

## Quotes from Jim Collins

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If I were running a company today, I would have one priority above all others: to acquire as many of the best people as I could. I'd put off everything else to fill my bus. Because things are going to come back. My flywheel is going to start to turn. And the single biggest constraint on the success of my organization is the ability to get and to hang on to enough of the right people. **–Jim Collins, *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap and Others Don't***

There is a direct relationship between the absence of celebrity and the presence of good-to-great results. Why? First, when you have a celebrity, the company turns into "the one genius with 1,000 helpers." It creates a sense that the whole thing is really about the CEO. At a deeper level, we found that for leaders to make something great, their ambition has to be for the greatness of the work and the company, rather than for themselves. That doesn't mean that they don't have an ego. It means that at each decision point -- at each of the critical junctures when Choice A would favor their ego and Choice B would favor the company and the work -- time and again the good-to-great leaders pick Choice B. Celebrity CEOs, at those same decision points, are more likely to favor self and ego over company and work. **–Jim Collins, *Good to Great***

A visionary company doesn't seek balance between short-term and long-term, for example. It seeks to do well in the short-term *and* in the long-term. A visionary company doesn't simply balance between idealism and profitability: it seeks to be highly idealistic *and* highly profitable. A visionary company doesn't simply balance between preserving a tightly held core ideology and stimulating vigorous change and movement; it does *both* to an extreme. In short, a visionary company doesn't want to blend yin and yang into a grey, indistinguishable circle that is neither highly yin nor highly yang; it aims to be distinctly yin *and* distinctly yang -- *both* at the same time, all the time. **–Jim Collins, *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies***

Dreams make you click, juice you, turn you on, excite the living daylights out of you. You cannot wait to get out of bed to continue pursuing your dream. The kind of dream I'm talking about gives meaning to your life. It is the ultimate motivator. **–Jim Collins, *Good to Great***

No matter what. Wherever your mind wanders, it seems to turn up at the same Field of Dreams. It's the vision you wake up with in the morning, and it's the last thing you picture before you fall asleep. Everytime you think of it, the idea in your head seems to get more vivid, filled in with more detail: You not only want to win a gold medal at the Olympics, you not only can see yourself standing there on the podium, but you can also feel the goose bumps as your national anthem is played; the tears are in your eyes. (That's how real a dream can be and should be). **–Jim Collins, *Good to Great***

A dream is a feeling that sticks - and propels. **–Jim Collins, *Good to Great***

The kind of commitment I find among the best performers across virtually every field is a single-minded passion for what they do, an unwavering desire for excellence in the way they think and the way they work. Genuine confidence is what launches you out of bed in the morning, and through your day with a spring in your step. **–Jim Collins, *Good to Great***

For no matter what we achieve, if we don't spend the vast majority of our time with people we love and respect, we cannot possibly have a great life. But if we spend the vast majority of our time with people we love and respect – people we really enjoy being on the bus with and who will never disappoint us – then we will almost certainly have a great life, no matter where the bus goes. The people we interviewed from the good-to-great companies clearly loved what they did, largely because they loved who they did it with. **–Jim Collins, *Good to Great***

It is impossible to have a great life unless it is a meaningful life. And it is very difficult to have a meaningful life without meaningful work. **–Jim Collins, *Good to Great***

Indeed, the real question is not, "Why greatness?" but "What work makes you feel compelled to try to create greatness?" if you have to ask the question, "Why should we try to make it great? Isn't success enough?" then you're probably in the wrong line of work. **–Jim Collins, *Good to Great***

...the question, Why try for greatness? would seem almost tautological. If you're doing something you care that much about, and you believe in its purpose deeply enough, then it is impossible to imagine *not* trying to make it great. It's just a given. **–Jim Collins, *Good to Great***

*Genius of AND*. Embrace both extremes on a number of dimensions at the same time. Instead of choosing A OR B, figure out how to have A AND B--purpose AND profit, continuity AND change, freedom AND responsibility, etc. **–Jim Collins, *Good to Great***

A great company will have *many* once-in-a-lifetime opportunities. **–Jim Collins, *Good to Great***

Everyone would like to be the best, but most organizations lack the discipline to figure out with egoless clarity what they *can* be the best at and the will to do whatever it takes to turn the potential into reality. **–Jim Collins, *Good to Great***

...The purpose of bureaucracy is to compensate for incompetence and lack of discipline--a problem that largely goes away if you have the right people in the first place. **–Jim Collins, Good to Great**

It took Einstein ten years of groping through the fog to get the theory of special relativity, and he was a bright guy. **–Jim Collins, Good to Great**

"Growth!" is not a Hedgehog Concept. Rather, if you have the right Hedgehog Concept and make decisions relentlessly consistent with it, you will create such momentum that your main problem will not be how to grow, but how not to grow too fast. **–Jim Collins, Good to Great**

Not one of the good-to-great companies focused obsessively on growth. **–Jim Collins, Good to Great**

It may seem odd to talk about something as soft and fuzzy as "passion" as an integral part of a strategic framework. But throughout the good-to-great companies, passion became a key part of the Hedgehog Concept. **–Jim Collins, Good to Great**

The only way to remain great is to keep on applying the fundamental principles that made you great. **–Jim Collins, Good to Great**

Focusing solely on what you can potentially do better than any other organization is the only path to greatness. **–Jim Collins, Good to Great**

The moment you feel the need to tightly manage someone, you've made a hiring mistake. The best people don't need to be managed. Guided, taught, led--yes. But not tightly managed. **–Jim Collins, Good to Great**

Those who build great companies understand that the ultimate throttle on growth for any great company is not markets, or technology, or competition, or products. It is one thing above all others: the ability to get and keep enough of the right people. **–Jim Collins, Good to Great**

In determining "the right people," the good-to-great companies placed greater weight on character attributes than on specific educational background, practical skills, specialized knowledge, or work experience. **–Jim Collins, *Good to Great***

Level 5 leaders are a study in duality: modest and willful, humble and fearless. **–Jim Collins, *Good to Great***

Level 5 leaders channel their ego needs away from themselves and into the larger goal of building a great company. It's not that Level 5 leaders have no ego or self-interest. Indeed, they are incredibly ambitious--*but their ambition is first and foremost for the institution, not themselves.* **–Jim Collins, *Good to Great***

That good is the enemy of great is not just a business problem. It is a *human* problem. **–Jim Collins, *Good to Great***

*...Culture of discipline.* When you have disciplined people, you don't need hierarchy. When you have disciplined thought, you don't need bureaucracy. **–Jim Collins, *Good to Great***

You must maintain unwavering faith that you can and will prevail in the end, regardless of the difficulties, **AND at the same time**, have the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of your current reality, whatever they might be. **–Jim Collins, *Good to Great***

Good is the enemy of great. **–Jim Collins, *Good to Great***

Level 5 leaders are fanatically driven, infected with an incurable need to produce sustained results. They are resolved to do whatever it takes to make the company great, no matter how big or hard the decisions. **–Jim Collins, *Good to Great***

The critical question asked by a visionary company is not "How well are we doing?" or "How can we do well?" or "How well do we have to perform to meet the competition?" For these companies, the critical question is *"How can we do better tomorrow than we did today?"* They institutionalize this question as a way of life--a habit of mind and action. Superb execution and performance naturally come to the visionary companies not so much as an end goal, but as the

residual result of a never-ending cycle of self-stimulated improvement and investment for the future... **–Jim Collins, *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies***

Highly visionary companies often use bold missions--what we prefer to call BHAGs (pronounced *bee-hags*, short for "Big Hairy Audacious Goals")--as a particularly powerful mechanism to stimulate progress. **–Jim Collins, *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies***

Profitability is a necessary condition for existence and a means to more important ends, but it is not the end in itself for many of the visionary companies. Profit is like oxygen, food, water, and blood for the body; they are not the *point* of life, but without them, there is no life. **–Jim Collins, *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies***