

## Leaders Make Mistakes Vocabulary Text

Hello, this is AJ, welcome to the vocabulary lesson for “Leaders Make Mistakes.”

Let’s go to the beginning. They have a phrase “they make no bones about it.” Tom Peters says “Leaders make mistakes and they make no bones about it.” So that’s a little idiom there, to make no bones about something. When you say “they make no bones about it”, it means they don’t apologize for it or they don’t try to hide it. They don’t feel bad about it. That’s the meaning of this phrase.

It means you do something and you’re not worried about it. You don’t apologize for it. You don’t feel bad about it. You don’t try to hide it. You feel good. So it says they make mistakes and they make no bones about it. It means they make mistakes and they don’t feel bad about making the mistakes, they feel good. They make mistakes and they don’t apologize. They don’t say “I’m sorry. I’m sorry I made a mistake,” right? They make no bones about it. They do not apologize.

They are direct and honest about it. They don’t try to hide it, they don’t feel bad about it and they don’t apologize. They make no bones about making mistakes. They don’t apologize for making mistakes. They don’t try to hide their mistakes. They don’t feel bad about mistakes. They make no bones about it.

Okay, then a little later he says “In placid times leaders can pretend to have the answers.” Okay, placid. Placid means calm, calm (c-a-l-m), calm. So it means nothing is changing, right? Everything is calm and slow and relaxed. So during placid times in the economy, in history, when everything is calm, then the leaders can pretend they are strong. They can pretend they are perfect. They can pretend they know everything. So in calm times leaders could, in the past, pretend to know everything. They could pretend to be perfect.

But he says “In turbulent times leaders must have the best questions, not the best answers.” They can’t pretend to know everything. Instead, they have to ask a lot of questions, always asking questions, asking questions. So that’s what happens in turbulent times, what must happen in turbulent times.

Now turbulent, of course, is the opposite of placid. Turbulent means not calm. It means rough or changing fast, chaotic, so in chaotic times, in rough, difficult times, in times when everything is changing quickly, in turbulent times, turbulent. Turbulent is the opposite of calm, turbulent, not calm.

Tom says that these questions that leaders ask -- they ask everybody questions all the time -- the questions must encourage other people to undertake voyages of mutual discovery. What does that mean? Undertake voyages of mutual discovery. Well, to undertake means to start, to start doing something. So to undertake a voyage means to start a voyage and a voyage is a trip, it's a journey, a trip.

So he's saying you must encourage other people to take a trip, to start a trip, to undertake, to start. So, again, to undertake something means to start something, usually something that takes a long time. So you're going to start something and it's going to take a while to finish it, to undertake.

And you're going to undertake a voyage. Again, a voyage is a journey, it's a trip. Now he's not talking about a real trip, like New York to Los Angeles, he's talking about an emotional trip, an intellectual trip. It means changing what happens in your mind, so a trip, a voyage of mutual discovery.

Mutual means shared, it means it's something you do together with other people. So, for example, you have a team. You want your team to take a trip together, a mutual trip, mutual, together. It means everybody shares it, it happens to everybody. That's mutual, mutual means shared or happening to everybody.

And, finally, the word discovery means learning, learning. Or to find new things, find something new, learn something new. So that whole phrase, which is a little difficult, to undertake voyages of mutual discovery, to start a trip of shared learning. So what he's saying is leaders encourage their people to learn new things together. Leaders encourage their people to do, to try, new things together. That's what he means.

And he says the essence of trying new stuff is letting people screw up. Alright, essence means the core, the most important idea. It's what's most important. So the most important part of trying new stuff, the most important idea, the most important point of trying new stuff is letting people screw up. To screw up means to make a mistake or to fail. To screw up means to fail or to make a mistake. You say "Oh, I screwed up!" It means I made a mistake. I made a mistake, I screwed up. To screw up means to make a mistake.

He says "You must screw up. You must make mistakes. If you're a leader you must encourage your people to screw up. You must encourage them to make mistakes. Help them to make mistakes. Congratulate them when they make big, interesting mistakes. Encourage them to screw up."

Out next word is mandatory. He says "Big mistakes are mandatory." Mandatory means required and necessary, something you must do. It is mandatory to make mistakes. It means you must make mistakes. It is required, it is necessary to make mistakes, it is mandatory. If you want to succeed, if you want your business to grow and be great, well then you must make big mistakes. Big mistakes are mandatory if you want big success.

And a great phrase, he says “Reward excellent failures, punish mediocre successes.” Mediocre means normal, average. Not great, not terrible, just in the middle. So he says punish, punish people for mediocre success, for so-so success, for average, normal success. Tom Peters says that average and normal are bad. They will hurt your business. Instead, reward excellent, great big failures.

Next we have the phrase “to be applauded.” He says “Thoughtless, recklessness is not to be applauded.” To be applauded means to be rewarded, to be congratulated and to be complimented, right? Applauding means clapping your hands like this (clap, clap, clap, clap, clap). I’m applauding right now...yeah, yeah! It means to be cheered, to be valued, to be applauded, to be complimented, to be rewarded. They all mean similar things.

So he’s saying don’t applaud, don’t congratulate, don’t reward, don’t applaud thoughtless recklessness. It means just random. Thoughtless means you don’t think about it. And reckless means taking big risks, to take big, big risks. Someone who is reckless, you know, they don’t care about failing at all. Reckless means you don’t care about the risks, you’re totally not afraid of taking a big chance. That’s reckless.

So he’s saying reckless or recklessness is the noun, it’s very good if it’s thoughtful. People who think about being reckless, people who think about taking big risks, people who think about trying something very different, if they think about it carefully and they really think about it and they have a plan, well that’s great.

And he gives examples, Martin Luther King and Galileo and Picasso. They were reckless, they tried very different, almost crazy things at that time in their life, in history and they succeeded, but they were thoughtful, they thought about it carefully.

And he says, “Against long odds they tried to create an entirely new world.” Against long odds, it means against difficult challenges, against difficult problems. It means there’s a low chance to succeed. The chance to succeed is very small.

So against long odds, it means you’re going against what is normal. It means you’re going against what is probable. You’re probably going to fail if you go against the long odds, if you go against what is normal, if you go against what is probable. So all these people, they tried something against long odds. It means they probably were going to fail. Most people thought they would fail.

And, finally, we have the word ain’t, ain’t. He said “If that ain’t reckless I don’t know what the word means.” Ain’t really just means is not or am not or are not. And it’s a very, very casual way to say is not or am not. Say “I ain’t hungry.” It means I am not hungry. Or “He ain’t handsome.” It means he is not handsome. So ain’t, again, is very, very casual. It does not sound intelligent, it does not sound intellectual. It’s really the opposite, it kind of very emotional, very, very, very casual. That’s ain’t, it

means am not or are not or is not. You can use it for all of those. He ain't hungry. I ain't hungry. They ain't hungry.

Okay, that is the end of the vocabulary for "Leaders Make Mistakes."