

Michael Sorrell

Visionary Leader, Institutional Change Agent, President of Paul Quinn College

The Four Ls of Leadership. Leadership is always challenging, but it doesn't need to be complicated, as Dr. Michael Sorrell points out. Regarded as a visionary leader and change agent, Dr. Sorrell, who is the president of Paul Quinn College, is widely respected in education and business circles for the manner in which he led the school from near-certain closure to becoming a leader among America's Historically Black Colleges and Universities. As he shares in this talk, none of what has been accomplished during his tenure would have been possible without the "Four Ls of Leadership" that Dr. Sorrell holds near and dear: Leave places better than you found them Live a life that matters Lead from wherever you are Love something greater than yourself Pointing to real-life examples of his purpose-driven approach with Paul Quinn College and the incredible results it continues to yield, Dr. Sorrell shares thought-provoking anecdotes and practical strategies any leader can apply to become a catalyst for positive change within their own organization. As he addresses topics such as servant leadership, inclusive leadership, and leading through change, Dr. Sorrell challenges those in the room to dismantle outdated systems, establish a vision that others will rally around, collaborate in pursuit of a greater mission, and leave things better than before.

Reviving and Thriving: Strategies for Business Turnaround Success. Dr. Michael Sorrell's leadership of Paul Quinn College for close to two decades has become one of the great turnaround stories in education, business, and beyond. Dr. Sorrell moved away from his dream of becoming the part-owner and president of the NBA's Memphis Grizzlies, and instead turned his attention toward how he could help Paul Quinn College's students, faculty, and surrounding community achieve their dreams. What followed was the school's remarkable transformation from on the brink of closure, to thriving beyond what anyone could have imagined before Dr. Sorrell first stepped through the doors. In this talk, Dr. Sorrell revisits the complex challenges he faced when he assumed the role of president of Paul Quinn College, as well as the difficult decisions he had to make in order to get the institution back on its feet, and then lead it to where it is today – the model of what a thriving and innovative organization looks like. An engaging storyteller with sought-after insights that are applicable to organizations in any industry, Dr. Sorrell equips leaders with strategies and the mindset shift needed in order to lead change, build strong teams, develop forward-looking solutions to underlying problems, drive progress, and create a lasting impact.

From Chaos to Clarity: Strategies for Leading Through Change and Uncertainty. When Dr. Michael Sorrell accepted the position of president of Paul Quinn College, the future of the school remained in the balance. Graduation rates were low, academic standards had plummeted, and there was almost no money left for the school to operate. Despite uncertainty lurking at every corner, Dr. Sorrell succeeded in communicating his vision to the Paul Quinn community, and the school is now

pointed to as an example of academic excellence among HBCUs and small colleges. In this talk, Dr. Sorrell focuses specifically on the challenges of leading through change and times of uncertainty. Drawing from his own experiences leading at Paul Quinn College, Dr. Sorrell offers valuable strategies for managing resistance, overcoming obstacles, and seizing opportunities for growth and transformation amid the complexities and disruption that exist all around us. He inspires leaders to embrace the unknown, lead with empathy, and drive positive change within their organizations and communities.

Overcoming Fear to Write Your Next Chapter. Dr. Michael J. Sorrell has faced fear and uncertainty directly on several occasions, both in his professional and personal lives. While the story of him jumping in headfirst and leading the remarkable turnaround of Paul Quinn College is often pointed to as an example of embracing and overcoming the unknown, a lesser-known story is Dr. Sorrell's own personal turnaround following his battle with sudden cardiac death in 2008. Reflecting on the episode and the long path to physical and mental recovery that followed, Dr. Sorrell opens up to the audience and shares how he was able to overcome his fear of the future to make the second act of his life as meaningful as the first. His personal story inspires people to reframe fear and use it as their fuel to be more resilient, be better leaders, and achieve those goals that seem out of reach.

Lessons to Last a Lifetime. Among all the awards and accolades, Dr. Michael J. Sorrell counts winning the "Father of the Year" for the city of Dallas as his greatest accomplishment. Reflecting on his interactions with his children, including a series of journeys with his son over the course of a year, Sorrell shares lessons that will resonate with any audience on leadership, setting goals, uncovering your purpose, and aligning the steps you take on the path to success to your purpose.