critical.

5. They have courage in the war of doubt, fear and discouragement. Leaders agree that self-doubt never ends. The mom and pop just beginning their entrepreneurial journey and the multi-billionaire with thousands of staff all fight the war of fear, doubt and discouragement. To maintain courage and to keep going through the negativity is a key ingredient in the powerful leader who rises to their potential. Faith is important because your dreams and business plans will be attacked. No one has ever gotten to a

place of influence and success without first walking through a lot of criticism, self doubt, fear and even insecurity. What we lean on is critical. Who we have on our team or in support around us will make all the difference. Don't attempt to be a good leader without first realizing it will take enormous courage and it will be incredibly rewarding.

Faith works at work. To go farther in our career it is important to work on strengthening how we think and where our beliefs are taking us.