

Lessons from Yoda

Dr. Jim Harris on the “Star Wars” sage.

My son and I love the entire Star Wars movie series. From the birth of Luke Skywalker through the final destruction of the Death Star and the liberation of the universe, the longevity of this epic story across multiple generations is indeed unique. And the Star Wars story is not over! So many wonderful characters are now part of our pop culture including C-3P0, R2-D2, Jabba the Hut, Chewbacca, Darth Vader, and for many the most popular, Yoda, who uttered those famous words:

“Do...or do not. There is no try.”

So what can a business leader learn from Yoda? Here are four things we can all apply to our leadership from the wisdom of Yoda.

Wisdom is built from experience.

Yoda taught Luke Skywalker from his deep experience. Even he knew that real wisdom is not simply some pithy statement or cute way to twist a new saying. His wisdom was honed through the experiences of failure, tragedy, and triumph. The wisest business leader in history once said, “There is nothing new under the sun.” I therefore caution all



Dr. Jim Harris

*President,
Ropella Leadership
Transformation*

Dr. Jim Harris teaches thousands of professionals every year how to crystallize their goals, leverage their strengths, energize their teams, and realize their significance as a professional and as a leader. From keynotes and workshops to 1-on-1 coaching and digital learning products, Dr. Jim helps transform your potential into productivity, and your passion into results. An author of eight books, Dr. Jim offers you, your team and your audience a unique combination of perspective, insight, passion and integrity.



Christian business leaders to approach contemporary business “gurus” through the lens of God’s word. We can learn powerful and morally schrewd ways of conducting business through their advice, but I encourage you to compare it to the wisdom of Solomon, Moses, and Jesus before implementation.

Wisdom is packaged in sometimes strange ways.

Remember when Luke Skywalker first met Yoda? Remember his first impression of this quirky, silly looking creature? Luke was not impressed with the external Yoda. yet when he discovered the wisdom within Yoda, his view radically changed. Luke immediately wanted more! We need to look beyond the outer covering and into the soul of those from whom we seek wisdom. Eliminate any preconceived notions of what a “wise person” looks like, sounds like, or acts like. There are likely many Yoda’s in your path. Seek them out.

Wisdom speaks across time. I am an avid reader of many great business magazines: Fortune, Forbes, Fast Company, INC., Bloomberg BusinessWeek, Build Network, and more. As I read and learn strategies and tactics from so many wonderfully successful secular business leaders, I consistently remind myself to evaluate their “secrets” across years, even decades. Real wisdom is timeless, not time bound. Yoda’s wisdom to Luke

Skywalker spanned several centuries. For Luke, Yoda’s wisdom did indeed speak across time yet was applicable to his current fight with the Dark Side. We too must seek timeless wisdom for our daily challenges and not get caught up in the hype surrounding a new management fad.

Wisdom is a critically important to defeating the Dark Side.

Yoda understood the tactics, strategies, and the power of the Dark Side. He did his best to warn Luke of all the insights he had gleaned from centuries of fighting the past Darth Vader’s in his universe. Sometimes Luke listened – sometimes he did not. Christian business leaders need to be reminded that our battle is not only against our competitors – our battle is indeed against a Dark Side that is dedicated to destroying our companies and our lives. This is not to be taken lightly. For only through the wisdom that surpasses all understanding will we triumph in the end.

Long Live Yoda

Although the character Yoda died in the final episode, his wisdom will certainly be passed along to the next generation of Star Wars movie characters and fans. It is a fun diversion for Christian business leaders to consider how his wisdom applies to our business lives and how we can better integrate this wisdom into our daily walk. So, listen to experience, look for wisdom in unique packages, judge what you hear and read across time, and always remember that the wisdom we seek is ultimately tested by a real and relentless Dark Side.

And may the right force be with you!