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FACE THE CHALLENGE, INC.
16748 E. Smoky Hill Rd., Box 300
Centennial, CO 80015-2495 USA

TEL: 303.699.7970
FAX: 303.699.7454
www.facethechallenge.org

Leadership Guide: Quotes From the Masters

First, the Definitions

(American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language: Fourth Edition. 2000.)

Lead

- *Transitive verb:*
 1. To show the way to by going in advance.
 2. To guide or direct in a course.
 3. To guide the behavior or opinion of; induce.
 4. To direct the performance or activities of.
- *Noun:*
 1. The first or foremost position.
 2. Command; leadership.
- *Adjective:*
 1. First or foremost.
 2. Most important.
- *Idiom:* Lead the way
 1. To show a course or route by going in advance.
 2. To be foremost in an endeavor or trend.

Leader

- *Noun:*
 1. One who is highest in rank or authority.
 2. An important, influential person.

Leadership

- *Noun:*
 1. The position or office of a leader.
 2. An act or instance of guiding: direction, guidance, lead, management.
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Coach Coach Mike Shanahan, coach of the world champion Denver Broncos (1998, 1999) has achieved big goals. His example of leadership goes far beyond the sports motif and is an effective model even for FACE the Challenge surgical teams. (FTC is headquartered in the Denver area and we are Broncos fans.) In three seasons Coach Shanahan helped the Broncos team move to peak levels of performance, winning Super Bowl Games XXXII and XXXIII, with Running Back, Terrell Davis (1998) and Quarterback John Elway (1999) being awarded as the NFL's Most Valuable Players.

Shanahan co-authored a book with Adam Schefter, *Think Like a Champion: Building Success One Victory at a Time* (Harper Business, New York, NY, 1999) that outlined his game plan for others to apply in their endeavors. Simply, the five points are:

1. Preparation is key. Shanahan considered virtually every possible contingency in order to win.
2. Whatever the sacrifice, it is worth the price of pursuing your passion.
3. Break down the competition's weakness and learn from their strengths. As Shanahan would approach his competitors, he'd study game films, observe them on their game field before the "big game". FTC leaders need to apply this principle any time they enter a foreign country and must make important decisions.
4. Pick great leaders and give them the power to inspire. Leaders need to identify such strong players and give them responsibilities and lead as they are gifted.
5. Set huge goals. Guided by a leader's ethic and balance, the leader can help the team achieve what once was thought impossible.

Shanahan is described by many as having "an innovative mind, tenacity, . . .and vision". Further, his peers had these observations about his leadership abilities:

"Mike Shanahan possesses a rare combination of toughness, expertise, naked intelligence, street sense, and terrific people skills. He brings to every challenge not only his foresight but also his unique willingness to commit everything in his being-- everything--to the task of getting the job done."

--Carmen Policy, *President, Cleveland Browns*

"Mike leads by example, with confidence, and with a track record that shows he knows what it takes to win."

--Paul Tagliabue, *Commissioner, National Football League*

"Mike has a keen mind and an excellent intellect. He's bright, he's creative, and he's well-organized. Above all, he has energy and a vision, the essence of what it takes to be successful."

--Bill Walsh, *General Manager, San Francisco 49ers*

Each of these peers recognized key traits of an effective leader in Shanahan. These same traits are essential for FTC surgical team leaders as well. Following are quotes from each of the chapters in Shanahan's *Think Like a Champion*. Each of Shanahan's chapter titles are in bold followed, first by direct quotes of Shanahan, then a few other relevant quotes of other leaders. For any surgical trip to be a success, good leadership, start to finish, is essential.

Pregame Talk

"If I was going to be a coach, I wanted to be the best, and that clearly meant seeking out the top coaches and programs and learning from them. With that plan, avoiding mistakes becomes more likely. Then success becomes much more achievable."

--Mike Shanahan, *Think Like a Champion* (p. 3)

"If a task is once begun, never leave it till it's done. Be the labor great or small, do it well or not at all."

--J.C. Penney

"Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might. . . ."

--Ecclesiastes 9:10 NIV

Preparing: The Foundation

"In whatever endeavor you are in, it takes an intelligent person to thoroughly investigate the pitfalls, seek the keys to advancement, and realize what it is that separates the ordinary people from the extraordinary people. Is it preparation? Sacrifice? Luck? What?"

--Mike Shanahan, *Think Like a Champion* (p. 4)

"Adult 'homework' is preparation. As far as I'm concerned, you can never do enough of it. Whatever endeavor you have entered, . . .you should never walk into a business meeting without studying. . . .Otherwise, you're asking for a passport to failure."

--Mike Shanahan, *Think Like a Champion* (p. 11)

"The difference between someone who is successful and someone who isn't is not about talent. It's about preparation. So much of what successful people do. . .is tied to the powerful principle of preparation. . . .Nothing you do is as important.

. . . .It is why our practices are demanding. We go through every conceivable situation and how we should respond. We work on visualization, going over every detail. We run each play 100 times in our minds. That way, whatever happens in the game, we've already seen before. . . .We want our players to be so disciplined that their reaction is instinctive."

--Mike Shanahan, *Think Like a Champion* (pp. 11-12)

"Here is your choice. You can have a plan or you can have the stress that comes along with not having one. Stress can destroy a lot of people. It can, in the long run, force you to retire or quit. But a well-thought-out plan will boost your confidence, your self-esteem, and your percentages for success."

--Mike Shanahan, *Think Like a Champion* (pp. 17-18)

"Identify your highest skill and devote your time to performing it."

--Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

"Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling. . .sure"

--2 Peter 1:10 NIV

"Take first things first. That process often reduces the most complex human problems into manageable proportions."

--St. Francis de Sales

"But seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."

--Matthew 6:33

Competing: Know Your Obstacles

"No matter what level of success you have achieved, your competition always is trying to overtake you or stay ahead of you. . . . OHow can we stay at that level? There's only one way we can. By being flexible and adjusting. . . . "

--Mike Shanahan, *Think Like a Champion* (p. 105)

"During the off-season, we study all thirty-one teams, really concentrating on the ten best and seeing what they are doing so that we can incorporate it into our offense and defense. Then, shortly after the draft, our focus shifts from our competition to ourselves. We spend the next month trying to see how we can improve. With a microscopic eye, we look at our offense and defense. We break down every play we ran from the season before and see how many yards we averaged on each one."

--Mike Shanahan, *Think Like a Champion* (p. 106)

"You have to feel good about your preparation, your organization; you've got to believe that you are better than anybody else out there. Not in an outward, cocky sense, but in a quiet, confident manner. You have to believe that the only way you will lose is if you are not prepared to win."

--Mike Shanahan, *Think Like a Champion* (p. 108)

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

--Martin Luther King, Jr.

"You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things."

--Romans 2:1

Communicating: The Power of Being Connected

"So many people in so many organizations are so unhappy with their lots in life, they'd almost be better off in anger management classes. They just love to [complain]. They thrive on it. . . .In our organization, if the [complainers] have a complaint about our team or their treatment, I want them to see me and tell me what's on their mind. I want to hear their problems so that I can solve them before the situation gets any worse. . . ."

--Mike Shanahan, *Think Like a Champion* (p. 91)

". . .one philosophy I attempted to make abundantly clear to every member of our organization was that they might not always like what I had to say, but at least they knew I was always going to tell the truth. . . .Face it: Without truth, there can be no trust. Without trust, there can be no relationship. And without a relationship, the chances of achieving success decrease dramatically. Isn't it interesting how the trio of truth, trust, and relationship are tied so closely to communication? . . ."

--Mike Shanahan, *Think Like a Champion* (p. 115)

"With ethical performances and honest answers, through fulfilling promises and demonstrating loyalty, layers of trust are built. They are built thick enough to be virtually impenetrable. People listen to those whom they trust. They give them loyalty and respect. Their word is their bond."

--Mike Shanahan, *Think Like a Champion* (p. 115)

". . . take proper and necessary steps to avoid it (breaking the bond of trust). If not, stop yourself, revise your behavior, alter your plan. But make sure that your actions are as sincere as your word. . . .So many times people think yelling at somebody heightens their level of respect. In fact, it is just the opposite. In my experience, I have found that a gentle word or warm smile--two things I'm still trying to do more often--can do far more good than any verbal diatribe."

--Mike Shanahan, *Think Like a Champion* (p. 116)

"Communicating might be the single most important skill we possess, and it has many forms: reading, writing, listening, speaking. . . .But communicating isn't all about talking. Just as much, it's about listening. . . .You don't learn from talking; you learn from listening. Last time I checked, I never said anything I didn't already know. . . .Listen to entire thoughts. . . .Becoming a better listener allows you to be more patient and the others around you to be happier and more productive. They feel as though you respect their thoughts and wishes. In return, you get loyalty and a heightened sense of respect."

--Mike Shanahan, *Think Like a Champion* (p. 119)

"I've often wondered how some people in positions of this kind . . .manage without having had any acting experience."

--Ronald Reagan, *40th U.S. President*
Interview with Barbara Walters, ABC TV, 24 March 1986

"My only criticism is that I wasn't told everything."

--Ronald Reagan, *40th U.S. President*
On Oliver L. North's work on the National Security Council

"Talk low, talk slow, and don't say too much."

--William Danforth

"Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God."

--Ecclesiastes 5:1 NIV

Leading: Out in Front

"No matter what business you're in, the principles of leadership are the same. A real leader must produce, thus putting himself in a position where others look to him for guidance, for advice, for an example of how to behave. . . . A real leader must be bold enough to stand alone. This is not an easy thing to do. . . . You can talk about teamwork, you can talk about sharing the load, you can talk about spreading it around all you want. But at some point, your leader has to emerge. Ours did. And when he did, the rest of our team followed right along. That, ultimately, is what leaders do. They guide you along the way, to your short- and long-term destinations."

--Mike Shanahan, *Think Like a Champion* (pp. 125-126)

"A real leader must be empowered with the courage to make difficult decisions. . . . As a leader, you are responsible for everything that occurs within your organization. If you notice a problem, you have to become a problem-solver. You have to act swiftly and decisively. Otherwise, you jeopardize the success of your organization. . . . A real leader must demonstrate the compassion to listen to and help others."

--Mike Shanahan, *Think Like a Champion* (pp. 126-127)

"A real leader knows everything going on within his or her organization. That is why you must attend business meetings, . . . any situation where your presence can ensure that the proper atmosphere will prevail. . . . Sometimes it is not what it should be. And then it is up to the leader to step in and bring it back to its intended level."

--Mike Shanahan, *Think Like a Champion* (p. 129)

"But just remember to stand tall, to be courageous, to be compassionate, to tell it like it is."

--Mike Shanahan, *Think Like a Champion* (p. 133)

"My obligation is to do the right thing. The rest is in God's hands."

--William Carey

"Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do and they will surprise you with their ingenuity."

--General George S. Patton

"A man of honor regrets a discreditable act even when it has worked."

--Marcus Aurelius

Teaming Up: Winning is Not for the Selfish

"At wide receiver, for example, we have Rod Smith and Ed McCaffrey. What better role models? They are two of the most unselfish players I've been around.

They don't care how many balls they catch as long as they win."

--Mike Shanahan, *Think Like a Champion* (p. 43)

"No matter how isolated each of us might be in our jobs and our lives, there isn't a single one of us out there who doesn't live within the framework of some type of team. . . .As former great Green Bay Packers coach Vince Lombardi once said: 'Individual commitment of a group effort--that's what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work. When it comes to teams and team work, so many of the winning principles are the people principles.' "

--Mike Shanahan, *Think Like a Champion* (p. 137)

"My fifteen-point plan to help you become a better team and teammate:

1. Teams matter more than individuals.
2. Every job is important.
3. Treat everyone with respect.
4. Share victories and defeats.
5. Accept criticism.
6. Keep the boss well informed.
7. Focus on your work ethic, not others'.
8. Allow for differences in lifestyle.
9. Be more creative than predictable.
10. Let go of bad ideas.
11. Employ structure and order.
12. Reward those who produce.
13. Find different ways to motivate your employees.
14. Keep your employees fresh.
15. Protect your system."

--Mike Shanahan, *Think Like a Champion* (pp. 125-146)

"We make a living by what we get--we make a life by what we give."

--Arnold Glasow

". . .It is more blessed to give than to receive."

--Acts 20:35

"The greatest achievements are those that benefit others."

--Anonymous

"If you choose to live alone, whose feet will you wash?"

--Basel of Ceasarea

"The greatest among you will be your servant. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted."

--Matthew 23:11 NIV

"A great deal of good can be done in the world if one is not too careful who gets the credit."

--Bill Cosby

"So, . . . , whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."

--I Corinthians 10:31

"A great man is always willing to be little."

--Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

"But the greatest among you shall be your servant."

--Matthew 23:11

"When you put on a uniform, there are certain inhibitions that you accept."

--U.S. Army General Dwight D. Eisenhower, 34th U.S. President

Making Breaks: The Lucky Formula

"To me, luck means capitalizing on your preparation, on your desire, on your work ethic, so that when opportunity arises you are able to recognize it and seize it. . . . Good luck follows those who spend their time wisely, pursuing their goals constructively. . . .Based on my experience, I've worked up a formula for luck: Preparation plus desire plus work ethic equals luck.eliminate your mistakes and your chance for errors."

--Mike Shanahan, *Think Like a Champion* (pp. 153-154)

"But I don't think you really know what kind of player you have until someone actually comes into training camp. You've got projections and you've got ideas, but until a player actually comes in and shows what he can do, there are always those question marks about his talents. . . . We were lucky in that no one else saw his (re: Terrell Davis, 1998 NFL Most Valuable Player) potential. But because we were thorough, we gave ourselves the advantage we needed."

--Mike Shanahan, *Think Like a Champion* (p. 157)

"On our team, winning surprises nobody. With Mike, he wants the best, demands the best, and gets it."

--Terrell Davis, referring to Mike Shanahan, *Think Like a Champion* (p. 160)

"Begin to act boldly. The moment one definitely commits oneself, heaven moves in his behalf. "

--Gerald R. Ford, 38th U.S. President

"Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

--Hebrews 4:16 NIV

"Opportunities are seldom labeled."

--William Feather

"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people"

--Galatians 6:10

"Heroes may not be braver than anyone else. They're just braver five minutes longer. "

--Ronald Reagan, 40th U.S. President
Awarding Young American Medal for Bravery, 22 December 1982

Risk Taking: Shooting the Roll of Your Life

"If I thought I were taking a crazy risk, I wouldn't do it. That is why I take risks only after I have studied and analyzed a situation. I know that if I have prepared myself, then the taking of the risk will usually pay its rewards. . . .for me, taking risks and playing the odds are a chance to separate yourself from the pack."

--Mike Shanahan, *Think Like a Champion* (p. 161)

"Success does not visit those who straddle the fence of indecision. It visits those who evaluate their decisions thoroughly, weigh the pros and cons, and then find the answers if not in the percentages then in a rational and well-thought-out manner."

--Mike Shanahan, *Think Like a Champion* (p. 167)

"And when you base you risks on previous experiences--knowing what works and what won't--the better you become at judging. . . .Now it's always better to have full control over all possible variables. But sometimes, as is only natural, you won't. "

--Mike Shanahan, *Think Like a Champion* (p. 169)

"Take calculated risks. That is quite from being rash."

--Horace/General George S. Patton

"The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty."

--Proverbs 21:5 NIV

"Man cannot discover new oceans unless he has the courage to lose sight of the shore."

--Anonymous

"But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him."

--Hebrews 10:38

"If an individual wants to be a leader and isn't controversial, that means he never stood for anything."

--Richard M. Nixon, 37th U.S. President
Dallas Times-Herald 10 December 1978

Persevering: Falling Hard, Bouncing High

"Things don't always go perfectly. The course of human events rarely goes according to one's plans...But that's when it's most important to keep the faith, to rely on the optimism that you must make your foundation."

--Mike Shanahan, *Think Like a Champion* (p. 93)

"It's okay to fail every now and then. Everyone does. But do not fail due to lack of effort; that is a mistake worse than any other. . . .A bend in the road is not the end of the road-- unless you fail to make the turn. The ability to fight on in spite of difficulties is almost always rewarded. Perseverance pays."

--Mike Shanahan, *Think Like a Champion* (p. 174)

"If you think you are deprived of an opportunity, instead of getting mad at that person, try something else. But you can't become negative. You've got to keep working and learning from your mistakes, not duplicating them. . . .Successful people treat crushing defeats as learning experiences, nothing more than temporary setbacks that make them stronger, not weaker. They understand that struggle and strength go together."

--Mike Shanahan, *Think Like a Champion* (p. 177)

"Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent."

--Calvin Coolidge, 30th U.S. President

"The man who makes no mistakes does not normally make anything."

--Anonymous

". . .though he stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with his hand."

--Psalm 37:24

"A man is not finished when he is defeated. He is finished when he quits."

--Anonymous

"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

--Galatians 6:9

"Experience is not what happens to a man, it's what a man does with what happens to him."

--Roger von Oech

"For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith."

--I John 5:4

Succeeding: When Good Isn't Good Enough

"In every mutual fund prospectus is one line in fine print that you'd miss if you didn't look closely. As small as it is, though, it is extremely important. That line: 'Past performance is no guarantee of future success.' This is a caveat well worth remembering. As I often remind my players, it's easier to get to the top than to stay there."

--Mike Shanahan, *Think Like a Champion* (p. 183)

"To beat complacency, you cannot win with the status quo, simply doing what you did in the past. . . . You cannot let down in preparation, condition, or psychological readiness. You must prepare as though your job is on the line,It's like what I tell our players: people don't worry about what you've done I the past. They want to see what you're doing now."

--Mike Shanahan, *Think Like a Champion* (p. 186)

"Every job is a self-portrait of the person who does it. Autograph your work with excellence. "

--Anonymous

"Many. . .do noble things, but you surpass them all."

--Proverbs 31:29 NIV

"Honesty is the cornerstone of all success, without which confidence and ability to perform shall cease to exist."

--Anonymous

". . .let God weigh me in honest scales and he will know that I am blameless--"

--Job 31:6 NIV

"Success seems to be largely a matter of hanging on after others have let go."

--Lawrence D. Bell

"Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. "

--Hebrews 10:23

"The most vital quality a soldier can possess is self-confidence."

--General George C. Patton

Balancing: Juggling the Professional and the Personal

"If somebody were to show me a job where you only have to work nine to five, five days a week, to advance to the top of your field, I would be the first to apply. But as far as I know, there is nothing out there like that. The fact is, to advance to the top of your field takes time, and it inevitably has an impact on other areas of your life."

--Mike Shanahan, *Think Like a Champion* (p. 191)

"Balance is a choice that only you can make. . . .Just as there must be a balance between running and passing on game days, there should be one between living and working every day."

--Mike Shanahan, *Think Like a Champion* (p. 191)

"But what I underestimated was the power of escaping. It was therapeutic. . . .In our profession, just as it is in any demanding field, it is imperative to get away. The great coaches and entrepreneurs always have been well-rounded people who see other parts of the world. . . . If work is the only thing you do all the time. . . . Burn out could find you before success."

--Mike Shanahan, *Think Like a Champion* (p. 193)

"My family knows that during the season, breaking away for me is next to impossible But my family, as supportive as they are, helps me find the balance I need. . . .They understand my long hours, and to try to make up for it, we maximize the time we do have together. We try to do what we can when we can. . . .Be where you're at."

--Mike Shanahan, *Think Like a Champion* (pp. 197-198)

"I don't know the secret to success but the key to failure is to try to please everyone."

--Robert Frost

"No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."

--Matthew 6:24

"Indecision is often worse than the wrong action."

--George P. Burnham

"A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways."

--James 1:8

Postgame Talk

"One of the keys to happiness is having dreams. One of the keys to success is making them come true."

--Mike Shanahan, *Think Like a Champion* (p. 203)

"As the late great Green Bay Packers coach Vince Lombardi once said, 'Your quality of life is in direct proportion to your commitment to excellence.' It's not one thing you do that gives you a chance to be the best. It's everything. But what separates the winner from the also-ran is the commitment."

--Mike Shanahan, *Think Like a Champion* (p. 204)

"It also is important to point out the importance of finishing the job. The most successful people I know are great finishers. . . .They do it from start to finish."

--Mike Shanahan, *Think Like a Champion* (pp. 205-206)

"The final test of a leader is that he leaves behind him in other men the conviction and the will to carry on. . . . The genius of a good leader is to leave behind him a situation which common sense, without the grace of genius, can deal with successfully."

--Eulogy quoting Franklin D. Roosevelt, 32nd U.S. President, *Roosevelt Has Gone*, 14 April 1945

"However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me--the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace."

--*Acts 20:24 NIV*

"The test of a first-rate work is that you finish it."

--*Peter J. Daniels*

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course. . . ."

--*II Timothy 4:7*