

## 15 LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM ST. JOSEMARIA ESCRIVA

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St. Josemaria Escriva was a natural leader. In the world of business or politics, he could have been what the world would consider a “great man.” Instead, he became a priest and dedicated his considerable talents to the advancement of the Kingdom of God, pouring his heart and soul into raising up an army of apostles who sanctify the world from the inside out.

Through the course of his priestly ministry, St. Josemaria left many letters of advice and spiritual direction, many excerpts of which are contained in the three books, [The Way](#), [Furrow](#), and [The Forge](#). Here are 15 pieces of leadership advice from St. Josemaria’s writings for those who seek to sanctify their work and be leaders in the Church and in the world.

### 1. Don’t compromise your principles

‘One must not compromise.’ Compromise is a word found only in the vocabulary of those who have no will to fight — the lazy, the cunning, the cowardly — for they consider themselves defeated before they start.

### 2. Don’t waste time

Don’t let your life be barren. Be useful. Make yourself felt. Shine forth with the torch of your faith and your love. With your apostolic life, wipe out the trail of filth and slime left by the corrupt sowers of hatred. And set aflame all the ways of the earth with the fire of Christ that you bear in your heart.

### 3. Pay attention to the little things

Will-power. A very important quality. Don’t despise little things, for by the continual practice of denying yourself again and again in such things — which are never futile or trivial — with God’s grace you will add strength and resilience to your character. In that way you will first become master of yourself, and then a guide, a chief, a leader: to compel and to urge and to inspire others, with your word, with your example, with your knowledge and with your power.

### 4. Embrace sacrifice

The Lord’s calling — vocation — always presents itself like this: “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.” Yes: a vocation demands self-denial, sacrifice. But how pleasant that sacrifice turns out to be — *gaudium cum pace*, joy and peace — if that self-giving is complete!

### 5. Pray boldly

Be daring in your prayer, and the Lord will turn you from a pessimist into an optimist; from being timid, to being daring, from being feeble-spirited to being a man of faith, an apostle!

## 6. Care for others

I think it is very good that you should try daily to increase the depth of your concern for those under you. For to feel surrounded and protected by the affectionate understanding of the one in charge, can be the effective help which is needed by the people you have to serve by means of your governance.

## 7. Accept obstacles

Is the burden heavy? No, a thousand times no! Those obligations which you freely accepted are wings that raise you high above the vile mud of your passions.

Do the birds feel the weight of their wings? If you were to cut them off and put them on the scales you would see that *they are heavy*. But can a bird fly if they are taken away from it? It needs those wings and it does not notice their weight, for they lift it up above other creatures.

—Your “wings” are heavy too! But if you did not have them you would fall into the filthiest mire.

## 8. Finish the task

Sanctity is made up of heroic acts. Therefore, in our work we are asked for the heroism of *finishing* properly the tasks committed to us, day after day, even though they are the same tasks. If we don't, then we do not want to be saints!

## 9. Persevere

As the flames of your first enthusiasm die down, it becomes difficult to advance in the dark. —But that progress is all the more reliable for being hard. And then, when you least expect it, the darkness vanishes, and the enthusiasm and light return. Persevere!

## 10. Be at peace

As soon as you truly abandon yourself in the Lord, you will know how to be content with whatever happens. You will not lose your peace if your undertakings do not turn out the way you hoped, even if you have put everything into them, and used all the means necessary. For they will have “turned out” the way God wants them to.

## 11. Call on Mary

Holy Mary is the Queen of peace, and thus the Church invokes her. So when your soul or your family are troubled, or things go wrong at work, in society or between nations, cry out to her without ceasing. Call to her by this title: *Regina pacis, ora pro nobis* — Queen of peace, pray for us. Have you at least tried it when you have lost your calm?... —You will be surprised at its immediate effect.

## 12. Surround yourself with wise counselors

Mediocre men, mediocre in mind and in Christian spirit, surround themselves by foolish people when they are in power. They are falsely persuaded by their vanity that in this way they will never lose control.

Sensible men, however, surround themselves with learned people who live a clean life as well as possessing knowledge, and become, through their help, men who can really govern. They are not in this matter deceived by their humility, for in making others great they themselves are made great.

### **13. Please God, not men**

You are in a position of authority and you go by what people say? You are a doddering old man! —First of all you should worry about what God will say; then, very much in the second place, and sometimes not at all, you may consider what others might think. “Whoever acknowledges me before men”, says the Lord, “I too will acknowledge him before my Father who is in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father who is in heaven.”

### **14. Delegate**

A fundamental rule for good management is to give responsibility to others without this becoming for you a way of seeking anonymity or comfort. I repeat, delegate responsibility and ask each person to give an account of how his job is going, so that you can “render an account” to God; and to souls, if necessary.

### **15. Always stay humble**

For all your learning, for all your fame, your eloquence and power, if you are not humble, you are worth nothing. Cut out, root out that self-complacency which dominates you so completely. — God will help you — and then you will be able to begin working for Christ, in the lowest place in his army of apostles.