

Nelson Mandela and leadership



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Nelson Mandela was the man who abolished Apartheid, freeing South Africa from the binds of racial segregation forever. However, it was not an easy road and Mandela needed patience, strength of character, focus, passion, understanding, perseverance, and most importantly, forgiveness, to achieve this. For more than forty years, black South Africans were subject to the harsh racial segregation of the Apartheid system; despite making up over 70% of South Africa's population, they had little to no rights. Mandela had a vision for South Africa, of which he was incredibly dedicated.

During his famous speech entitled ' I am Prepared to Die' (1964), he stated, " I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons will live together in harmony with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for, and to see realized. But my Lord, if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die." Nelson Mandela was sent to prison in 1962 after the infamous Sharpeville Massacre, the result of a violent approach to equality.

During the 27 years he was in prison, Mandela changed his approach to finding and keeping equality between the blacks and the whites of South Africa at the time, from violence to peaceful strategies. Mandela realized that peace and forgiveness was the only way to bring South Africa forward to greatness. " Forgiveness liberates the soul. It removes fear. That is why it is such a powerful weapon." (Movie, Invictus, 2009) To find this better approach, Mandela ' studied' his white guards, and literature by white South Africans to understand their points of view.

“ Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” He also studied constantly in prison and received the degree of Bachelor of Laws. The famous poem ‘ Invictus’ (William Earnest Henley, 1888) also empowered him with the message of self-mastery.” Out of the night that covers me, Black as the pit from pole to pole, I thank whatever gods may be For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance I have not winced nor cried aloud. Under the bludgeonings of chance My head is bloody, but unbowed. Beyond this place of wrath and tears Looms but the Horror of the shade, And yet the menace of the years Finds and shall find me unafraid. It matters not how strait the gate, How charged with punishments the scroll, I am the master of my fate: I am the captain of my soul.” After his release from prison in 1990, he went to be elected the first black President of South Africa. The time in prison helped him to come to peace with himself and the people he was initially mad at; such as the South African Government.

“ I always knew that deep down in every human heart, there is mercy and generosity ... Even in the grimmest times in prison, when my comrades and I were pushed to our limits, I would see a glimmer of humanity in one of the guards, perhaps just for a second, but it was enough to reassure me and keep me going.” (Long Walk to Freedom, Mandela, Nelson, 1995) Nelson Mandela was an exceptional leader, as President he took South Africa to somewhere it had never been. He valued his time as President, because he knew his time was limited; often working days without a break. Each step of the way he took risks for the good of the people. When told he was ‘ risking his political capital and his future as a leader’, he replied, “ The day I am <https://assignbuster.com/nelson-mandela-and-leadership/>

afraid to do that is the day I am no longer fit to lead.” (Movie, Invictus, 2009) Nelson Mandela is a man who looks at people with an unbiased mind.

He realised that he could not hope to look after South Africa as a country if he was only to address and cater for the black population. He knew that to serve the nation, he had to look at the nation as a whole. “ You criticize without understanding. You seek only to address your own personal feelings. That is selfish thinking..

. It does not serve the nation.” (Movie, Invictus, 2009) Nelson Mandela had important qualities that made him an exceptional leader. He had such a clear vision for South Africa, and such determination to achieve it, that it inspired South Africa to strive for greatness. Through peace, understanding and forgiveness, Nelson Mandela made South Africa what it is today...