



100 Best Quotes on Culture

1. *The most robust, sustainable cultures are those based on action, not words; an alignment of personality and strategy; an honest awareness and assessment of the norms imbibed on the first day of work by new—not veteran—employees grasping at what it will take to make it; an openness to including outside talent and perspectives; a commitment to explicit ethics and principled virtues that stand out and have meaning; and, not least, a willingness to come up with “shocking rules” within an organization that indelibly and inescapably prompt others to ask, “Why?”* **(Ben Horowitz)**
2. *Our work has to represent our passion, our desire to contribute to our culture, especially to the development of others.* **(Phil Jackson)**
3. *So Goes the Culture, So Goes the Company.* **(Simon Sinek)**
4. *I came to see, in my time at IBM, that culture isn't just one aspect of the game, it is the game. In the end, an organization is nothing more than the collective capacity of its people to create value.* **(Louis Gerstner)**
5. *Belonging cues are behaviors that create safe connection in groups. They include, among others, proximity, eye contact, energy, mimicry, turn taking, attention, body language, vocal pitch, consistency of emphasis, and whether everyone talks to everyone else in the group.* **(Dan Coyle)**
6. *Integrity, honesty, and decency are long-term cultural investments.* **(Ben Horowitz)**
7. *Growing a culture requires a good storyteller. Changing a culture requires a persuasive editor.* **(Ryan Lilly)**
8. *Culture makes people understand each other better. And if they understand each other better in their soul, it is easier to overcome the economic and political barriers. But first they have to understand that their neighbour is, in the end, just like them, with the same problems, the same questions.* **(Paulo Coelho)**



9. *The best organizations have strong cultures and shared values, understand the importance of teamwork, create trust among their members, maintain focus, and, most important, understand the importance of people and relationships to their mission success. (Simon Sinek)*
10. *An organization's ability to learn, and translate that learning into action rapidly, is the ultimate competitive advantage. (Jack Welch)*
11. *Culture is not like a mission statement; you can't just set it up and have it last forever. There's a saying in the military that if you see something below standard and do nothing, then you've set a new standard. This is also true of culture—if you see something off-culture and ignore it, you've created a new culture. (Ben Horowitz)*
12. *Good culture requires you to surround yourself with people of diverse perspectives who can disagree with you without fear of retaliation. (Doris Goodwin)*
13. *Intimidation, humiliation, isolation, feeling dumb, feeling useless and rejection are all stresses we try to avoid inside the organization. But the danger inside is controllable and it should be the goal of leadership to set a culture free of danger from each other. And the way to do that is by giving people a sense of belonging. By offering them a strong culture based on a clear set of human values and beliefs. By giving them the power to make decisions. By offering trust and empathy. By creating a Circle of Safety. (Simon Sinek)*
14. *A hallmark of a healthy creative culture is that its people feel free to share ideas, opinions, and criticisms. Lack of candour, if unchecked, ultimately leads to dysfunctional environments. (Ed Catmull)*
15. *When I visited the successful cultures, I kept seeing the same expression on the faces of listeners. It looked like this: head tilted slightly forward, eyes unblinking, and eyebrows arched up. Their bodies were still, and they leaned toward the speaker with intent. The only sound they made was a steady stream of affirmations—yes, uh-huh, gotcha—that encouraged the speaker to keep going, to give them more. (Dan Coyle)*



16. *Because your culture is how your company makes decisions when you're not there. It's the set of assumptions your employees use to resolve the problems they face every day. It's how they behave when no one is looking. If you don't methodically set your culture, then two-thirds of it will end up being accidental, and the rest will be a mistake. (Ben Horowitz)*

17. *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)*

18. *The difference wasn't in who they were but in the set of small, attentive, consistent links between where they are now and where they are headed. This is the way high-purpose environments work. They are about sending not so much one big signal as a handful of steady, ultra-clear signals that are aligned with a shared goal. They are less about being inspiring than about being consistent. They are found not within big speeches so much as within everyday moments when people can sense the message: This is why we work; this is what we are aiming for. (Dan Coyle)*

19. *An organization is a machine consisting of two major parts: culture and people. Each influences the other, because the people who make up an organization determine the kind of culture it has, and the culture of the organization determines the kinds of people who fit in. (Ray Dalio)*

20. *Culture clearly has a powerful effect. So how do you shape it, how do you set it deep in people's minds, and how do you fix it when it goes wrong? (Ben Horowitz)*

21. *Team cultures reveal themselves, and most of the time they don't deviate too far from the national or local ones. (Fergus Connelly)*

22. *The real courage is seeing the truth and speaking the truth to each other. People never want to be the person who says, 'Wait a second, what's really going on here?' But inside the squadron, that is the culture, and that's why we're successful. (Unknown)*



23. *Culture isn't a magical set of rules that makes everyone behave the way you'd like. It's a system of behaviors that you hope most people will follow, most of the time. (Ben Horowitz)*
24. *The individual becomes the culture and the culture becomes the individual. It becomes hard to deconstruct. (Louisa Thomas)*
25. *And sometimes you have to break a core principle of your culture to survive. Culture is crucial, but if the company fails because you insist on cultural purity, you're doing it wrong. (Ben Horowitz)*
26. *A culture and its people are symbiotic—the culture attracts certain kinds of people and the people in turn either reinforce or evolve the culture based on their values and what they're like. (Ray Dailo)*
27. *In the cultures I visited, I didn't see many feedback sandwiches. Instead, I saw them separate the two into different processes. They handled negatives through dialogue, first by asking if a person wants feedback, then having a learning-focused two-way conversation about the needed growth. They handled positives through ultraclear bursts of recognition and praise. (Dan Coyle)*
28. *Building a great culture means adapting it to circumstances. (Ben Horowitz)*
29. *Humans succeed because they have the ability to develop advanced cultures. Culture is a collection of habits, practices, beliefs, arguments, and tensions that regulates and guides human life. Culture transmits certain practical solutions to everyday problems—how to avoid poisonous plants, how to form successful family structures. (David Brooks)*
30. *Walk the Talk No culture can flourish without the enthusiastic participation of its leader. No matter how well designed, carefully programmed, and insistently enforced your cultural elements are, inconsistent or hypocritical behavior by the person in charge will blow the whole thing up. (Ben Horowitz)*
31. *Successful cultures do this by relentlessly seeking ways to tell and retell their story. To do this, they build what we'll call high-purpose environments. High-purpose environments are filled with small, vivid signals designed to create a link between the present moment and a future ideal. They provide the two simple*



locators that every navigation process requires: Here is where we are and Here is where we want to go. (Dan Coyle)

32. *Whether your company is a startup or a hundred years old, designing your culture is always relevant. Cultures, like the organizations that create them, must evolve to meet new challenges. The point is not to be perfect, just better than you were yesterday. While you can draw inspiration from other cultures, don't try to adapt another organization's ways. For your culture to be vibrant and sustainable, it must come from the blood, from the soul. (Ben Horowitz)*
33. *We live in a culture that celebrates fifteen minutes of fame, but god honors a lifetime of faithfulness. The longer I live, the more I believe in long obedience in the same direction. (Mark Batterson)*
34. *Successful cultures are organic and adaptive, they change and flow, yet always just under the surface is a bedrock of values, smoothed by the current above, but unyielding. (James Kerr)*
35. *Culture is an omnipresent coach. (Fergus Connolly)*
36. *People become the culture they live in and do what they have to do to survive and thrive. (Ben Horowitz)*
37. *Create Safe, Collision-Rich Spaces: The cultures I visited were uniformly obsessed with design as a lever for cohesion and interaction. (Dan Coyle)*
38. *Culture is an abstract set of principles that lives—or dies—by the concrete decisions the people in your organization make. (Unknown)*
39. *If you can surround a person with a new culture, a different web of relationships, then they will absorb new habits of thought and behaviors in ways you will never be able to measure or understand. (David Brooks)*
40. *Each virtue was carefully defined and then reinforced through a set of principles, practices, and stories. They all worked together as a system, balancing one another in a way that made it very difficult for any individual virtue to be misunderstood or misused. (Ben Horowitz)*



41. *One misconception about highly successful cultures is that they are happy, lighthearted places. This is mostly not the case. They are energized and engaged, but at their core their members are oriented less around achieving happiness than around solving hard problems together. This task involves many moments of high-candor feedback, uncomfortable truth-telling, when they confront the gap between where the group is, and where it ought to be. (Dan Coyle)*
42. *Culturally, what you believe means nearly nothing. What you do is who you are. Even the samurai oath is oriented toward action: I will never fall behind others in pursuing the way of the warrior. I will always be ready to serve my lord. I will honor my parents. I will serve compassionately for the benefit of others. (Ben Horowitz)*
43. *Belonging cues have to do not with character or discipline but with building an environment that answers basic questions: Are we connected? Do we share a future? Are we safe? Let's take them one by one. (Unknown)*
44. *Creating engagement around a clear, simple set of priorities can function as a lighthouse, orienting behavior and providing a path toward a goal. (Dan Coyle)*
45. *Cultural design is a way to program the actions of an organization, but, like computer programs, every culture has bugs. (Unknown)*
46. *Overdo Thank-Yous: When you enter highly successful cultures, the number of thank-yous you hear seems slightly over the top. (Dan Coyle)*
47. *That's the nature of culture. It's not a single decision—it's a code that manifests itself as a vast set of actions taken over time. (Ben Horowitz)*
48. *In fact, we are separated from the other animals because we have phenomenal social skills that enable us to teach, learn, sympathize, emote, and build cultures, institutions, and the complex mental scaffolding of civilizations. Who are we? We are like spiritual Grand Central stations. We are junctions where millions of sensations, emotions, and signals interpenetrate every second. We are communications centers, and through some process we are not close to understanding, we have the ability to partially govern this traffic—to shift attention*



from one thing to another, to choose and commit. We become fully ourselves only through the ever-richening interplay of our networks. We seek, more than anything else, to establish deeper and more complete connections. (David Brooks)

49. *Cultures are shaped more by the invisible than the visible. They are willed. (Ben Horowitz)*

50. *People who live in trusting cultures form more community organizations. People in more trusting cultures have wider stock market–participation rates. People in trusting cultures find it easier to organize and operate large corporations. Trust creates wealth. (David Brooks)*

51. *A culture is a set of actions. By requiring thoughtful action before every meeting, Amazon moves its culture in the right direction every day. (Ben Horowitz)*

52. *Pick the virtues that will help your company accomplish its mission. (Unknown)*

53. *In order to shift a culture from one stage to the next, you need to find the levers that are appropriate for that particular stage in the group’s development. (Phil Jackson)*

54. *Accountability is being held to the standard you have accepted as what you want, individually and collectively. (Jay Bilas)*

55. *The most important element of any corporate culture is that people care. They care about the quality of their work, they care about the mission, they care about being good citizens, they care about the company winning. So a gigantic portion of your cultural success will be determined by what gets rewarded at your company. (Ben Horowitz)*

56. *Some ways of thinking about a virtue’s effectiveness: Is your virtue actionable? According to bushido, a culture is not a set of beliefs, but a set of actions. What actions do your cultural virtues translate to? Can you turn empathy, for instance, into an action? If so, it may work as a virtue. If not, best to design your culture with a different virtue. (Ben Horowitz)*



57. Your culture sets your expectation for what is “normal.” **(James Clear)**
58. *Working in an unhealthy, unbalanced culture is a lot like climbing Mount Everest—we adapt to our surroundings. Even though the conditions are dangerous, climbers know to spend time at base camp to adapt.* **(Simon Sinek)**
59. *Deliver the Negative Stuff in Person: This was an informal rule that I encountered at several cultures. It goes like this: If you have negative news or feedback to give someone—even as small as a rejected item on an expense report—you are obligated to deliver that news face-to-face.* **(Dan Coyle)**
60. *Whether we like to admit it or not, we need each other. That’s where serotonin and oxytocin come in. They are the backbone of the Circle of Safety. There to encourage pro-social behavior, serotonin and oxytocin help us form bonds of trust and friendship so that we will look out for each other. It is because of these two chemicals that we have societies and cultures.* **(Simon Sinek)**
61. *When you trust and believe, you can be challenged and held accountable. Once a coach earns his players’ trust, he can push them to new levels mentally and physically, where less trustworthy coaches might not dare tread.* **(Jay Bilas)**
62. *Bushido looks like a set of principles, but it’s a set of practices. The samurai defined culture as a code of action, a system not of values but of virtues. A value is merely a belief, but a virtue is a belief that you actively pursue or embody.* **(Ben Horowitz)**
63. *Like any tribe, they have traditions and symbols and language. The culture of a company is like the culture of any tribe. Some have strong cultures and some have weak cultures. We feel like we belong to some more than others, that we more easily “click” with the people in one culture over another. And, like all tribes, some have strong leaders and some have weak leaders. But they all have leaders.* **(Simon Sinek)**
64. *Cultures are emergent systems.* **(David Brooks)**
65. *Culture isn’t a piece of the game, it is the game.* **(Gerstner)**
66. *Culture defines the legacy you and your team leave behind.* **(Fergus Connolly)**



67. *In a weak culture, we veer away from doing “the right thing” in favor of doing “the thing that’s right for me. (Simon Sinek)*
68. *If you expect a culture of trust, you have to build and foster a culture of truth. (Jay Bilas)*
69. *The samurai called their principles “virtues” rather than “values”; virtues are what you do, while values are merely what you believe. As we’ll see, doing is what matters. (In what follows I will use “virtues” to refer to the ideal, and “values” to refer to what most companies now espouse.) How exactly did the samurai focus their culture on actions? Companies—just like gangs, armies, and nations—are large organizations that rise or fall because of the daily microbehaviors of the human beings that compose them. (Ben Horowitz)*
70. *In a culture of strong character, the people inside the company will feel protected by their leaders and feel that their colleagues have their backs. In a culture of weak character, the people will feel that any protection they have comes primarily from their own ability to manage the politics, promote their own successes and watch their own backs. (Simon Sinek)*
71. *A great culture produces a united team driven by high character, competitive and talented people working unselfishly to achieve sustainable excellence. (Brooklyn Nets Basketball)*
72. *We can say this much with confidence: When change works, it tends to follow a pattern. The people who change have clear direction, ample motivation, and a supportive environment. In other words, when change works, it’s because the Rider, the Elephant, and the Path are all aligned in support of the switch. (Chip Heath)*
73. *Leaders create the right environment for the right behaviors to occur. (Owen Eastwood)*
74. *Environment is the invisible hand that shapes human behavior. (James Clear)*



75. *Healthy cultures never happen by accident. They are created. Culture is a combination of what you create and what you allow. If you don't like what you have, change what you tolerate and what you expect. (Craig Groeschel)*
76. *Ethos is the Greek word for character. Descended from the same root as the word ethics, it is used to describe the beliefs, principles, values, codes and culture of an organization. It is the 'way we do things around here', the unwritten (and sometimes written) rules, the moral character of a particular group of people. (James Kerr)*
77. *Successful groups are attuned to the same truth as the starlings: Purpose isn't about tapping into some mystical internal drive but rather about creating simple beacons that focus attention and engagement on the shared goal. (Dan Coyle)*
78. *Every player on a team is a role player, and every player on a team should strive to excel at what I consider to be the most important role of all: the role of being a great teammate. (Jay Bilas)*
79. *When a flower doesn't grow, you fix the environment for which it grows; not the flower. (Justin Barber)*
80. *But they will never forget how it felt to work there, or the kind of people they became as a result. The company's character and ethos will be the one thing they carry with them. It will be the glue that holds them together when things go wrong. It will be their guide to the tiny, daily decisions they make that add up to a sense of genuine purpose. (Ben Horowitz)*
81. *Culture comes from the Latin word cultus which means 'care'.*
82. *Doing tough things needs to be expected, but it also needs to be valued. Acknowledging and celebrating that those around you are doing tough things, and doing them for the good of the team, is important to a culture of winning. (Jay Bilas)*
83. *Whether one is baking a cake or examining an institutional mix, the interaction of ingredients is almost always a function of the temperature and pressure of the environment. (Edwin Friedman)*



84. *Capitalize on Threshold Moments: When we enter a new group, our brains decide quickly whether to connect. So successful cultures treat these threshold moments as more important than any other. (Dan Coyle)*
85. *A team culture is a living organism. It has to be touched every single day. (Unknown)*
86. *Along the way, you will learn how to answer a question fundamental to any organization: who are we? Because who you are is how people talk about you when you're not around. How do you treat your customers? Are you there for people in a pinch? Can you be trusted? (Ben Horowitz)*
87. *Culture is a set of living relationships working toward a shared goal. It's not something you are. It's something you do. (Dan Coyle)*
88. *CULTURE COACHES WHEN YOU'RE NOT AROUND. (Fergus Connolly)*
89. *Leadership isn't one person leading a team. It is a group of leaders working together, up and down the chain of command, to lead. (Jocko Willink)*
90. *What you know doesn't mean anything. What do you do consistently? (Tony Robbins)*
91. *Every culture has its own history, traditions, languages and symbols. When we identify with a culture, we articulate our belonging to that group and align ourselves with a shared set of values and beliefs. (Simon Sinek)*
92. *The three skills of culture building. Skill 1—Build Safety—explores how signals of connection generate bonds of belonging and identity. Skill 2—Share Vulnerability—explains how habits of mutual risk drive trusting cooperation. Skill 3—Establish Purpose—tells how narratives create shared goals and values. (Dan Coyle)*
93. *Teamwork is the ultimate competitive advantage. (Patrick Lencioni)*
94. *High performing teams promote a culture of honesty, authenticity and safe conflict. (Unknown)*



95. *As a final word of discouragement: a great culture does not get you a great company. Culture is to a company as nutrition and training are to an aspiring professional athlete. If the athlete is talented enough, he'll succeed despite relatively poor nutrition and a below-average training regimen. If he lacks talent, perfect nutrition and relentless training will not qualify him for the Olympics. But great nutrition and training make every athlete better. (Ben Horowitz)*
96. *So goes the culture, so go the people. (David Brooks)*
97. *Culture alone doesn't win games, but a great one is the foundation for organized talent to express itself. (Fergus Connolly)*
98. *When we cooperate or look out for others, serotonin and oxytocin reward us with the feelings of security, fulfillment, belonging, trust and camaraderie. (Simon Sinek)*
99. *Culture guides discretionary behavior and it picks up where the employee handbook leaves off. Culture tells us what to do when the boss isn't in the room, which is of course most of the time. (Frances Frei)*
100. *Culture does not change because we desire to change it. Culture changes when the organization is transformed; the culture reflects the realities of people working together every day. (Frances Hesselbein)*