

The Power of Now: How Leadership Starts with Accountability

Sitting in my first class at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, thousands of miles from home, I felt pride and overwhelming homesickness. It was a monumental step in my life—I had earned a scholarship to pursue a degree in Informatics Engineering—but that day, I was sick, exhausted, and longing for familiarity.

The course, “Leadership and Communication,” was taught by Professor Nurgiyantna, the dean of our faculty. His opening remark caught me off guard:

“My job is just to teach you, not place material in your mind.”

At first, I found this statement perplexing. We’ve been conditioned to believe that a great teacher ensures students learn effortlessly, without needing extra effort. I couldn’t help but wonder, “Why am I even here?”

The turning point came when the professor asked a deceptively simple question: **“Who wants to be a leader?”**

Most students eagerly expressed their ambition to lead. A few, perhaps uncertain about their abilities, remained silent. Then came his unexpected response:

“You are all wrong.”

The room fell silent. Why wasn’t he applauding our aspirations? Instead, he shared a hadith:

“Everyone is a shepherd and responsible for their flock.”¹

This profound statement made us pause. What did it mean for us as aspiring leaders?

The professor explained: leadership isn’t confined to titles or positions. It’s about responsibility and accountability in everyday life. Each of us leads in some capacity—whether for ourselves, our families, or our communities. He underscored one critical

¹ Sahih Bukhari, Book 10, Hadith 573

principle:

“Do your work now, not later.”

Procrastination, he said, is a slippery slope. Today’s tasks are manageable, but tomorrow’s uncertainties might make them far more challenging. By acting in the moment, we take control of our responsibilities and set the foundation for success.

He left us with a powerful call to action:

“If you hold yourself accountable, you can achieve anything. Listen to that inner voice reminding you that you are a leader.”

That lesson resonated deeply with me. After class, I made a personal commitment: to embrace my responsibilities each day without delay. To me, this “work” transcends assignments—it encompasses every duty and goal I set for myself.

Since that day, this mindset has shaped my approach to life. I no longer see leadership as a distant goal or formal title. Instead, it’s a mindset rooted in responsibility and action.

Leadership isn’t a position—it’s a mindset. By embracing your responsibilities today, you lay the groundwork for a brighter, more accountable future.

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Bibliography:

Sahih Bukhari, Book 10, Hadith 573.

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