

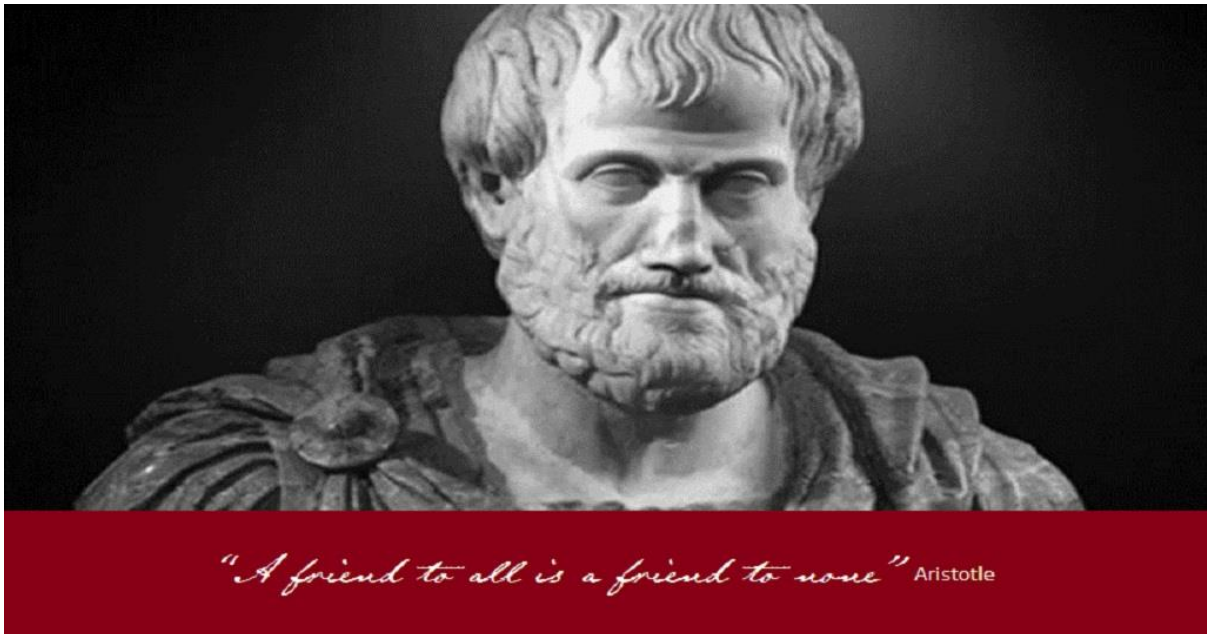


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Executive Search & Board Advisory

11 LESSONS FROM ARISTOTLE



Aristotle lived from 384 to 322 BC. He was a Greek philosopher, a student of Plato and teacher of Alexander the Great. His writings covered many topics, including biology, zoology, physics, metaphysics, theatre, music, poetry, politics, ethics, logic, rhetoric, linguistics, and government.

Aristotle is one of the most important figures in Western philosophy. His writings were the first to create a comprehensive basis for Western philosophy and in particular, ethics, logic, politics and science.

Whilst little of his writings have survived the centuries, they provide great insights of leadership which are relevant today. Some of Aristotle's thoughts include:

1. "He who cannot be a good follower cannot be a good leader." Aristotle felt to become a leader, we must first be a follower, and even after we have become a leader, we still need to follow those we serve.
2. "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an act, but a habit." Set the standard, once you commit to excellence in everything you do, it becomes a habit.

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3. “To avoid criticism say nothing, do nothing, be nothing.” Avoiding criticism by avoiding action is not the answer. It is more important to do the right thing than to please everyone. You can never please everyone, criticism will always be given, and it is how you choose to respond that matters.
4. “Patience is bitter, but its fruit is sweet.” Leaders need patience, they need to bring people on the journey, they don’t give up easily, it reflects their inner strength and conviction.
5. “Liars when they speak the truth are not believed.” A leader’s reputation is their number one asset. Don’t deal in lies. Integrity is everything.
6. “Tolerance and apathy are the last virtues of a dying society.” Leaders cannot afford to be tolerant to laziness. Leaders need the courage and resolve to oppose and eliminate poor behaviour. Apathy is like complacency, it is the beginning of the end.
7. “To run away from trouble is a form of cowardice and, while it is true that the suicide braves death, he does it not for some noble object but to escape some ill.” Many people avoid conflict, they run away from it. Leaders do not run away, they face their problems head on to prevent it from growing. They act swiftly and decisively.
8. “Happiness belongs to the self-sufficient.” Self-Sufficiency creates confidence and esteem. Leaders teach and encourage others to be self-sufficient. They believe in accountability and delivery and surround themselves with people who are competent in their own abilities to deliver.
9. “There is no great genius without a mixture of madness.” Leaders need to take risks, by doing the same as everyone else they achieve the same. To think differently, to break with convention and to act could be perceived as genius or madness.
10. “Those that know, do. Those that understand, teach.” As a leader you develop confidence by teaching others, it forces you to fully indenture your subject matter, to build knowledge and develop expertise.
11. “You will never do anything in this world without courage. It is the greatest quality of the mind next to honour.” Courage is the greatest of all qualities, it is the quality that ensures all others.

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