Tom’s Top 47 Leadership Maxims

1. Be ready for almost anything
2. Laughter cures a lot
3. Bring your A-game every day
4. It is easier to change the course of history than a history course
5. Be willing to put the success of others ahead of your own
6. Note the utility of the pause
7. Forget the past
(and sometimes, forget this maxim)
8. Be ready to oscillate between the big stage and intimate details
9. Get all sides of the story
10. Find the expert
11. Never allow urgency to crowd out the important
12. Perfection is the enemy of the sufficiently good
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13. Time off for mind, body and spirit
14. Transparency is good, but not everybody needs to know everything
15. We are an institution with medieval roots
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16. Surround yourself with smart people, and ignore them sometimes
17. It is probably not that urgent
18. In times of plenty, everything is easy (they won’t last)
19. Rise above the sectarian and parochial
20. You can’t make everybody happy all at once
21. When in doubt: experiment (and be willing to pull the plug)
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22. Trust comes first
23. Leadership is not for the faint of heart
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24. Build bridges -- don’t burn them
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25. Take ownership but give credit freely
26. Admit errors and failures
27. Don’t give mandates (especially unfunded ones)
28. Mingle with everybody, often
29. Make every meeting you run repay all attendees with something of real value
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30. Delegate, and then leave them alone
31. Reasonable minds WILL disagree
32. Be intolerant of unreason
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33. No decision is risk-free or cost-free
34. Rejoice in others’ accomplishments
35. Compliance problems are forever
36. Nobody is indispensable, not even you
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37. Approach your work as a calling
38. Practice intentional leadership
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39. Don’t confuse principles with the pragmatic
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40. Be easily available
41. It isn’t a popularity contest
42. Do not suffer incompetence
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43. Ask for the evidence
44. Don’t baffle anybody
45. Doing nothing may be the best choice
46. Humility and modesty go a long way
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47. Know your constituents