

THE WISDOM OF LEADERSHIP

**TIMELESS PRINCIPLES FOR GREATER
PURPOSE, PROSPERITY, AND PEACE OF MIND**

Per Winblad



Beverly Hills, California

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INTRODUCTION

Leaders are a very special breed of people and are found in every field of human endeavor and activity. Over my years of consulting and coaching leaders, I have always been awed and inspired by leaders who want to make a difference. In today's fast moving, fast changing world there is now more than ever a need for strong, secure, and wise leaders to inspire us—to dream, to be involved, and to contribute to a better world.

As I examined leadership, attempting to distill it down to its essential elements, I found that one quality stood out from the rest: Wisdom. With this awareness, in order to be more effective in my work with leaders, I embarked upon an in-depth exploration of wisdom; what it meant, how it was applied, how it was made practical so it could be acted on instead of just reflected upon. What I discovered was that one man, King Solomon, considered by many to be the wisest leader ever, had it all in one place. My task, then, was to present what Solomon knew so that leaders could use Solomon's wisdom to enhance their work and their own lives.

The book that emerged, *The Wisdom of Solomon*, was first published in Sweden in 1994. Over a decade later it is still in popular demand and I feel that there is a tremendous hunger for real wisdom and deeper guidelines about living

and working. King Solomon says: “*Without a vision, the people perish.*” I think that many of us today are searching for an overarching vision for our existence and a roadmap to get through life in a more fulfilling way.

This English version of the book, *The Wisdom of Leadership*, is a faithful translation of the Swedish original. It focuses on universal principles that have stood the test of time. They are relevant to all, regardless of the culture or background of the reader. They apply to individuals, to families, to private or public organizations of every kind. In the same way that the laws of nature bring order to the universe, these principles direct human co-existence, success, and happiness. When we build our lives and leadership on these principles, we gain insight and become more complete individuals.

It is written that when Solomon was crowned as Israel’s king and leader, God appeared to him in a dream, offering that any particular gift would be granted to him. What an opportunity for Solomon to ask for fame, fortune, and a good life for himself. Instead, as stated in II Chronicles 1:10, Solomon says: “*Now give me wisdom and knowledge to properly guide this people.*”

Did Solomon lose anything in this? When he asked for wisdom he got so much more. “*For wisdom gives: A long, good life, riches, honor, pleasure, peace*” (Proverb 3:17). The message is that the individual who searches for wisdom will receive inspiration and reward in every aspect of living—which guides each seeker to a rich life, in the truest sense of the word.

Introduction

The Wisdom of Leadership presents the story of a series of meetings between the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon (described in I Kings 10). The reason for these meetings was that the Queen of Sheba had heard rumors about Solomon's wisdom and successful governing. Spurred by curiosity, she traveled to Jerusalem to meet him in person and learn from his wisdom. During her visit she states (I Kings 10:4), "*Your wisdom and wealth are much greater than anything I have ever heard of.*" As the story goes, Solomon becomes a mentor of sorts for the Queen of Sheba.

Their meeting is a biblical episode. My story, on the other hand, is fictitious, structured with instructional guidelines for the reader. People and settings are rendered as faithfully as possible based on my research describing this time period. Many facts are gathered from the Old Testament, especially II Kings. Italicized quotations in the book are from *The Living Bible; a paraphrase*.

Most quotations are borrowed from Proverbs, one of three poetic books in the Old Testament. Proverbs is a book of wisdom with practical, intellectual, and moral purpose. The essence of Proverbs is considered to come from Solomon while some of its content is attributed to other authors. Solomon's proverbs are interwoven with insights and knowledge gleaned from my experience as a leadership consultant.

The proverbs and principles in each chapter will lend support for your own individual reflection and development. It is this individual reflection, or the parts you choose to take with you, that becomes the core of your development. Thus

it is advisable to identify the three or four most important insights regarding your personal development after reading each chapter. You may write a lot or just a few lines, but it is important that you save your reflections.

I know it is not usual practice to jot down notes in a book, but I strongly suggest you do so in this one. My experience after many years' work in training and development is that doing this will support you in energizing your inner thoughts and bringing them to action, which will establish for you a practical reality containing deeper values. These are values built on personal reflection, insights, and the wisdom that you choose to embrace.

I do not claim there to be a simple method for development and growth, but as you follow these simple yet powerful principles in your daily life, you will experience an inner source of security, guidance, and wisdom. This will lift you to higher levels in all areas of your life, filling your life with purpose, prosperity, and peace of mind.

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Stockholm



*“Some rich people are poor, and some
poor people have great wealth.”*

—King Solomon



1

True Success Comes from Within

She was the picture of beauty. As the caravan slowly pressed onward in the early morning haze, her silhouette appeared against the rising sun. A gold crown adorned her head, with her black hair hanging loosely, covering her shoulders. Her perfectly shaped lips were barely visible through the delicate, white veil. A necklace of gold and carnelian shimmered around her neck, swaying with the gait of the camel and disappearing into her softly rounded bosom. Bracelets circling her wrists jingled. She wore sandals with thin straps and jewels between each toe. Her toenails were painted bright red—a color fit for the queen that she was.

The Queen of Sheba was on her way to Jerusalem to visit King Solomon. Now the city of Jerusalem rose visible on the horizon, like a fortress shaped by nature. It had taken the caravan three years to travel the long road from Sheba

in southwest Arabia, through vast deserts and sand dunes in the scorching sun. A large court of assistants and servants traveled with her, tending to her needs. She brought with her to Jerusalem many riches; the camels carried spices, gold, and precious gems as gifts for King Solomon.

The Queen of Sheba ruled over a vast land where people had been engaged in trade and transportation between India and the countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea. The Menoan people and culture had prospered here but were overthrown by the Sabeans. After taking power, the Sabeans governed from the city of Sirwali, located in one of the most desolate areas of Arabia. When the Queen of Sheba became ruler, a new palace was constructed in the capital city bearing her name. The city was located on a high mountain along the road stretching between Aden and Marib.

One of the camel drivers shouted an order and the caravan come to a halt. It stopped in the forecourt of King Solomon's palace towering before them against a clear blue sky. The palace was built of cedar from Lebanon and surrounded by a looming stonewall. A couple of servants scurried to the queen's side and assisted her to descend from the ornate palanquin on the back of the white camel. With delicate steps the queen was guided onto the dusty earth below, leaving the comfort of her chair, adorned with pillows in gold brocade and a linen roof that protected the queen from the searing heat during the journey. She walked with her escorts through the large gates leading into the palace. A winter garden was located in an impressive courtyard

nearby. The garden was draped with linen, cotton, and dark blue cloth, covered with white and red ribbons tied to silver rings on columns of white marble. Gold and silver benches dotted the floor, which displayed inlays of green and white marble and shimmering onyx. The Queen of Sheba moved with the grace befitting a queen, as she continued further into the palace, to the big hall of pillars.

Once inside the hall of pillars, she glanced around. What she saw exceeded all her expectations. Onyx columns lined both sides of the hall, the bottom halves black and the top halves wine-colored with gold squares on top near the ceiling and on the bottom near the floor. The columns supported the gold-shimmering ceiling. Tapestries in varying patterns and colors decorated the walls. In the center of the room was a fountain, surrounded by tall palm trees. Couches upholstered with gold foil were placed on the marble floor with inlays of alabaster, pearls, and precious stones. Fruit bowls in algumwood from Ophir had been placed on tables made from cypress and ivory. A fragrance of apples and ginger lingered throughout the room.

The queen crossed the wide marble floor, past rows of alert guards in shining uniforms, heading toward two great pillars bordering the entrance to the throne room. Her eyes settled on a throne of ivory layered with pure gold. Six steps led upward to the throne seat, where the backrest curved around the back. The seat had two armrests with a lion standing at attention by each one. Another twelve lions stood uniformly on the six steps, one on each side.

King Solomon sat on the throne, dressed in royal blue and white robes. He wore a cloak of white and purple over the robes. A simple gold necklace hung around his neck and on his head glittered his crown, the hailed symbol of kingship. His wavy hair was jet black showcasing his youth, and his calm and deep-set eyes appeared to penetrate right through her. His hands rested calmly on the armrests of his throne.

Solomon, the King of Israel, inherited the throne from his father David. He governed successfully and had realized the dream of a powerful and flourishing Israel. Trade and traffic abounded, and craftsmen were busy with large construction projects around the country. Building the Temple and Solomon's palace alone required seventy thousand carpenters, eighty thousand stonemasons, and three thousand and six hundred foremen.

Solomon's empire included all lands west of the Euphrates river, from Tifsa to Gaza, and further from the land of the Philistines to the Egyptian border. The country was at peace with its neighbors mainly because of King Solomon's ability to create and maintain good neighborly relationships. The people felt safe and each family owned a home and garden. Every month the tax collectors provided Solomon and his court with food and any other necessities. They were also responsible for providing the royal stables with special feed for the king's four thousand carriage horses and twelve thousand riding mounts.

Solomon was renowned for his great wisdom and intellect; his knowledge seemed boundless. Yes, his wisdom

was much greater than that of the wise men in the East and in Egypt. Rumors of his wisdom spread to the surrounding countries and several kings sent their ambassadors to Solomon for advice. They all brought gifts, items of silver and gold, beautiful cloth, incense, spices, horses, and mules. This continued year after year.

Now the Queen of Sheba stood before King Solomon with the same driving intrigue to know the depths of his wisdom. Two of his closest men accompanied her as she approached him. He rose from his throne and greeted her in the customary manner. After welcoming the Queen of Sheba, King Solomon escorted her to the end of the throne room, where they sat down on a pair of divans. The queen turned to King Solomon and said, “I have heard that you are greater than any other king on earth, both in wealth and in wisdom. I have traveled the long road from Sheba to meet you in person. I have also brought a few gifts with me from my own country.”

As she said this, she raised her arm and made a subtle gesture with her hand. Her servant immediately hurried to her side and presented the king with gold, precious stones, and a great variety of aromatic spices. King Solomon thanked her for the wonderful gifts and the Queen of Sheba continued: “I have been told that you have written hundreds of wise proverbs.”

She paused and looked at Solomon who leaned forward, signaling for her to continue. “I have long searched for the answer to a most important question without finding it. Now

my hope is that you in your wisdom will be able to help me. Tell me, what are the secrets behind a successful life?"

King Solomon thought about her inquiry for a moment, and then leaned back, put his hands together, and said, "I feel honored that you have come all the way from Sheba to visit me. I also feel honored that you ascribe such great wisdom to me. But I am afraid the rumor of my wisdom is considerably exaggerated. I wish my father David were still alive to tell you the principles of success. He was an excellent example of a successful person and would have been better able to answer your question. A simple shepherd from the beginning, without any obvious opportunities to succeed, he eventually became the King of Israel. My father achieved many impressive heroic deeds and overcame significant difficulties. Already as a very young man he defeated the giant warrior Goliath with a mere slingshot and a few stones. Regarding my own accomplishments, they only consist of continuing the work that my father David started. To be honest, I do not know if I am the best person to answer such a deep question."

After listening to King Solomon's words, the Queen of Sheba spoke. "It is difficult for me to believe, after the rumors I have heard about you and your wisdom, that it should not contain a great deal of truth. As I told you, I have traveled a long way to hear your wisdom and I am eager to learn." Her voice grew quiet as her eyes eagerly sought King Solomon's.

Solomon smiled and said, "Your determination and persistence demonstrate your integrity." He paused and then

continued, “I am willing to visit with you each day and try to answer your questions. It is important that you spend some time after each conversation reflecting on that which may contribute to your own development.

You have already brought up one of the most important conditions for living a successful life: that we are open and eager to learn. But we also have to put what we learn into practice. Because it is only with action that something is accomplished. A wise man once said, ‘We forget what we hear, we remember what we see, but only what we do will remain.’ Do you agree that my requirements for sharing my wisdom are reasonable?” he asked.

The Queen of Sheba replied, “I appreciate your hospitality and your offer to support me in my quest. I will do everything I can to seek to understand and learn. I will also do my best to turn what I learn into action.”

“So we are in agreement,” King Solomon concluded with a nod. Smiling, he continued, “Then we better get started at once.”

We forget
what we hear,
we remember
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Thank you for reading a part of the first chapter in this preview. You can buy the book at www.perwinblad.com