



**Will VanLoh**  
Principal  
Quantum Energy Partners

At the time of this interview, Will VanLoh was co-founder Quantum Energy Partners, LP, a Houston-based private equity fund that made private equity investments in emerging exploration and production companies. He is also was a managing partner and co-founder of Tristone Capital Advisors, LP (formerly Windrock Capital, Ltd.) a merchant banking firm that provides products and services to corporate and institutional investors in the energy industry. Prior to co-founding Windrock in 1994, Will worked as an investment banker with Kidder, Peabody & Co.'s Natural Resources Group. Previously, Will had also been an investment banker with NCNB Investment Banking (now Banc America Securities). He is a member of the IPAA and a graduate of Texas Christian University where he earned a BBA degree in Finance.

## professional

### **What are top 3 principles for success in your industry?**

First it would be doing business with good people, people that are honest, have integrity, that have good track records and backgrounds. It seems to be, as far as my success goes, doing business with those kinds of people ensures me the best chance at succeeding in my business. Secondly, doing what I say I'm going to do. Don't over promise and under deliver ... actually under promise and over deliver. And then thirdly, I'd have to say being persistent. Never giving up, always trying, being creative, trying new things. But going the course. Staying the course.

### **What makes a great leader?**

The first thing that makes a great leader is if they can see the big picture. I think a leader has to see the big picture, has to, if you will, see the forest from the trees. Secondly I think a person is a great leader if he can take risk. I think the important thing there is that they've got to be willing to take calculated risk. So many times you see people that are scared of failure and leaders can't be scared of failure. Leaders are going to fail. That's one of the ingredients of being a great leader, great failure. If you look at the greatest leaders throughout history, often times their careers are marked with great failures. So a willingness to take chances ... calculated chances, calculated risk ... and being willing to fail, to find a better way to do something. And thirdly, maybe most importantly, I think a great leader has to be a great servant. It has to be a person who is willing to serve the people that he or she is leading. Only when you serve people that you lead, will you gain the trust and confidence and that desire in the people you're trying to lead, to follow you.

### **What are the 2-3 most valuable lessons you learned in your career?**

Your reputation is the most important thing that you have. Don't ever do anything to compromise your reputation, don't ever take a short cut that might provide short-term gratification or maybe a good short-term game, because in the long run, it's going to be a huge black mark. I kind of look at it as one negative thing on your reputation will overshadow ten or even 100 good things. People are going to focus on the negative things about your reputation, so that is the most important thing you have. Do everything you can do to preserve your reputation.

## personal

### **How do you define success? How has your definition evolved?**

Success is really a multi-component issue. I break my life into three basic areas. I break it into the spiritual component of my life. I break it into my family and then thirdly, my work. I think in order to be truly successful, one really has to do well on each of those three areas of your life. As a Christian, the most important thing to me is to be successful in my Christian walk and to serve my Creator. To fulfill



the purpose for which He created me to do, which is to serve Him. And secondly ... and this is really in the order of priority. I think you've got to have priorities. Secondly is to have a very successful family life and that includes both with my wife and my children. To be a successful husband is to support my wife and to help her and her struggles in life. And really with my children, I look at that as, again, from a more Christian perspective. I want my children to grow up and to know the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior and that's really how I define success in the home life. And then in my business ... most of us, especially in our early years in our lives, spend many years working. We probably spend more hours working than anything else. I define success in my business by really not so much how I do monetarily, but really how I impact others around me, my employees. Do I provide good work conditions for them or is my company able to earn a profit so we can keep employing these people and having them provide for their families? And also serving the clients. Am I adequately meeting their needs? If I do all that, then I'm going to have a successful business that's actually going to earn a very nice profit. I'll have employees that work hard for me and I'll have clients that continue to use my services. So that's how I look at it. There are really three areas of success: my spiritual, my home and family, and my business.

### **How do you prioritize your time/values? What are your priorities?**

There are really three main areas in my life: my spiritual, my home and family and my business. And I think back to a quote by a very well business author today, Steven Covey, who says, "Put first things first." I think that's really where you've got to start. If you're going to prioritize, you have to put first things first. You've got to do the important things in life, not the urgent things. Unfortunately so many of us spend most of our time doing the urgent things, putting out fires and we don't spend much time doing the important things. Start by prioritizing by importance. And for me, personally, the most important thing in my life is my walk with the Lord Jesus Christ. That's where I have to start every day. I have to start by asking, what am I doing to continually grow in my relationship with Christ? And then do things that help me to grow in my relationship with Christ. Secondly, I've got to make sure that my business is not all consuming, such that I don't have time to spend with my family and children. And so I think it's prioritizing, putting those things first that are most important and then at the end of the day ... although in our careers, especially among younger folks that are in the prime of their career ... we tend to spend maybe more time at our work. It's like a weed in a garden. It can really multiply and crowd out the really important things, the flowers and what you're really trying to get to grow. It's important to do the things ... even though you may spend more time on your work ... to do the things that are most important first and that will help you really prioritize what's important to you.

s p i r i t u a l

### **How has God changed your life? How has your choice of faith in God changed your life?**

God has radically changed my life by radically changing my priorities. You spend time doing the things that are your priorities and when my priorities changed, obviously where I spent my time changed. It's probably most evident in my work life. Early on in my career I was consumed with trying to be successful. Success was making a lot of money and I was pursuing that with all of my energy and strength. As I've matured in my Christian walk, I've realized that that is not the most important thing. I started spending my time on things that have eternal significance. Helping to share Christ with other people, both in the business place and at church and the community, spending more time with my family, trying to be their spiritual shepherd. It was truly liberating for me when I finally realized I wasn't in control. God was in control. That was such a paradigm shift for me because I quite worrying about things. I quit being anxious and being worried all the time. I realized that God had a plan for me. He had a plan for my life and if I was going to have a very successful business, it was going to be 100 percent of what He did, not what I did. When you can truly internalize that and understand that you aren't in control ... there's nothing you can really do to make your business career successful and unsuccessful. You take a tremendous amount of pressure off of yourself.