



10 Leadership Lessons From My Favorite Clint Eastwood Movie Quotes

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Regular readers of my weekly column have come to expect me to do my best in presenting them with fresh perspectives on how to manage the challenges that most of them face as leaders in their respective organizations. But, this week I decided to lighten it up a bit and look to what can be learned from some of my favorite Clint Eastwood movie quotes. So, let's have some fun!



What we can take away as leaders from my top 10 Clint Eastwood movie quotes:

"My mule don't like people laughing. He gets the crazy idea people are laughing at him." **A Fist Full of Dollars (1964)**: Leaders must stand up for themselves and the organizations that they lead. Otherwise, they may not gain the *"followership"* that is needed to have impact.

"As the saying goes, what do we do now?" **Where Eagles Dare (1968)**: Leaders don't need to have all the answers, all of the time. It's OK to solicit the best ideas from your people and work with them to develop strategies and solutions that can make the difference for the organization.

"A man's got to know his limitations." **Dirty Harry (1971)**: Ain't that the truth! Understanding an organization's strengths and weaknesses is essential to success. It's that understanding that enables a leader to dream big, set the bar high and inspire their people to work hard to make it happen.

"Bout time this town had a new sheriff." **High Plains Drifter (1973)**: Don't be afraid to lead. Regardless of those leaders that may have come before you, it's your time to shine. Take the opportunity to set direction and manage change.

"Now remember, things look bad and it looks like you're not gonna make it, then you gotta get mean. I mean plumb, mad-dog mean. 'Cause if you lose your head and you give up then you neither live nor win. That's just the way it is." **The Outlaw Josey Wales (1976)**: Indeed, an organization needs to be ready to do whatever it takes to get the job done. It's a leader's job to ensure that this "readiness" permeates the organization.

"Handouts are what you get from the government. A hand up is what you get from friends." **Any Which Way you Can (1980)**: A leader that sets the tone for an enterprise. Your people are watching you. If you operate with good will and demonstrate a willingness to "pitch in" and help those that need help in your business, then your people will recognize that this is a value worth mirroring.

"Go ahead, make my day" **Sudden Impact (1983)**: Leaders must be willing to set the boundaries and enforce them. It provides order and consistency and this sense of discipline and rigor will infuse from the top to the bottom of your business.

"If you want a guarantee, buy a toaster." **The Rookie (1990)**: There are no guarantees as a leader. You have to be willing to make the call and move on. Your people are depending on you to lead.

"A good glare can be just as effective as a gun. Know what I mean?" **In the Line of Fire (1993)**: Strategy-setting is the dominion of every great leader. At my firm, we help clients develop strategies and create the contingency plans needed, if certain scenarios begin to emerge. Yes, sometimes a glare is the right strategy.

"Ever notice how you come across somebody once in a while you shouldn't have messed with? That's me." **Gran Torino (2008)**: Great leadership requires all kinds of skills and behaviors. Being tough, when the situation requires it, is a good characteristic to develop and possess.

To close, I hope that you had some fun recalling these great lines from these wonderful Clint Eastwood films. I now that I did. And, as importantly, I hope that you gained some value from the leadership advice that can be derived from each one of the quotes.

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