

*New York Times* BESTSELLING AUTHOR

JOHN C.  
MAXWELL

25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY EDITION

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THE 21 IRREFUTABLE  
LAWS OF  
LEADERSHIP

REVISED AND UPDATED

FOLLOW THEM *and*  
PEOPLE WILL FOLLOW YOU



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LAWS OF  
LEADERSHIP

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HARPERCOLLINS  
LEADERSHIP

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*The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership, 25th Anniversary Edition*

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*This book is dedicated to Charlie Wetzel, my writing partner since 1994. Together we've created more than one hundred books, and I've enjoyed our collaboration on every one of them. As I have labored to add value to others by identifying and teaching leadership principles, Charlie, you have added value to me and my efforts. Your insights and skills as a wordsmith have been enjoyed by millions of readers. As a result, you have made a greater impact on more people than has anyone else in my inner circle. For that I thank you.*

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# FOREWORD TO THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

by Stephen R. Covey

When John Maxwell asked me to write the foreword for this tenth anniversary edition of *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, I was honored and intrigued. During the past two decades, John and I have traveled on parallel paths in our speaking and writing. We have both been called “leadership experts” over the years. We know and respect each other’s work. But in spite of the similarities between our messages, we have rarely spoken to the same audience.

So to recommend this book allows me to introduce John Maxwell and his teaching to members of my audience who have not yet read him. And what better book to recommend than this new and improved version of *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*? It serves as a sort of manifesto for his teaching and his life. Study this book and you have gotten to know John Maxwell the person as well as his philosophy of leadership.

When *The 21 Laws* was first published in 1998, I could see immediately how practical and applicable the laws were. They still are. For over three decades, John Maxwell has earned his reputation as a communicator. And as he says, communicators “make the complex simple.” Rather than an esoteric examination of leadership, this book is more like a foundational instruction manual. With each chapter, you will get to *know* individuals who did—or some who didn’t—obey the law in question. The law itself is defined clearly and simply. And—most importantly—John will give you specific steps for applying it to the leadership in your office, community, family, or church.

John has told me regarding this revision that he was excited about the opportunity to include the lessons he has learned since *The 21 Laws* was first written. I know what he means. Leadership is not static, and neither should be books about it. I believe this revised edition will have an even greater impact than its predecessor. Laws have been updated, illustrations refined, and applications enhanced. The foundational leadership concepts have not been abandoned; rather, they have been updated for a new generation of leaders. As good as the original was, this new edition is even better.

If *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* is new to you, let me say that you are in for a treat. It will change the way you live and lead. As you read, you will be encouraged and your ability to lead will expand. If you have read the original book, then you will be thrilled with this new edition. You will learn many new lessons as well as being reminded of truths that will serve you well. And by engaging in the new application activities, you will really sharpen your skills.

I trust you will enjoy and benefit from reading this book, just as I did. In it you will find absolutely amazing, inspiring leadership stories!

Stephen R. Covey  
Author of *The 7  
Habits of Highly  
Effective People*, *The  
8th Habit*, and  
*Everyday Greatness*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

**I** want to say thank you to Charlie Wetzel and the rest of the team who assisted me with the formation and publication of this book. And to the people in my organizations who support it. You all add incredible value to me, which allows me to add value to others. Together, we're making a difference!

## INTRODUCTION

Every book is a conversation between the author and the individual reading it. Some people pick up a book hoping for a bit of encouragement. Some devour a book's information as if they were attending an intensive seminar. Others find in its pages a mentor they can meet with on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis.

The thing I love about writing books is that it allows me to “talk” to many people I will never personally meet. That's why I made the decision in 1977 to become an author. I had a passion to add value to people who energized me to write. That passion still burns within me today. Few things are more rewarding to me than traveling and having someone I've never met before approach me to say, “Thank you. Your books have really helped me.” It's why I write—and intend to continue writing!

Despite the deep satisfaction of knowing that my books help people, there is also a great frustration that comes with being an author. Once a book is published, it freezes in time. If you and I knew each other personally and we met regularly to talk about leadership, every time we got together I'd share with you something new I'd learned. As a person, I continue to grow. I'm constantly reading. I'm analyzing my mistakes. I'm talking to excellent leaders to learn from them. Each time you and I were to sit down, I'd say, “You won't believe what I just learned.”

As a conference and event speaker, I often teach the principles I write about in my books, and I'm constantly updating my material. I use new stories. I refine ideas. And I often gain new insights as I stand in front of an audience. However, when I go back to books that I've previously written,

first, I become aware of how I've changed since I've written them. But second, I become frustrated because the books can't grow and change along with me.

When my publisher asked if I would like to revise *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* for its tenth anniversary, I got excited. When I originally wrote the book, it was my answer to the question, "If you were to take everything you've learned about leadership over the years and boil it down into a short list of laws, what would they be?" I put on paper the essentials of leadership, communicated as simply and clearly as possible. And soon after the book was published and it appeared on bestseller lists, I realized it had the potential to help a lot of people become better leaders. Ten years later, I was able to add what I'd learned during the previous decade. There were two new laws I had discovered and two old ones I realized were subsets of other laws. I was glad to make those updates plus others. It was my chance to improve the book.

## **GROWTH = CHANGE**

Another fifteen years has gone by since then. When my publisher asked if I wanted to revisit the book and update it again for this twenty-fifth anniversary edition, I of course said yes. However, as I approached the task, I wondered how I would feel about the laws and what I would want to change. I'm happy to say that when I reread the book, I recognized the laws were as solid as ever! They continue to stand the test of time. If you follow them, then people will follow you.

While teaching the laws for more than two decades in dozens of countries around the world, I fielded thousands of questions about the laws. That process advanced my thinking beyond what it was when I first wrote the book or did the tenth anniversary revision. Working on this twenty-fifth anniversary edition has allowed me to make more improvements from my experience leading others and teaching the laws. For example, I slightly reworded the tag lines for the Law of the Lid, the Law of Respect, and the Law of the Inner Circle to make them clearer. I removed some of the stories

that felt dated and replaced them with stories about fantastic leaders such as Angela Ahrendts, Ed Bastian, Jamie Kern Lima, and Mark Cole. And I developed new material to better explain and illustrate some of the laws. I would estimate that I revised 30 percent of the book and streamlined some of it too.

There are two other things that have been confirmed for me as I've taught the 21 Laws over the years and revisited the book:

## **1. LEADERSHIP REQUIRES THE ABILITY TO DO MORE THAN ONE THING**

Instinctively, successful people understand that focus is important to achievement. But leadership is very complex. During a break at a conference where I was teaching the 21 Laws, a young college student came up to me and said, "I know you are teaching 21 Laws of Leadership, but I want to get to the bottom line." With intensity, he raised his index finger and asked, "What is the one thing I need to know about leadership?"

Trying to match his intensity, I raised my index finger and answered, "The one thing you need to know about leadership is that there is more than one thing you need to know about leadership!" To lead well, we must do 21 things well.

## **2. NO ONE DOES ALL 21 LAWS WELL**

Despite the fact that we must do 21 things well to be excellent leaders, the reality is that none of us does all of them well. For example, I am average or below average in five of the laws—and I wrote the book! So what is a leader to do? Ignore those laws? No, develop a leadership team.

At the end of this book there is a leadership evaluation. I encourage you to take it to evaluate your aptitude for each law. Once you've discovered in which laws you are average or below, begin looking for team members whose skills are strong where yours are weak. They will complement you and vice versa, and the whole team will benefit. That will make it possible for you to develop an all-star leadership team. Remember, none of us is as smart as all of us.



## SOME THINGS CHANGE—OTHERS NEVER DO

Leadership has certainly become more complex in recent years. The times are difficult, and it can be challenging to lead people to work together. The need for good leadership has never been greater. Businesses, government, families, communities, and teams are crying out for good leaders to help them. That's why I'm especially excited to introduce a new generation of leaders to these laws. Learn the laws, and they will help you to lead. While the particular leadership challenges change from year to year and from community to community, some things have not changed. It's still true that leadership is leadership, no matter where you go or what you do. Times change. Technology marches forward. Cultures differ from place to place. But the principles of leadership are constant—whether you're looking at the citizens of ancient Greece, the Hebrews in the Old Testament, the armies of the modern world, the leaders in the international community, the pastors in local churches, or the businesspeople of today's global economy. The laws of leadership apply regardless of the gender, age, experience, or environment of the leader. The laws of leadership are unchanging and stand the test of time.

As you read the following chapters, I'd like you to keep in mind . . .

1. **THE LAWS CAN BE LEARNED.** Some are easier to understand and apply than others, but every one of them can be acquired.
2. **THE LAWS CAN STAND ALONE.** Each law complements all the others, but you don't need to know one to learn another.
3. **THE LAWS CARRY CONSEQUENCES WITH THEM.** Apply the laws, and people will follow you. Violate or ignore them, and you will not be effective leading others.
4. **THE LAWS ARE TIMELESS.** Whether you're young or old, inexperienced or experienced, the laws apply. They applied to your grandparents, and they will apply to your great-grandchildren.
5. **THE LAWS ARE THE FOUNDATION OF LEADERSHIP.** Once you learn the principles, you will have to practice them and apply them to your life. If you do, you will be a better leader.

Whether you are a follower who is just beginning to discover the impact of leadership, or you're a natural leader who already has followers, you can become a better leader. Whether you are in your teens leading others in student government or sports, or you are in your seventies like I am making a difference in your later years, you can improve. As you read about the laws, you may recognize that you already practice some of them very effectively. Other laws may expose weaknesses you didn't know you had. Use your interaction with the laws as a learning experience and complete the exercises at the end of each chapter to help you apply each law to your life.

No matter where you are in the leadership process, know this: the greater the number of laws you learn, the better leader you will become. Each law is like a tool, ready to be picked up and used to help you achieve your dreams and add value to other people. Pick up even one, and you will become a better leader. Learn them all, and people will gladly follow you.

Now, let's open the toolbox together.

# 1

## THE LAW OF THE LID

### *How Well You Lead Determines How Well You Succeed*

Brothers Dick and Maurice came as close  
as they could to living the American Dream  
—without making it. Instead a guy named  
Ray did it with the company they had  
founded. It happened because they didn't  
know the Law of the Lid.

**I** have often opened my leadership conferences by explaining the Law of the Lid because it helps people understand the value of leadership. If you can get a handle on this law, you will see the incredible impact of leadership on every aspect of life. So here it is: how well you lead determines how well you succeed. Leadership is the lid to your potential. The lower your leadership ability, the lower the lid on your potential. The higher your leadership ability, the higher the lid on your potential. To give you an example, if your leadership operates at an 8 (out of 10), then your effectiveness can never be greater than a 7. If your leadership is only a 4, then your effectiveness with others will be no higher than a 3. How well you are able to lead—for better or for worse—always determines your effectiveness with others and the potential of your team. How well you lead determines how well you succeed.

## LOOKING FOR AN OPPORTUNITY

Let me tell you a story that illustrates the Law of the Lid. In 1930, two young brothers named Dick and Maurice moved from New Hampshire to California in search of the

American Dream. They had just gotten out of high school, and they saw few opportunities back home. So they headed straight for Hollywood where they eventually found jobs on a movie studio set.

After a while, their entrepreneurial spirit and interest in the entertainment industry prompted them to open a theater in Glendale, a town about five miles northeast of Hollywood. But despite all their efforts, the brothers just couldn't make the business profitable.

The brothers' desire for success was strong, so they kept looking for better business opportunities. Drive-in restaurants were a new phenomenon springing up in the early thirties as people became more dependent on cars. Rather than eating in a dining room, customers placed orders with carhops and received their food on trays, right in their cars. Back then, food was served on dinner plates complete with glassware and metal utensils.

In 1937, Dick and Maurice opened a small drive-in restaurant in Pasadena, and it was a great success. In 1940, they decided to move the operation to San Bernardino, a working-class boomtown fifty miles east of Los Angeles, built a larger facility, and expanded their menu from hot dogs, fries, and shakes to include barbecued beef and pork sandwiches, hamburgers, and other items. Their business exploded. Annual sales reached \$200,000, and the brothers found themselves splitting \$50,000 in profits every year—a sum that put them in the town's financial elite.

In 1948, their intuition told them that times were changing. They eliminated the carhops, started serving only walk-up customers, and streamlined everything to reduce their costs and lower their prices. They reduced their menu and put their focus on selling hamburgers. They eliminated plates, glassware, and metal utensils, switching to paper products instead.

They also created what they called the Speedy Service System. Their kitchen became like an assembly line, where each employee focused on service with speed. The brothers' goal was to fill each customer's order in thirty seconds or less. And they succeeded. By the mid-1950s, annual revenue hit \$350,000, and by then, Dick and Maurice split net profits of about \$100,000 each year.

Who were these brothers? You've probably already guessed their last name: *McDonald*. Dick and Maurice McDonald had hit the great American jackpot, and the rest, as they say, is history, right? Wrong. The McDonalds never went any farther because their leadership put a lid on their ability to succeed.

## THE STORY BEHIND THE STORY

It's true that the McDonald brothers were financially secure. Theirs was one of the most profitable restaurant enterprises in the country, and they felt that they had a hard time

spending all the money they made. Their genius was in customer service and kitchen organization. In fact, their talent was so widely known in food service circles that people started writing them and visiting their restaurant from all over the country to learn more about their methods. At one point, they received as many as three hundred calls and letters every month.

That led them to the idea of marketing the McDonald's concept. The idea of franchising restaurants wasn't new. It had been around for several decades. To the McDonald brothers, it looked like a way to make money without having to open another restaurant themselves. In 1952, they got started, but their effort was a dismal failure. The reason was simple. They lacked the leadership necessary to make a larger enterprise effective. Dick and Maurice were good single-restaurant owners. They understood how to run a business, make their systems efficient, cut costs, and increase profits. They were efficient managers, but they were not great leaders. Their thinking patterns clamped a lid down on what they could do and become. At the height of their success, Dick and Maurice found themselves smack-dab against the Law of the Lid.

## **THE BROTHERS PARTNER WITH A BETTER LEADER**

Then in 1954, the brothers met Ray Kroc. He had been running a small company that sold machines for making milk shakes. Kroc knew the McDonald brothers because their restaurant was one of his best customers. After visiting their store, he had a vision for its potential: he could see the restaurant going nationwide in hundreds of markets. He soon struck a deal with Dick and Maurice, and in 1955, he formed McDonald's Systems, Inc. (later called the McDonald's Corporation).

In the years that Dick and Maurice McDonald had attempted to franchise their food service system, they managed to sell the concept to just fifteen buyers, only ten of whom actually opened restaurants. And even in that size enterprise, their limited leadership and vision were hindrances. For example, when their first franchisee, Neil Fox of Phoenix, told the brothers that he wanted to call his restaurant McDonald's, Dick's response was, "What . . . for? McDonald's means nothing in Phoenix."

Kroc thought—and led—differently. He immediately bought the rights to a franchise so that he could use it as a model and prototype so that he could sell franchises to others. Between 1955 and 1959, Kroc succeeded in opening one hundred restaurants. Four years after that, there were five hundred McDonald's restaurants. During his first eight years with McDonald's, he took no salary and borrowed money from the bank and against his life insurance to help cover the salaries of a few key leaders he wanted on the team. He had the vision and ability to make McDonald's a nationwide entity. And in 1961 for the sum of \$2.7 million, Kroc bought the exclusive rights to McDonald's from the brothers, and he proceeded to turn it into an American institution and global entity.

Today McDonald's has opened more than 38,000 restaurants in 120 countries.<sup>1</sup> In 2019, it recorded a net income of \$6.1 billion, and its net worth is estimated at \$170 billion. And it's still growing. None of that would have occurred without Ray Kroc. The leadership of the McDonald brothers had been the lid on the business, whereas Kroc had blown the lid off.

## SUCCESS WITHOUT LEADERSHIP

I believe that personal success is within the reach of just about everyone. But I also believe that the better you can lead, the greater you can succeed. The higher you want to climb and the greater success you want to achieve, the more you will need leadership. The greater the impact you want to make, the greater your influence needs to be. Whatever you will accomplish is restricted by your ability to lead others.

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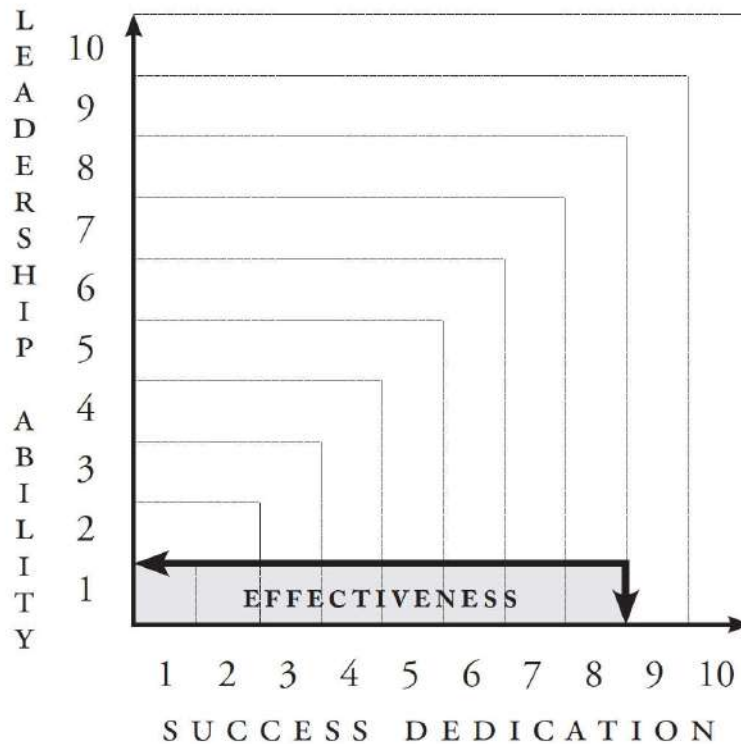
*The higher you want to climb, the more you need leadership. The greater the impact you want to make, the greater your influence needs to be.*

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Let me give you a picture of what I mean. Hold your left hand out in front of you, palm down. That represents your leadership level. If your leadership is low, hold your hand down at waist level. If it's average, hold it chest high. Now put out your right hand below it. That's your success. Here's the reality of leadership and success. Your success hand can *never* go higher than your leadership hand. It will always bump up against it.

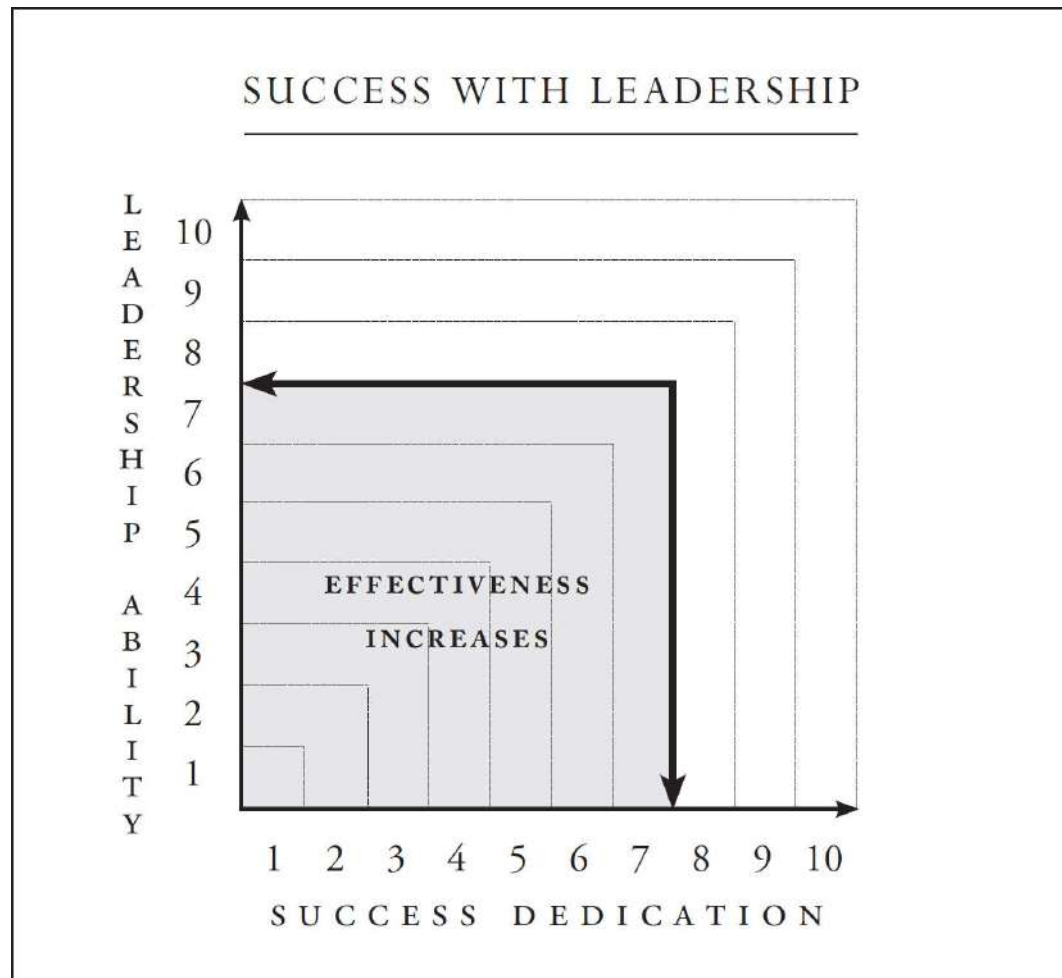
I'll explain it another way. Let's say that when it comes to success, you're an 8 (on a scale from 1 to 10). That's pretty good. I think it would be safe to say that the McDonald brothers were in that range. But let's also say that leadership isn't even on your radar. You don't care about it, and you make no effort to develop as a leader. You're functioning as a 1. Your level of effectiveness would look like this:

## SUCCESS WITHOUT LEADERSHIP



To increase your level of effectiveness, you have a couple of choices. You could work very hard to increase your dedication to success and excellence—to work toward becoming a 10. It's possible that you could make it to that level, though the Law of Diminishing Returns says that the effort it would take to increase those last two points might take more energy than it did to achieve the first eight. If you really killed yourself, you might increase your success by that 25 percent.

But you have another option. You can work hard to increase your level of *leadership*. Let's say that your natural leadership ability is a 4—slightly below average. Just by using whatever natural talent you have, you already increase your effectiveness fourfold. But let's say you become a real student of leadership and you maximize your potential. You take it all the way up to a 7. Visually, the results would look like this:



*Leadership has a multiplying effect.*

By raising your leadership ability—without increasing your success dedication at all—you can increase your original effectiveness by 600 percent. Leadership has a multiplying effect. I’ve seen its impact again and again in all kinds of businesses and nonprofit organizations. And that’s why I’ve taught leadership for more than fifty years.

## **TO CHANGE THE DIRECTION OF THE ORGANIZATION, CHANGE THE LEADER**

Leadership ability is always the lid on personal and organizational success. If a person’s leadership is strong, the team’s or organization’s lid is high. But if it’s not, then it’s



limited. That's why in times of trouble, organizations naturally look for new leadership. When the country is experiencing hard times, it elects a new president. When a company is losing money, it hires a new CEO. When a church is floundering, it searches for a new senior pastor. When a sports team keeps losing, it looks for a new head coach.

---

*Leadership ability is always the lid on  
personal and organizational success.*

---

The relationship between leadership and effectiveness is perhaps most evident in sports where results are immediate and obvious. Within professional sports organizations, the talent on the team is usually not the issue. Leadership is the issue. It starts with a team's owner and continues with the coaches and some key players. When the leaders at every level are good, the team has a good chance to win a championship. When the leadership is poor at any level, the team rarely succeeds.

Wherever you look, you can find smart, talented, successful people who are able to go only so far because of the limitations of their leadership. For example, when Apple got started in the late 1970s, Steve Wozniak was the brains behind the Apple computer. His leadership lid was low, but that was not the case for his partner, Steve Jobs. His lid was so high that he built a world-class organization and made it one of the most valuable businesses in the world. That's the impact of the Law of the Lid.

When I lived in San Diego, I met Don Stephenson, the chairman of Global Hospitality Resources, Inc., an international hospitality advisory and consulting firm. Over lunch, I asked him about his organization. At that time, his company was taking over the management of hotels and resorts that weren't doing well financially. His company oversaw many excellent facilities, such as La Costa in Southern California.

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*You can find smart, talented, successful  
people who are able to go only so far  
because of the limitations of their  
leadership.*

---

Don said that whenever his people went into an organization to take it over, they always started by doing two things. First, they trained the staff to improve service to customers, and second, they fired the leader. When he told me that, I was surprised.

"You always fire him?" I asked. "Every time?"

"That's right. Every time," he said.

"Don't you talk to the person first—to check him out to see if he's a good leader?" I asked.

“No,” he answered. “If he’d been a good leader, the organization wouldn’t be in the mess it’s in.”

And I thought to myself, *Of course. It’s the Law of the Lid.* To reach the highest level of success, you must raise the lid—one way or another.

The good news is that getting rid of the leader isn’t the *only* way. Just as I teach in conferences that there is a lid, I also teach that you can raise it—but that’s the subject of a different law of leadership.

---

*Applying*  
THE LAW OF THE LID

## *to Your Life*

1. List some of your major goals. (Try to focus on significant objectives —things that will require a year or longer of your time. List at least five but no more than ten.) Now identify which ones will require the participation or cooperation of other people. For these activities, your leadership ability will greatly impact your effectiveness.
2. Assess your leadership ability. Based on your gut instinct, give yourself a ranking from 0 (low) to 9 (high). Then take the leadership assessment at the back of this book as a point of comparison to your own assessment.
3. Ask others to rate your leadership. Talk to your boss, your spouse, two colleagues (at your level), and three people you lead about your leadership ability. Ask each of them to rate you on a scale of 0 (low) to 9 (high) in each of the following areas:

- People skills
- Planning and strategic thinking
- Vision
- Results

Average the four scores from each person. Now compare their scores, and the overall score from the assessment at the back of the book, to the score you gave yourself. Did you rate yourself higher, lower, or the same as the others? If there is a gap between your self-evaluation, the results of the assessment, and the opinions of others, try to determine the cause. How willing are you to grow in leadership to be more successful?

## 2

### THE LAW OF INFLUENCE

#### *The True Measure of Leadership Is Influence— Nothing More, Nothing Less*

Abraham Lincoln started with the rank of captain, but by the time the war was over, he was a private. What happened? He was a casualty of the Law of Influence.

**W**hat do leaders look like? Do they always *look* powerful, impressive, charismatic? And how do you *measure* the effectiveness of a leader? Can you put two people side by side and instantly tell which is the better leader? These are questions people have asked for hundreds of years.

One of the most effective leaders of the late twentieth century was anything but impressive upon first appearance. When most people think of Mother Teresa, they envision a frail little woman dedicated to serving the poorest of the poor. That she was. But she was also a tremendous leader. I say that because she had an amazing amount of influence with others. And if you don't have influence, you will *never* be able to lead others.

---

*If you don't have influence, you will  
never be able to lead others.*

---

## SMALL STATURE—BIG IMPACT

Lucinda Vardey, who worked with Mother Teresa on the book *A Simple Path*, described the nun as “the quintessential, energetic entrepreneur, who has perceived a need and done something about it, built an organization against all odds, formulated its constitution, and sent out branches all over the world.”

The organization Mother Teresa founded and led is called the Missionaries of Charity. While other vocational orders in the Catholic Church were declining, hers grew rapidly, reaching more than four thousand members during her lifetime (*not* including numerous volunteers). Under her direction, her followers served in twenty-five countries on five continents. In Calcutta alone, she established a children's home, a center for people with leprosy, a home for people who were dying and destitute, and a home for people suffering with tuberculosis or mental disorders. That kind of organizational building can be accomplished only by a true leader.

Mother Teresa's impact reached far beyond her immediate environment. People from all walks of life and from nations around the globe respected her. When she spoke, people listened. Author and former presidential speechwriter Peggy Noonan wrote about a speech Mother Teresa gave at the National Prayer Breakfast in 1994. It illustrates her level of influence with others. Noonan observed:

All the Washington establishment was there, plus a few thousand born-again Christians, orthodox Catholics and Jews . . . [S]he spoke of God, of love, of families. She said we must love one another and care for one another. There were great purrs of agreement.

But as the speech continued it became more pointed. She asked, “Do you do enough to make sure your parents, in the old people's homes, feel your love? Do you bring them each day your joy and caring?” The baby boomers in the audience began to shift in their seats. And she continued. “I feel that the greatest destroyer of peace today is abortion,” she said, and then she told them why, in uncompromising terms. For about 1.3 seconds there was complete silence, then applause built and swept across the room. But not everyone: the

President and the First Lady [Bill and Hillary Clinton], the Vice President and Mrs. Gore, looked like seated statues at Madame Tussaud's . . . moving not a muscle. [Mother Teresa] didn't stop there either. . . . When she was finished, there was almost no one she hadn't offended.<sup>1</sup>

If just about any other person in the world had made those statements, people's reactions would have been openly hostile. They would have booed, jeered, or stormed out. But the speaker was Mother Teresa. She was probably the most respected person on the planet at that time. So everyone listened to what she had to say, even though many of them violently disagreed with what she said. In fact, every time that Mother Teresa spoke, people listened. Why? She was a real leader, and when a real leader speaks, people listen. Leadership is influence—nothing more, nothing less.

## LEADERSHIP IS NOT . . .

Leadership is often misunderstood. When I began offering leadership conferences in the 1970s, I had a difficult time getting people to show up. Back then, if people had a title or leadership position, they said, "I don't need to come and learn about leadership. I'm already a leader." They thought they'd arrived. At the same time, people who didn't have a position or title would say, "I'm not a leader," meaning they didn't have a position, "so I don't need to come." They didn't understand that *becoming* a leader was a process someone can pursue. I talk more about this in the Law of Process.

To counter this mind-set, I began teaching the 5 Levels of Leadership, though back then I called it the 5 Levels of Influence, to help people understand that *position* is the lowest level of leadership, the starting point. True leadership cannot be awarded, appointed, or assigned. It comes only from developing influence, and that cannot be mandated. It must be earned. The 5 Levels of Leadership is a road map for that process. The only thing a title can buy is time—either to increase your level of influence with others or to undermine it. When people recognized that, they became open to how leadership actually works.

Today, people sometimes have a different misconception about leadership. When they hear me say leadership is influence, they confuse influence with popularity. You can have a high-profile career on television, music, or movies, or you can have millions of followers on social media and thousands of likes on your posts, but that doesn't make you a leader. It makes you popular, and that's not the same thing. People can be highly interested in someone with social influence, but that doesn't become leadership influence until the people following them change their behavior and take action as a result of the interaction with the influencer. That's the type of influence I'm describing when I state that leadership is influence—nothing more, nothing less.

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*Social influence doesn't become leadership influence until the people following change their behavior and take action as a result of the interaction with the influencer.*

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## **FIVE MYTHS ABOUT LEADERSHIP**

Through the years, I've encountered many other misconceptions and myths people embrace about leaders and leadership. I want to share with you five common ones:

### **1. THE MANAGEMENT MYTH**

A widespread misunderstanding is that leading and managing are one and the same. Up until a few decades ago, books that claimed to be on leadership were often really about management. The main difference between the two is that leadership is about influencing people to follow, while management focuses on maintaining systems and processes. As former Chrysler chairman and CEO Lee Iacocca wryly commented,



“Sometimes even the best manager is like the little boy with the big dog, waiting to see where the dog wants to go so that he can take him there.”

The best way to test whether a person can lead rather than just manage is to ask him to create positive change. Managers can maintain direction, but often they can’t change it. Systems and processes can do only so much. To move people in a new direction, you need influence.

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*The only thing a title can buy is a little time—either to increase your level of influence with others or to undermine it.*

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## **2. THE ENTREPRENEUR MYTH**

Frequently, people assume that all entrepreneurs are leaders. But that’s not always the case. Entrepreneurs are skilled at seeing opportunities and going after them. They see needs and understand how to meet them in a way that produces a profit. But not all entrepreneurs are good with people. Many find it necessary to partner with someone skilled at the people part of the equation. If they can’t influence people, they can’t lead.

## **3. THE KNOWLEDGE MYTH**

Sir Francis Bacon said, “Knowledge is power.” If you believe power to be the essence of leadership, then you might naturally assume that those who possess knowledge and intelligence are therefore leaders. That isn’t necessarily true. You can visit any major university and meet brilliant research scientists and philosophers whose ability to think is so high that it’s off the charts, but whose ability to lead is so low that it doesn’t even register *on* the charts. Neither IQ nor education necessarily equates to leadership.

## **4. THE PIONEER MYTH**

Another misconception is that anyone who is out in front of the crowd is a leader. But being first isn't always the same as leading. For example, Sir Edmund Hillary was the first man to reach the summit of Mount Everest. Since his historic ascent in 1953, hundreds of people have "followed" him in achieving that feat. But that doesn't make Hillary a leader. He wasn't even the official leader on the expedition when he reached the summit. John Hunt was. And when Hillary traveled to the South Pole in 1958 as part of the Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition, he was accompanying another leader, Sir Vivian Fuchs. To be a leader, a person has to not only be out front, but also have people intentionally coming behind him, following his lead, and acting on his vision. Being a trendsetter is not the same as being a leader.

## 5. THE POSITION MYTH

As mentioned earlier, the greatest misunderstanding about leadership is thinking it is based primarily on position. It's not. If you've ever declined to follow a bad boss, or if you've ever been appointed to a position on a team or committee and people didn't listen to your advice or take your direction, you know that a title doesn't make you a leader. A position only gives you a chance. Stanley Huferty affirmed, "It's not the position that makes the leader; it's the leader that makes the position."

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*"It's not the position that makes the leader; it's the leader that makes the position."*

—STANLEY HUFERTY

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## WHO'S THE REAL LEADER?

There is a game show on television that began when I was a kid and is currently in its sixth iteration called *To Tell the Truth*. Here's how it works.

At the opening of the show, three contestants claim to be the same person. One of them is telling the truth; the other two are actors. A panel of celebrity judges takes turns asking the three people questions, and when time is up, each panelist guesses which person is the real truth teller. Many times, the actors bluff well enough to fool the panelists and members of the audience.

When it comes to identifying a real leader, that task can be much easier. Don't listen to the claims of the person professing to be the leader. Don't examine credentials. Don't check titles. Check for influence. The proof of leadership is found in the followers.

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*The proof of leadership is found in  
the followers.*

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I personally learned the Law of Influence when I accepted my first job out of college. I went in with all the right credentials. I had the proper college degree. I had a great deal of insight into the work because of the training given to me by my father. I possessed the position and title of leader in the organization. It made for a good-looking résumé—but it didn't make me the real leader. At my first board meeting, I quickly found out who the real leader was—a farmer named Claude. When he spoke, people listened. When he made a suggestion, people respected it. When he led, others followed. If I wanted to make an impact, I would have to influence Claude. He, in turn, would influence everybody else. It was the Law of Influence at work.

## **LEADERSHIP IS . . .**

The true measure of leadership is influence—nothing more, nothing less. If you watch the dynamics that occur between people in just about every aspect of life, you will see some people leading and others following. If

you're a student of leadership, you begin to notice the leaders. They stand out, and position or title often have little to do with who is really in charge.

That being the case, why do some people emerge as leaders while others can't influence people no matter how hard they try? I believe that several factors will determine your level of influence:

### **CHARACTER—WHO YOU ARE**

True leadership always begins with the inner person. That's why someone like Billy Graham was able to draw more and more followers to him as time went by. People could sense the depth of his character. Influence begins with who you are.

### **RELATIONSHIPS—WHO YOU KNOW**

You're a leader only if you have followers, and that always requires the development of relationships—the stronger the relationships, the greater the potential for leadership. In my career, each time I entered a new leadership position, I immediately worked to start building relationships. Build enough of the right kinds of relationships with the right people, and you can become the real leader in an organization.

### **KNOWLEDGE—WHAT YOU KNOW**

Information is vital to a leader. You need a grasp of the facts, an understanding of dynamic factors and timing, and a vision for the future. Knowledge alone won't make someone a leader, but without knowledge, no one can become one. Whenever I was new to an organization, I always spent a lot of time doing homework before I tried to take the lead.

### **INTUITION—WHAT YOU FEEL**

Leadership requires more than just a command of data. It demands an ability to deal with numerous intangibles. In fact, that is often one of the main differences between managers and leaders. Leaders seek to recognize and influence intangibles such as energy, morale, timing, and momentum.

## **EXPERIENCE—WHERE YOU’VE BEEN**

The greater the challenges you’ve faced as a leader in the past, the more likely followers are to give you a chance to lead in the present. Experience doesn’t guarantee credibility, but it encourages people to give you a chance to prove that you are capable.

## **PAST SUCCESS—WHAT YOU’VE DONE**

Nothing speaks to followers like a good track record. When I accepted my first leadership position, I had no track record. I couldn’t point to past successes to help people believe in me. But by the time I went to my second position, I possessed a positive track record. Every time I extended myself, took a risk, and succeeded, followers had another reason to trust my leadership ability—and to listen to what I had to say.

## **ABILITY—WHAT YOU CAN DO**

The bottom line for followers is what a leader is capable of accomplishing. They want to know whether that person can lead their team to victory. Ultimately, that’s the reason people will listen to you and acknowledge you as their leader. As soon as they no longer believe you can deliver, they will stop listening and following.

# **LEADERSHIP WITHOUT LEVERAGE**

If you want to test your ability to lead through influence alone, try leading in an organization of volunteers. Why do I say that? Because in volunteer organizations, there is no leverage. There is no rank or title to fall back on. There is no pay to withhold. There are no benefits or perks. Employees are pretty cooperative when their livelihood is at stake. But in voluntary organizations the thing that works is leadership in its purest form: influence.

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*“The very essence of all power to influence lies in getting the other person to participate.”*

—HARRY A. OVERSTREET

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Psychologist Harry A. Overstreet observed, “The very essence of all power to influence lies in getting the other person to participate.” Followers in voluntary organizations cannot be forced to get on board. If the leader has no influence with them, then they won’t follow.

Recently at a meeting where I was speaking to a group of company presidents and CEOs, one participant asked for advice on finding the best leaders in his organization. My advice was to ask candidates to lead in a volunteer organization for six months. If those leaders can get people to follow them when they have no leverage, then you know that they can influence others. That is the mark of true leadership ability.

## **FROM COMMANDER TO PRIVATE TO COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF**

One of my favorite stories that illustrates the Law of Influence concerns Abraham Lincoln. In 1832, decades before he became president, young Lincoln gathered a group of men to fight in the Black Hawk War. In those days, the person who put together a volunteer company for the militia often became its leader and assumed a commanding rank. In this instance, Lincoln was given the rank of captain. But Lincoln had a problem. He knew nothing about soldiering. He had no prior military experience, and he knew nothing about tactics. He had trouble remembering the simplest military procedures.

For example, one day Lincoln was marching a couple of dozen men across a field and needed to guide them through a gate into another field. But he couldn’t figure out how to do it. Recounting the incident later,

Lincoln said, “I could not for the life of me remember the proper word of command for getting my company endwise. Finally, as we came near [the gate] I shouted: ‘This company is dismissed for two minutes, when it will fall in again on the other side of the gate.’”<sup>2</sup>

As time went by, Lincoln’s level of influence with others in the militia actually *decreased*. While other officers proved themselves and gained rank, Lincoln found himself going in the other direction. He began as a captain, but *title and position* did him little good. He couldn’t overcome the Law of Influence. By the end of his military service, Abraham Lincoln had found his rightful place, having achieved the rank of private.

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*By the end of his military service,  
Abraham Lincoln found his rightful  
place, having achieved the rank of  
private.*

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Fortunately for Lincoln—and for the fate of the United States—he overcame his inability to influence others. Lincoln followed his time in the military with undistinguished stints in the Illinois state legislature and the US House of Representatives. But over time and with much effort and personal experience, he became a person of remarkable influence and impact, and later one of the nation’s finest presidents.

I love the leadership proverb that says, “He who thinks he leads, but has no followers, is only taking a walk.” If you can’t influence people, then they will not follow you. And if people won’t follow, you are not a leader. That’s the Law of Influence. No matter what anybody else may tell you, remember that leadership is influence—nothing more, nothing less.

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*Applying*  
THE LAW OF INFLUENCE



## *to Your Life*

1. Which of the myths in this chapter have you bought into in the past: management, entrepreneur, knowledge, pioneer, or position? Why have you been susceptible to that myth? What does that say about your perception of leadership up until now? What must you change in your current thinking to make you more open to improving your leadership in the future?
2. What do you usually rely upon most to persuade people to follow you? Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10 for each of the seven factors named in the chapter (a 1 means it's not a factor, while a 10 means you rely on it continually):

Character—who you are

Relationships—who you know

Knowledge—what you know

Intuition—what you feel

Experience—where you've been

Past success—what you've done

Ability—what you can do

How can you optimize or better utilize the ones with low scores?

3. Find an organization for a cause you believe in and volunteer. If you believe you have leadership ability, then after building relationships, try leading. It will help you learn to lead through influence.

# 3

## THE LAW OF PROCESS

### *Leadership Develops Daily, Not in a Day*

Theodore Roosevelt helped create a world power, won a Nobel Peace Prize, and became president of the United States. But today you wouldn't even know his name if he hadn't known the Law of Process.

**A**nne Scheiber was 101 years old when she died. For years she had lived in a tiny, run-down, rent-controlled studio apartment in Manhattan. The paint on the walls was peeling, and the old bookcases that lined the walls were covered in dust. Rent was four hundred dollars a month.

Scheiber lived on Social Security and a small monthly pension, which she started receiving in 1943 when she retired as an auditor for the Internal Revenue Service. She hadn't done very well at the IRS. More accurately, the agency hadn't done right by her. Despite having a law degree and doing excellent work, she was never promoted. And when she retired at age fifty-one, she was making only \$3,150 a year.

## WINDFALL!

Imagine the surprise of Norman Lamm, the president of Yeshiva University in New York City, when he found out that Anne Scheiber, a little old lady whose name he had never heard—and who had never attended Yeshiva—left nearly her entire estate to the university.

“When I saw the will, it was mind blowing, such an unexpected windfall,” said Lamm. “This woman has become a legend overnight.”

The estate Anne Scheiber left to Yeshiva University was worth \$22 million!<sup>1</sup>

How in the world did a spinster who had been retired for fifty years build an eight-figure fortune? The answer is, she did it one day at a time.

By the time she retired from the IRS in 1943, Anne Scheiber had managed to save \$5,000. She invested that money in stocks. By 1950, she had made enough profit to buy 1,000 shares of Schering-Plough Corporation stock, then valued at \$10,000, and she held on to that stock, letting its value build. By the time she died, those original shares split enough times to produce 128,000 shares, worth \$7.5 million.<sup>2</sup>

The secret to Scheiber’s success was that she spent most of her life building her worth. Whether her stock’s values went up or down, she didn’t sell it off with the thought, *I’m finished building; now it’s time to cash out*. She was in for the long haul, the *really* long haul. While other older people worry that they may run out of funds before the end of their lives, the longer she lived, the wealthier she became. When it came to finances, Scheiber understood and applied the Law of Process.

## LEADERSHIP IS LIKE INVESTING—IT COMPOUNDS

Becoming a leader is a lot like investing successfully in the stock market. If your hope is to make a fortune in a day, you’re not likely to be successful. There are no successful “day traders” in leadership development. What matters most is what you do day by day over the long haul. My friend Tag

Short maintains, “The secret of our success is found in our daily agenda.” If you continually invest in your leadership development, letting your “assets” compound, the inevitable result is growth over time. What can you see when you look at a person’s daily agenda? Priorities, passion, abilities, relationships, attitude, personal disciplines, vision, and influence. See what a person is doing every day, day after day, and you’ll know who that person is and what he or she is becoming.

When I teach leadership at conferences, people inevitably ask me if leaders are born. I always answer, “Yes, of course they are . . . I’ve yet to meet an unborn leader! How else would you expect them to come into the world?” We all laugh, and then I answer the real question—whether leadership is something a person either is born with and possesses, or is not born with and doesn’t. I can tell you: leadership can be learned.

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*Becoming a leader is a lot like investing successfully in the stock market. If your hope is to make a fortune in a day, you’re not likely to be successful.*

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If a genie appeared and gave me just one wish, it would be that people who learn leadership from me now could have seen me fifty years ago. I was not a good leader because I truly did not understand it. In my first leadership position, I led through popularity. I was charismatic and energetic, and I could make things fun. So people joined along with me. But I didn’t really take anyone anywhere. And when I left the organization, it declined because I had gathered a crowd. When I left, the crowd dispersed.

I spent probably six months trying to figure out what happened and where I went wrong. At the end of that time, I came to the conclusion that I was trying to lead out of personality instead of a process. That’s a problem because personality always takes shortcuts. I wanted people to like me, but I wasn’t doing anything to help them change their behavior, take action, and win. Good leadership is bigger and better than one person.

You may have been born with great natural gifts or few. That's not important in the end, because the ability to lead is really a collection of skills, nearly all of which can be learned and improved. If you have loads of talent but never develop it, you will not lead as well as people with fewer gifts who dedicate themselves to the Law of Process.

Becoming a better leader is a process that doesn't happen overnight. Leadership is complicated. It has many facets: respect, experience, emotional strength, people skills, discipline, vision, momentum, timing—the list goes on. As you can see, many factors that come into play in leadership are intangible. That's why leaders require so much seasoning to be effective.

## LEADERS ARE LEARNERS

In a study of ninety top leaders from a variety of fields, leadership experts Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus made a discovery about the relationship between growth and leadership: “It is the capacity to develop and improve their skills that distinguishes leaders from their followers.” Successful leaders are learners. And the learning process is ongoing, a result of self-discipline and perseverance. The goal each day must be to get a little better, to build on the previous day's progress.

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*“It is the capacity to develop and  
improve their skills that distinguishes  
leaders from their followers.”*

—BENNIS AND NANUS

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The problem is that most people overestimate the importance of events and underestimate the power of processes. We want quick fixes. We want the compounding effect that Anne Scheiber received over fifty years, but we want it in fifty minutes.

Don't get me wrong. I appreciate events. They can be effective catalysts. But if you want lasting improvement, if you want power, then rely on a process. Consider the difference between the two:

AN EVENT	A PROCESS
Encourages decisions	Encourages development
Motivates people	Matures people
Is a calendar issue	Is a culture issue
Challenges people	Changes people
Is easy	Is difficult

If I need to be inspired to take steps forward, then I'll attend an event. If I want to improve, then I'll engage in a process and stick with it.

## CONSISTENCY COMPOUNDS

As a young leader, I discovered the Law of Process when I learned that I had to keep growing if I wanted to become a good leader. More than fifty years have gone by since then, and what I've discovered is that consistency compounds. By working to grow a little every day, I've grown a lot over the years. It takes time for the little things to add up to big things. Too often, we get discouraged because we don't see great leaps in our growth. What we need to remember is that most changes occur gradually. It's like trying to freeze room-temperature water. If you put water outside on a cold winter day, it will start changing from 75 degrees Fahrenheit, down to 74, 73, 72, but it looks like nothing is happening. The water temperature goes down into the sixties, fifties, then forties. Still it looks like nothing's happening. It keeps dropping: 38, 37, 36, 35, 34, 33. So much time has gone by that you're ready to give up. Then it drops down to 32 and a major change occurs. It's a breakthrough change.

Leaders are the same way. They need to keep learning and growing, even if they don't see the payoff. Sometimes we are so close to having a compounding victory and we don't know it. If we give up before the

change, we miss it. Persistence pays. Consistency compounds. As martial arts legend Bruce Lee said, “Long-term consistency trumps short-term intensity.”

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*“The secret of success in life is for a man to be ready for his time when it comes.”*

—BENJAMIN DISRAELI

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Leadership is developed daily, not in a day. That is the reality dictated by the Law of Process. Benjamin Disraeli asserted, “The secret of success in life is for a man to be ready for his time when it comes.” What a person does on a disciplined, consistent basis gets him ready, no matter what the goal.

## FIGHTING YOUR WAY UP

There is an old saying: champions don’t become champions in the ring—they are merely recognized there. That’s true. If you want to see where someone develops into a champion, look at his daily routine. Former heavyweight champ Joe Frazier stated, “You can map out a fight plan or a life plan. But when the action starts, you’re down to your reflexes. That’s where your road work shows. If you cheated on that in the dark of the morning, you’re getting found out now under the bright lights.”<sup>3</sup> Boxing is a good analogy for leadership development because it is all about daily preparation. Even a person with natural talent has to prepare and train to become successful.

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*Champions don’t become champions  
in the ring—they are merely*

*recognized there.*

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One of this country's greatest leaders was a fan of boxing: President Theodore Roosevelt. In fact, one of his most famous quotes uses a boxing analogy:

It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena; whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs and comes short again and again; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, and spends himself in a worthy cause; who, at best, knows in the end the triumph of high achievement; and who, at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.

Roosevelt, a boxer himself, was the ultimate man of action. Not only was he an effective leader, but he was one of the most flamboyant of all US presidents. British historian Hugh Brogan described him as “the ablest man to sit in the White House since Lincoln; the most vigorous since Jackson; the most bookish since John Quincy Adams.”

## **A MAN OF ACTION**

TR (Roosevelt's nickname) is remembered as an outspoken man of action and proponent of the vigorous life. While in the White House, he was known for regular boxing and judo sessions, challenging horseback rides, and long, strenuous hikes. A French ambassador who visited Roosevelt used to tell about the time that he accompanied the president on a walk through the woods. When the two men came to the banks of a stream that was too deep to cross by foot, TR stripped off his clothes and expected the dignitary to do the same so that they could swim to the other side. Nothing was an obstacle to Roosevelt.

At different times in his life, Roosevelt was a cowboy in the Wild West, an explorer and big-game hunter, and a roughriding cavalry officer in the Spanish-American War. His enthusiasm and stamina seemed boundless. As



the vice-presidential candidate in 1900, he gave 673 speeches and traveled 20,000 miles while campaigning for President McKinley. And years after his presidency, while preparing to deliver a speech in Milwaukee, Roosevelt was shot by a would-be assassin. With a broken rib and a bullet in his chest, Roosevelt insisted on delivering his one-hour speech before allowing himself to be taken to the hospital.

## ROOSEVELT STARTED SLOW

Of all the leaders this nation has ever had, Roosevelt was one of the toughest—both physically and mentally. But he didn't start that way. America's cowboy president was born in Manhattan to a prominent wealthy family. As a child, he was puny and sickly. He had debilitating asthma, possessed very poor eyesight, and was painfully thin. His parents weren't sure he would survive.

When he was twelve, young Roosevelt's father told him, "You have the mind, but you have not the body, and without the help of the body the mind cannot go as far as it should. You must *make* the body." Make it he did. He lived by the Law of Process.

TR began spending time *every day* building his body as well as his mind, and he did that for the rest of his life. He worked out with weights, hiked, ice-skated, hunted, rowed, rode horseback, and boxed. Roosevelt said, "I had a great admiration for men who were fearless and who could hold their own in the world, and I had a great desire to be like them."<sup>4</sup> By the time TR graduated from Harvard, he *was* like them, and he was ready to tackle the world of politics.

## NO OVERNIGHT SUCCESS

Roosevelt didn't become a great leader overnight, either. His road to the presidency was one of slow, continual growth. As he served in various

positions, ranging from New York City police commissioner to president of the United States, he kept learning and growing, and in time he became a strong leader. Under his leadership, the United States emerged as a world power, developed a first-class navy, and built the Panama Canal. He negotiated peace between Russia and Japan, winning a Nobel Peace Prize in the process. And when people questioned TR's leadership—he had first become president when McKinley was assassinated—he campaigned and was reelected by the largest majority of any president up to his time.

On January 6, 1919, at his home in New York, Theodore Roosevelt died in his sleep. Then Vice President Marshall said, "Death had to take him sleeping, for if Roosevelt had been awake, there would have been a fight." When they removed him from his bed, they found a book under his pillow. Up to the very last, TR was still striving to learn and improve himself. He was still practicing the Law of Process.

If you want to be a leader, the good news is that you can do it. Everyone has the potential, but it isn't accomplished overnight. It requires perseverance. And you absolutely cannot ignore the Law of Process. Leadership doesn't develop in a day. It takes a lifetime.

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*Applying*  
THE LAW OF PROCESS

## *to Your Life*

1. How will you intentionally grow as a leader? Do you have a plan? If not, write one out. I recommend that you read one book a month, listen to at least one message or podcast a week, and attend one conference a year. Select the materials in advance, put time for growth on your calendar, and start immediately. If developing a plan from scratch seems difficult, you may want to read my book *Today Matters*. That contains the personal growth plan I have used for years.
2. One thing that separates great leaders from good leaders is the way they invest in those who follow them. Just as you need a growth plan to improve, so do those who work for you. You can take groups of employees through books, bring in trainers, mentor people one on one—anything that works. Make providing opportunities for growth your responsibility.
3. If you are the leader of a business, an organization, or a department, you can create a culture of growth. When people in your sphere of influence know that personal growth and leadership development are valued, resourced, and rewarded, then growth will explode. And the environment you create will begin attracting high achievers and people with great potential.

## 4

### THE LAW OF NAVIGATION

*Anyone Can Steer the Ship, but It Takes a Leader to  
Chart the Course*

Using a fail-safe compass, Robert Falcon Scott led his team of adventurers to the end of the earth—and to inglorious deaths. They would have lived if only he, their leader, had known the Law of Navigation.

**I**n 1911, two groups of explorers set off on an incredible mission. Though they used different strategies and routes, the leaders of the teams had the same goal: to be the first in history to reach the South Pole. Their stories are life-and-death illustrations of the Law of Navigation.

One group was led by Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen. Ironically, Amundsen had not originally intended to go to Antarctica. His desire was to be the first man to reach the North Pole. But when he learned that Robert Peary had beaten him there, Amundsen changed his goal and headed toward the other end of the earth. North or south—he knew his planning would pay off.

## **AMUNDSEN CAREFULLY CHARTED HIS COURSE**

Before his team ever set off, Amundsen had assessed the coming challenges and painstakingly planned his trip. He studied the methods of the indigenous Arctic people and other experienced cold-weather travelers, and he determined that their best course of action would be to transport all their equipment and supplies by dogsled. When he assembled his team, he chose expert skiers and dog handlers. His strategy was simple. The dogs would do most of the work as the group traveled fifteen to twenty miles in a six-hour period each day. That would afford both the dogs and the men plenty of time for daily rest prior to the following day's travel.

Amundsen's forethought and attention to detail were incredible. He located and stocked supply depots all along the intended route. That way they would not have to carry every bit of their supplies with them the whole trip. He also equipped his people with the best gear possible. Before he set off, Amundsen had taken the trip in his mind, carefully considering every possible aspect of the journey, thinking it through, and planning accordingly. And it paid off. The worst problem they experienced on their trip was an infected tooth one man needed to have extracted.

## **SCOTT VIOLATED THE LAW OF NAVIGATION**

The other team of people was led by Robert Falcon Scott, a British naval officer who had previously done some exploring in the Antarctic area. Scott's expedition was the antithesis of Amundsen's. Instead of using dogsleds, Scott decided to use motorized sledges and ponies. Their problems began when the motors on the sledges stopped working only five days into the trip. The ponies didn't fare well either in those frigid temperatures. When they reached the foot of the Transantarctic Mountains, all of the poor animals had to be killed. As a result, the team members themselves ended up hauling the two-hundred-pound sledges. It was arduous work.

Scott hadn't given enough attention to the team's other equipment either. Everyone on the team developed frostbite and became snow-blind because of inadequate clothing and goggles. The team was always low on food and water. The depots of supplies were inadequately stocked, too far apart, and poorly marked, making them very difficult to find. Because they were continually low on fuel to melt snow, everyone became dehydrated. Making things even worse was Scott's last-minute decision to take along a fifth man, even though they had prepared enough supplies for only four.

After covering a grueling eight hundred miles in ten weeks, Scott's exhausted group finally arrived at the South Pole on January 17, 1912. There they found the Norwegian flag flapping in the wind and a letter from Amundsen. The other well-led team had beaten them there by more than a month!

## **IF YOU DON'T LIVE BY THE LAW OF NAVIGATION . . .**

Scott's expedition to the South Pole is a classic example of a leader who could not navigate for his people. But their trek back was even worse. Scott insisted that they collect and carry back thirty pounds of geological specimens—more weight to be carried by the worn-out men. The group's progress became slower and slower. One member of the party sank into a stupor and died. Another, suffering severe frostbite, purposely walked out into a blizzard to keep from hindering the group. Before he left the tent, he said, "I am just going outside; I may be some time."

Scott and his final two team members made it only a little farther north before giving up. They died 150 miles from their base camp. We know their story only because they spent their last hours updating their diaries and writing letters.

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*Because Robert Falcon Scott was  
unable to live by the Law of*

*Navigation, he and his companions  
died by it.*

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Some of the last words Scott wrote were: “We have been to the Pole and we shall die like gentlemen. . . . I think this will show that the spirit of pluck and power to endure has not passed out of our race. . . . We very nearly came through and it’s a pity to have missed it, but lately I have felt that we have overshot the mark.”<sup>1</sup> Scott had great courage. But only at the end did he recognize his shortcomings. Finally he saw that anyone can steer the ship, but it takes a leader to chart the course. Because he did not live by the Law of Navigation, he and his companions died by it.

## **NAVIGATORS SEE THE TRIP AHEAD**

One thing all leaders have in common is the ability to see more and before—they see more than others do because they see the big picture, which not all people grasp. And they see what’s coming before others do. This gives them an advantage when it comes to navigating for the people they lead. And today, with the rapid pace of life, that ability to see *before* others do is especially important so that they don’t let their team get blindsided.

The larger the organization someone leads, the more clearly the leader has to be able to see ahead. That’s true because sheer size makes midcourse corrections more difficult. And if there are errors in navigation, many more people are affected than when a leader is traveling alone or with only a few people. The disaster of the *Titanic* was a good example of that kind of problem. The crew could not see far enough ahead to avoid the iceberg altogether, and because of the size of the ship, they could not maneuver enough to change course once the object was in view. The result was that more than one thousand people lost their lives.

## **WHERE THE LEADER GOES . . .**



First-rate navigators always have in mind that people are depending on them and their ability to chart a good course. I read an observation by James A. Autry in *Life and Work: A Manager's Search for Meaning* that illustrates this idea. He wrote that occasionally you hear about the crash of four military planes flying together in a formation. The reason for the loss of all four is this: when jet fighters fly in groups of four, one pilot—the leader—designates where the team will fly. The other three planes fly on the leader's wing, adjusting to him and following wherever he goes. Whatever moves the leader makes, the rest of the team will make along with him. That's true whether he soars in the clouds or smashes into a mountaintop.

Before good leaders take their people on a journey, they take steps to give the trip the best chance for success:

## **1. NAVIGATORS KEEP THEIR EMOTIONS FROM CLOUDING THEIR VISION**

Recently I came across something writer and professor C. S. Lewis wrote in 1948 because people were worried about dying as a result of an atomic bomb. It reminded me of the fear people experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic. Lewis wrote,

We think a great deal too much of the atomic bomb. "How are we to live in an atomic age?" I am tempted to reply: "Why, as you would have lived in the sixteenth century when the plague visited London almost every year, or as you would have lived in a Viking age when raiders from Scandinavia might land and cut your throat any night; or indeed, as you are already living in an age of cancer, an age of syphilis, an age of paralysis, an age of air raids, an age of railway accidents, an age of motor accidents."

In other words, do not let us begin by exaggerating the novelty of our situation. Believe me, dear sir or madam, you and all whom you love were already sentenced to death before the atomic bomb was invented. . . . It is perfectly ridiculous to go about whimpering and drawing long faces because the scientists have added one more chance of painful and premature death to a world which already bristled with such chances and in which death itself was not a chance at all, but a certainty.

This is the first point to be made: and the first action to be taken is to pull ourselves together.<sup>2</sup>

No matter the conditions we face, leaders must not panic. They can't let the circumstances prevent them from seeing more and before and from navigating people through their difficulties.

Tom Morris, in his book *Plato's Lemonade Stand*, offers a metaphor that can help leaders avoid getting caught up in emotion that might otherwise paralyze them. "Imagine life as a large wagon wheel," writes Morris. "If we emotionally live on the outer rim, then as the wheel turns, we'll be spun around to extreme highs and lows in rapid and dizzying succession. But if we can learn to move closer in toward the mid point of the hub, we become much more centered. The wheel will still spin, but we won't be so dramatically thrown by its motion. That's a position of power."<sup>3</sup>

The best navigators are able to delay their emotions long enough to work through a problem when people are depending on them to lead. How can they do that? First, by knowing and staying true to their definition of success. For example, the definition of success that guides me internally states that success is having those closest to me love and respect me the most. This keeps me grounded and faithful. My external definition of success is knowing my purpose, growing to my potential, and sowing seeds that benefit others. These two definitions give me perspective as I face challenges.

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*The best navigators are able to delay their emotions long enough to work through a problem when people are depending on them to lead.*

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The second factor that helps good navigators keep their heads in the midst of difficult circumstances is dedication to being bigger on the inside than the outside. This comes from having more faith than fear and from embracing good values. When facing difficult times, values keep us from losing our way or giving up.

## **2. NAVIGATORS DRAW ON PAST EXPERIENCE**

Every past success and failure you've experienced can be a valuable source of information and wisdom—if you allow it to be. While successes can teach you what you're capable of doing and gives you confidence,

failures often teach greater lessons. They reveal wrong assumptions, character flaws, errors in judgment, and poor working methods. Ironically, many people hate their failures so much that they quickly cover them up instead of analyzing them and learning from them. As I explain in my book *Failing Forward*, if you fail to learn from your mistakes, you're going to fail again and again.

Why do I even mention something that seems so basic? Because most natural leaders are activists. They tend to look forward (not backward), make decisions, and move on. I know this because that is my tendency. But I'm not very good at navigating. It's one of my leadership weaknesses. Good navigators take time to reflect and learn from their experiences. I wrote about this in my book *How Successful People Think*, but allow me to recount some advantages of reflective thinking here. Reflective thinking . . .

- Gives you true perspective.
- Gives emotional integrity to your thought life.
- Increases your confidence in decision making.
- Clarifies the big picture.
- Takes a good experience and makes it a valuable experience.<sup>4</sup>

Each benefit gives a leader a great advantage when planning next steps for a team or organization.

### **3. NAVIGATORS EXAMINE THE CONDITIONS BEFORE COMMITTING**

Drawing on experience means looking inward. Examining conditions means looking outward. No good leader plans a course of action without paying close attention to current conditions. That would be like setting sail against the tide or plotting a course into a hurricane. Good navigators look at the present and try to anticipate the future so that they can count the cost *before* making commitments for themselves and their team. They examine not only measurable factors such as finances, resources, and talent, but also intangibles such as timing, morale, momentum, culture, and so on. (I'll discuss this more in the Laws of Intuition and Timing.)

#### 4. NAVIGATORS LISTEN TO OTHERS

No matter how much you learn from the past, it will never tell you all that you need to know about the present. No matter how good a leader you are, you will not see everything you need to. That's why topnotch navigators gather information from many sources. For example, before Roald Amundsen's expedition to the South Pole, he learned from a group of Native Americans in Canada about warm clothing and Arctic survival techniques. Those skills and practices meant the difference between failure and success for his team in Antarctica.

Navigating leaders get ideas from many sources. They listen to members of their leadership team. They talk to the people in their organization to find out what's happening at the grassroots level. And they spend time with leaders from outside the organization who can mentor them. They always think in terms of relying on a team, not just themselves.

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*No matter how much you learn from  
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#### 5. NAVIGATORS BALANCE BOTH FACT AND FAITH

Being able to navigate for others requires a leader to possess a positive attitude. You've got to have faith that you can take your people all the way. If you can't confidently make the trip in your mind, you're not going to be able to take it in real life.

On the other hand, you also have to be able to realistically deal with facts. You can't minimize obstacles or rationalize challenges and still navigate effectively. Pretending obstacles don't exist won't help you to overcome them. If you don't go in with your eyes wide open, you're going to get blindsided.

Jim Collins confirmed this balance between faith and fact in his 2001 book *Good to Great*. He calls it the Stockdale Paradox, after Admiral Jim Stockdale, and writes, "You must retain faith that you will prevail in the end *and* you must also confront the most brutal facts of your current reality."<sup>5</sup>

Balancing optimism and realism, intuition and planning, faith and fact can be very difficult. But that's what it takes to be effective as a navigating leader.

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## A LESSON IN NAVIGATION

I remember the first time I really understood the importance of the Law of Navigation. I was twenty-eight years old, and I wanted to lead my organization through a difficult challenge unlike anything I'd ever done before. But I was aware of my shortcomings as a navigator: I took no joy in getting into logistical details, and I was impatient. So to help me create a way forward in the navigation process, I developed a strategy that I have used repeatedly in my leadership. I wrote it as an acrostic based on *Plan Ahead* so that I would always be able to remember it:

**P**redetermine a course of action.

**L**ay out your goals.

**A**adjust your priorities.

**N**otify key personnel.

**A**llow time for acceptance.

**H**ead into action.

**E**xpect problems.

**A**lways point to the successes.

**D**aily review your plan.

Leaders who are good navigators plan ahead. They see more and before others, and they *prepare* more and before. This enables them to find a way forward as well as convey confidence and gain trust from people. Great leaders do all that, plus they make navigational adjustments, changing course when needed as they go along. More than once, Robert Falcon Scott could have made navigational adjustments that might have saved his team. When the motorized sledges failed, he could have turned back. Or when they realized the ponies couldn't make the trip into the mountains. Instead, he valued reaching the Pole more than keeping his team alive. He demonstrated an inflexibility that prevented him from making good decisions. In the end, it's not the size of the project that determines its acceptance, support, and success. It's the size of the leader. That's why I say that anyone can *steer* the ship, but it takes a leader to chart the course.

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## NAVIGATING A PANDEMIC

For leaders to be at their best, they need to do all twenty-one laws well. But at the same time, *nobody* does all twenty-one well. Of all the laws, I'm probably the worst at the Law of Navigation. However, I am fortunate to have someone leading my organizations who is better at navigation than I am: Mark Cole. I was reminded of his ability to chart the course as the COVID-19 pandemic struck in the spring of 2020.

In February 2020, Mark and I were in Israel leading tour groups of the Holy Land. When we were about a week and a half away from the end of the tour, we began hearing news about a potential pandemic on the horizon. Already in some countries officials were talking about shutting down travel. We started to have concerns about getting everyone in our group home from

Israel—and getting home ourselves. But we also had another difficult leadership challenge to navigate.

We were then four weeks away from holding our twice-annual International Maxwell Certification (IMC) event, our biggest conference of the year. More than three thousand people from sixty-four nations had signed up and were scheduled to attend. We needed to figure out whether to hold the conference or cancel it. But there was a lot on the line. If we canceled the conference, we would lose millions of dollars. We had already given money to the hotel in Orlando where we hold the conference, and we would also be responsible to pay for a huge block of rooms whether or not they were used. Plus, we had a deadline in a few days to pay an additional \$1 million for food.

We had a decision to make. We could plow ahead and hold the conference. Everything in the United States was still open for business. The airlines were flying. We could tell everyone who had signed up to come. That would save us financially. But what would it do to the people who had signed up for the conference?

Mark took ownership of navigating the company through these decisions. His values were his guiding principles. “Our number one value is valuing people,” Mark said. “We were in Israel experiencing the stress of not knowing what was going to happen, not knowing if we would be able to get on planes to go home. I knew that the people signed up for the IMC were experiencing that same stress and doubt.

“We waited as late as we could to make the call because we wanted to see what would happen,” said Mark, “but in the end, we needed to do what was right for the people. We canceled the event in time for people to change their travel early enough to get their money back.” The decision was difficult, but clear. Mark said simply, “Sometimes it costs money to put people first.”

Mark did the right thing, and we were prepared to deal with the negative financial fallout. But then two weeks later, something happened. Walt Disney World closed and the hotels in Orlando shut down. Our company wasn’t going to be responsible for rooms that *could not* be occupied. Mark used that opportunity to work with the hotel to renegotiate our deal with them for future IMC events.

But we still had thousands of people anxious to be certified as John Maxwell Team (JMT) coaches. What were we going to do about that? With the help of our staff, Mark navigated that too. They created a virtual event in August 2020, and we ended up training and certifying more than six thousand coaches virtually. It was the largest training we ever held. Since then, Mark has developed a system in which we train as large a group as we can in person according to circumstances while simultaneously providing virtual training to people not traveling to Orlando. It's become a huge win for the coaches and for us!

That's what good leaders do. They do more than steer the ship; they chart the course. When they practice the Law of Navigation, they create wins for the people on their team, the organization, and everyone they serve. What could be better than that?

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*Applying*  
THE LAW OF NAVIGATION

## *to Your Life*

1. Do you make it a regular practice to reflect on your positive and negative experiences? If not, you miss the potential lessons they have to offer. Do one of two things. Set aside a time to reflect every week, examining your calendar or journal to jog your memory. Or build reflection time into your schedule immediately after every major success or failure. In either case, write down what you learn during that discovery process.
2. Leaders who navigate well do their homework. For a current project or objective, draw on your past experience, have intentional conversations with experts and team members to gather information, and examine current conditions to inform your navigational planning. Once you've taken these steps, and formed your action plan, take action.
3. Which way do you naturally lean—toward faith or facts? Are you highly visionary and optimistic, believing that anything is possible? Or do you focus on facts without giving much attention to intangibles? To successfully practice the Law of Navigation, you must embrace both. Enlist opposite-thinking people on your team to help you. Work together to navigate to success.

## 5

### THE LAW OF ADDITION

#### *Leaders Add Value by Serving Others*

What kind of a Fortune 500 CEO works on a folding table, answers his own phone, visits hourly employees as often as possible, and is criticized by Wall Street for being too good to his employees? The kind of leader who understands the Law of Addition.

In a world where many political leaders enjoy their power and prestige and where CEOs of large corporations make astronomical incomes, work and live in luxury, and appear to be most concerned with what's in it for them, Jim Sinegal was an oddity.

Sinegal is the cofounder and former CEO of Costco, one of the largest retailers in the world and an organization that regularly ranks near the top as a best brand, admired company, and respected retailer.<sup>1</sup> He retired in 2012. While he was CEO, Sinegal didn't seem much interested in the perks of leadership. He worked in an unremarkable office comprised primarily of folding tables and chairs. If he invited people to meet him at the corporate offices, he went down to the lobby himself to meet them. He answered his

own phone. And the salary he took was modest: a third of the average CEO's salary during his tenure.<sup>2</sup>

Sinegal's path to corporate leadership wasn't typical either. He didn't attend an Ivy League school. He wasn't a lawyer or a CPA. As a teenager, he thought of becoming a doctor, but his high school grades were less than stellar. So he went off to community college and earned an associate degree. While he was attending San Diego State College (now University), he helped a friend unload mattresses at a new local retail store called Fed-Mart. What he expected to be one day of work turned into a regular job. When he received a promotion, he discontinued his studies. He had found his career and a mentor, Sol Price, Fed-Mart's chairman. Under Price's guidance, Sinegal rose to the post of executive vice president for merchandising. Sinegal later helped Price found Price Club, then went on to cofound Costco in 1983 with Jeffrey H. Brotman. The company's growth was rapid. Costco purchased and merged with Price Club ten years later.

## **ADDING PROFITS BY ADDING VALUE**

Retail experts give a lot of attention to Sinegal's formula for success: offer a limited number of items, rely on high volume sales, keep costs as low as possible, and don't spend money on advertising. But there is something that separated him from the competitors who employ similar strategies: the way he treated his employees. He believed in paying his employees well and offering them good benefit packages. Sinegal believed if you pay people well, "You get good people and good productivity."<sup>3</sup> You also get employee loyalty. Costco has by far the lowest employee turnover rate in all of retailing.

But Sinegal's leadership style of adding value didn't end with employee compensation. He went out of his way to show Costco workers that he cared about them. He maintained an open-door policy with everyone. He wore an employee name tag, was on a first-name basis with everyone, and made sure to visit every single Costco store at least once a year.

“No manager and no staff in any business feels very good if the boss is not interested enough to come and see them,” said Sinegal. “The employees know that I want to say hello to them, because I like them.”<sup>4</sup>

The only real criticism of Sinegal came from Wall Street. Analysts there believed that Sinegal was too kind and generous to his people. They wanted him to pay employees less and squeeze them more. But Sinegal wouldn’t think of it. He believed that if you treat the employees and customers right, profits will follow. “On Wall Street,” he observed, “they’re in the business of making money between now and next Thursday. I don’t say that with any bitterness, but we can’t take that view. We want to build a company that will still be here 50 and 60 years from now.”<sup>5</sup>

When it came down to it, Sinegal was more focused on adding value to people by serving them than on serving himself. “It’s improper for one person to take credit when it takes so many people to build a successful organization,” stated Sinegal.<sup>6</sup> He lived by the Law of Addition. He said, “I just think that if you’re going to try to run an organization that’s very cost-conscious, then you can’t have those disparities. Having an individual who is making 100 or 200 or 300 times more than the average person working on the floor is wrong.”<sup>7</sup> Sinegal summed it up this way: “This is not altruistic. This is good business.” He could also say it’s good leadership!

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*“It’s improper for one person to take credit when it takes so many people to build a successful organization.”*

—JIM SINEGAL

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## MOTIVES MATTER

Why do leaders lead? If you were to ask a lot of leaders, you might hear a variety of responses, believing a leader’s job is to . . .

- Be in charge.
- Make the organization run smoothly.
- Make money for shareholders.
- Build a great company.
- Make his organization better than the competition.
- Win.

Does a leader's motive matter, or is it simply getting the job done that's important? What's the bottom line?

I didn't give motives much thought until the last twenty-five years. I vividly remember speaking on leadership to a group of government officials in a developing nation years ago and teaching that leaders add value by serving others. I could see that many of the audience members looked very uncomfortable as I talked about it. When I finished speaking and mentioned what I observed to one of my hosts, he said, "Yes, I'm sure they did look uncomfortable. What you have to realize is that probably more than half of those people killed someone to obtain their current position of power." I've seen and heard a lot of things around the world, but that shocked me. In that moment, I realized that I should never take for granted why leaders lead and how they go about doing it.

## DO THE MATH

Many people view leadership the same way they view success, hoping to go as far as they can, to climb the ladder, to achieve the highest position possible for someone with their talent. But contrary to conventional thinking, I believe the bottom line in leadership isn't how far we advance ourselves, but how far we advance others. That is achieved by serving others and adding value to their lives.

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*The bottom line in leadership isn't  
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*how far we advance others.*

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The interaction between every leader and follower is a relationship, and all relationships either add to or subtract from a person's life. If you are a leader, then trust me, you are having either a positive or a negative impact on the people you lead. How can you tell? There is one critical question:

*Are you making things better for the people who follow you?*

That's it. If you cannot answer with an unhesitant yes, and show some evidence that backs it up, then you may very well be a subtractor.

Often subtractors don't realize they are subtracting from others. I would say that 90 percent of all people who take more than they give do so unintentionally, and they don't recognize how negative their impact is on others. However, when leaders are subtractors and don't change their ways, it's only a matter of time before their impact on others goes from subtraction to division.

In contrast, 90 percent of all people who add value to others do so intentionally. Why do I say that? Because human beings are naturally selfish. I'm selfish. Being an adder requires me to get out of my comfort zone every day and think about adding value to others. But that's what it takes to be a leader others want to follow. And eventually if you add value to others long enough, that value tends to multiply.

The people who make the greatest difference seem to understand this. If you examine some of the people who have won the Nobel Peace Prize—for example, Albert Schweitzer, Martin Luther King Jr., Mother Teresa, and Malala Yousafzai—you see leaders who were less interested in their position and more interested in their positive impact on others. If you read their writings or study their lives, you notice that they wanted to make things better for others. They didn't set out to receive the Nobel Prize; they desired to engage in noble service to their fellow human beings. A servant's mind-set pervaded their thinking. Albert Einstein, who was awarded the Nobel Prize for physics in 1921, asserted, "Only a life lived in the service of others is worth living." He understood that great leadership meant great service.

How do leaders serve their people? Jim Sinegal paid good wages and treated employees with respect. Martin Luther King Jr. led people to march for civil rights. Mother Teresa cared for the sick and established places where others could do the same. As a leader, your best place to be in an organization is where you can serve others best. The specifics will depend on vision, talent, opportunities, and organization, but the intention should always be the same—to add value. When you add value to people, you lift them up, help them advance, make them a part of something bigger than themselves, and assist them in becoming who they were made to be. Often their leader is the only person able to help them do those things.

## **ADDING VALUE, CHANGING LIVES**

As I try to live out the Law of Addition, I follow four guidelines that help me add value to others. I believe we can add value to others when we . . .

### **1. TRULY VALUE OTHERS**

Becoming a leader means to give up our right to think of ourselves first. We need to focus on others. We must value people and demonstrate our caring in a way that our followers know it.

I'm told that in American Sign Language, the sign for serving is to hold the hands out in front with the palms up and to move them back and forth between the signer and the signee. And really, that is a good metaphor for the attitude that servant leaders should possess: they should be open, trusting, caring, offering their help, and willing to be vulnerable. Leaders who add value by serving believe in their people before their people believe in them and serve others before they are served.

### **2. MAKE OURSELVES MORE VALUABLE TO OTHERS**

The whole idea of adding value to other people depends on the idea that you have something of value to add. You can't give what you do not possess. What do you have to give others? Can you teach skills? Can you



give opportunities? Can you offer insight and perspective gained through experience? None of these things comes without a price.

If you have skills, you gained them through study and practice. If you have opportunities to give, you acquired them through hard work. If you possess wisdom, you gained it by intentionally evaluating the experiences you've had. The more intentional you have been in growing personally, the more you have to offer. The more you continue to pursue personal growth, the more you will continue to have to offer.

### **3. KNOW AND RELATE TO WHAT OTHERS VALUE**

Inexperienced leaders are quick to lead before knowing anything about the people they intend to lead. But mature leaders listen, learn, and then lead. They *listen* to learn their people's stories. They find out about their hopes and dreams. They become acquainted with their aspirations. And they pay attention to their emotions. From those things, they *learn* who their people are and what is valuable to them. And *then* they *lead* based upon what they've learned. When they do that, everybody wins—the organization, the leader, and the followers.

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*Inexperienced leaders are quick to lead before knowing anything about the people they intend to lead. But mature leaders listen, learn, and then lead.*

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### **4. DO THINGS THAT GOD VALUES**

This final value may not be for you. If so, just skip it. But for me it's nonnegotiable. I believe that God desires us not only to treat people with respect but also to actively reach out to them and serve them. Scripture provides many examples and descriptions of how we should conduct ourselves, but here is my favorite, captured by Eugene Peterson's *The Message*:

“When he finally arrives, blazing in beauty and all his angels with him, the Son of Man will take his place on his glorious throne. Then all the nations will be arranged before him and he will sort the people out, much as a shepherd sorts out sheep and goats, putting sheep to his right and goats to his left.

“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Enter, you who are blessed by my Father! Take what’s coming to you in this kingdom. It’s been ready for you since the world’s foundation. And here’s why:

I was hungry and you fed me,  
I was thirsty and you gave me a drink,  
I was homeless and you gave me a room,  
I was shivering and you gave me clothes,  
I was sick and you stopped to visit,  
I was in prison and you came to me.’

“Then those ‘sheep’ are going to say, ‘Master, what are you talking about? When did we ever see you hungry and feed you, thirsty and give you a drink? And when did we ever see you sick or in prison and come to you?’ Then the King will say, ‘I’m telling the solemn truth: Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me—you did it to me.’”<sup>8</sup>

That standard for my conduct influences everything I do, not just in my leadership, but *especially* my leadership. Because the more power I have, the greater my impact on others—for better or worse. And I always want to be someone who adds value to others, not takes it away. God values people so much that when we add value to them, he takes it personally!

## THE MATH THAT DOESN’T ADD UP

When you embrace the Law of Addition and become a leader who adds value by serving others, in the end, the math doesn’t add up. Why do I say that? Because when you give, you receive back even more than you give. And what you give gets multiplied. I think of this as the servanthood surprise. Here’s how I experienced it:

### I THOUGHT ADDING VALUE TO OTHERS WAS WHAT I SHOULD DO: BUT I GOT A HEART THAT VALUED PEOPLE

When we *help* others, we can see them as weak. When we try to *fix* others, we see them as broken. These attitudes make us feel superior. But

when we *serve* others, we see them as valuable. That changes us. It becomes part of us. Valuing people is part of my identity. Someday, I will no longer be leading others. But I will never stop serving them. That's who I am and what I do.

### **I THOUGHT ADDING VALUE TO HELP OTHERS BE SUCCESSFUL WAS PERSONAL: BUT IT WAS CONTAGIOUS**

Adding value to others was a personal decision. It was something that came from within, and I decided I needed to practice it every day privately. What surprised me is that others joined me. When they saw the joy it brought me, they started adding value to others too. The people in my organizations live to add value to others.

### **I THOUGHT SIGNIFICANCE WOULD COME LATE IN LIFE: BUT SIGNIFICANCE CAME EARLY**

Early in my career, I made a decision to add value to others by training them and creating resources to help them. That required me to do two things: develop creativity and consistency. I needed to keep coming up with ideas, and I needed to keep producing. Little did I know that those two attributes would compound and contribute so much to my success.

### **I THOUGHT ADDING VALUE WOULD HAVE LITTLE RETURN: BUT I DISCOVERED THE RETURN IS AMAZING**

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*“You cannot help someone else get up a hill without getting closer to the top yourself.”*

—NORMAN SCHWARZKOPF

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General Norman Schwarzkopf said, “You cannot help someone else get up a hill without getting closer to the top yourself.” When I started adding

value to others, I had no idea how much it would help me and give me joy. I've gotten back so much more than I've given. When you serve others, their success becomes your success.

## HOW ADDING VALUE MULTIPLIES

When you add value to others by serving others, you know it will help people, but there's no telling what will happen or how far it can go. For example, one day in 2016, I was playing golf with Chris Hodges, a pastor and community leader in Birmingham, Alabama, who has served on the board of my nonprofit organization for many years. Chris is a wonderful person and a good friend. Between holes I asked Chris how I could serve him. Always humble and generous, Chris said he couldn't think of anything. So I pressed him and asked him what he was excited about. Immediately he began talking about Highlands College, a school he was working to establish.

"Is there a way I can help you with that?" I asked. "What's your greatest need?"

Chris said he was trying to raise money for an endowment so that a thousand students a year could receive scholarships to attend the college at no cost. My response was to give him a day. I told him I'd come to Birmingham at my own expense, spend time at a breakfast with his top donors, and then speak at a one-day event for which he could sell tickets. Chris accepted and we set it up.

Now here's the wonderful thing. That day did raise some money for the college. It was successful enough that we decided to do it again the next year, and every year since. But even better, it also encouraged additional donors to give money too. From the time Chris and I had that conversation on the golf course to 2020, Chris has raised \$100 million for scholarships. The little I *added* has been *multiplied*. That's how the Law of Addition inevitably works. When leaders add value by serving others, the math doesn't add up. Everyone gets back more than they give.

If you desire to add value by serving others, you will become a better leader. And your people will achieve more, develop more loyalty, and have a better time getting things done than you ever thought possible. There is absolutely no downside to the Law of Addition.

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*Applying*  
THE LAW OF ADDITION

## *to Your Life*

1. Do you have a servant's attitude when it comes to leadership? Don't be too quick to say yes. Here's how you can tell. In situations where you are required to serve others' needs, how do you respond? Do you become impatient? Do you feel resentful? Do you believe that certain tasks are beneath you or your position? If you answer yes to any of those questions, then your attitude is not as good as it could be. Make it a practice to perform small acts of service for others without seeking credit or recognition for them. Continue until you no longer resent doing them.
2. Do you value what the people closest to you value? Make a list of the most important people in your life, both personal and professional. Beside each name, write what that person values most. Then rate yourself on a scale of 1 (poorly) to 10 (excellently) for how actively and intentionally you support the person in that area.
3. Make adding value part of your lifestyle. Begin with those closest to you. How could you add value to the people on your list related to what *they* value? Start doing it. Then do the same with all the people you lead. If there are only a few, add value individually. If you lead large numbers of people, you may have to think of ways to serve groups as well as individuals.

## 6

### THE LAW OF SOLID GROUND

#### *Trust Is the Foundation of Leadership*

If only Robert McNamara had known the Law of Solid Ground, the war in Vietnam—and everything that happened at home because of it—might have turned out differently.

**H**ow important is trust for a leader? It is *the most important* thing. Trust is the foundation of leadership. It is the glue that holds people together on a team, in an organization, and even in a nation. Leaders cannot repeatedly break trust with people and continue to influence them. It just doesn't happen. That's true in every area of society: government, education, business, religion, media, arts, sports, and health care. Broken trust undermines influence and organizations fall apart.

### THE BEGINNING OF THE END OF TRUST



In my lifetime, I've observed the gradual breakdown of trust in our society, especially of its leaders. In the fifties and early sixties, people had confidence in political leaders and the federal government. At that time, nearly 80 percent of Americans believed the federal government could be trusted to do the right thing most of the time.<sup>1</sup> Today, only 24 percent of Americans trust the government.<sup>2</sup> In a 2020 Gallup poll, people identified members of Congress as the *least* honest and ethical group by profession, with only 8 percent of people believing members of Congress demonstrated high or very high trustworthiness.<sup>3</sup> When did trust in government leaders begin to erode? I believe it started in the mid- and late-sixties during the Vietnam War.

In 1961 during President John F. Kennedy's first year in office, when he said he wanted to fight and contain communism by supporting South Vietnam, most Americans supported him. Though he originally planned to provide only aid, that year he also sent four hundred Green Beret commandos to Vietnam as advisors.<sup>4</sup> The next year he sent an additional twelve thousand military "advisors" as well as three hundred helicopters and pilots.<sup>5</sup> President Lyndon B. Johnson, who took office following Kennedy's assassination, escalated American involvement in the war. In 1965, he sent one hundred fifty thousand troops.<sup>6</sup> By 1966, more than two hundred thousand Americans had been sent to Vietnam. Even with reports of casualties rising, two-thirds of all Americans surveyed by Louis Harris believed that Vietnam was the place where the United States should "stand and fight communism." And most people expressed the belief that the US should stay until the fight was finished.

## FIRST TRUST, THEN SUPPORT

If you know anything about the sixties, you know that the War in Vietnam divided the country. It sparked protests, inspired a huge antiwar movement, and brought about radical social change. How did the country move from overwhelming support to overwhelming opposition? The people lost trust in the nation's leaders.

Johnson and his secretary of defense, Robert McNamara, weren't honest with the American people about the war. As early as 1962, McNamara told the public they were winning the war.<sup>7</sup> In his book *In Retrospect*, McNamara recounted that he repeatedly minimized American losses and told only half-truths about the war. For example, he said, "Upon my return to Washington [from Saigon] on December 21, [1963,] I was less than candid when I reported to the press . . . I said, 'We observed the results of a very substantial increase in Vietcong activity' (true); but I then added, 'We reviewed the plans of the South Vietnamese and we have every reason to believe they will be successful' (an overstatement at best)."<sup>8</sup>

For a while, nobody questioned McNamara's statements because there was no reason to mistrust the country's leaders. But in time, people recognized that his words and the facts weren't matching up. More and more young men were being drafted and sent to Vietnam, yet they were losing the war. The American public began to lose faith. Years later, McNamara admitted his failure: "We of the Kennedy and Johnson administrations who participated in the decisions on Vietnam acted according to what we thought were the principles and traditions of this nation. We made our decisions in light of those values. Yet we were wrong, terribly wrong."<sup>9</sup> The era that had begun with the hope and idealism characterized by John F. Kennedy ultimately ended with the mistrust and cynicism associated with Richard Nixon following Watergate and Nixon's resignation.

Whenever a leader breaks the Law of Solid Ground, he pays a price in his leadership. And the people who are asked to follow him suffer too. The repercussions of broken trust that started to rise in the sixties continue today, not only with political leaders, but with leaders in business, religious institutions, and the entertainment industry. Why? Because they have broken trust.

## THE KEYS TO TRUST

I've become well known for teaching that everything rises and falls on leadership. I believe that to my core. Everything rises when leaders demonstrate competence and good values. Everything falls when leaders demonstrate incompetence and poor values. Why do I say this? When leaders lack competence, they can't accomplish anything. When leaders lack good values, they can't be trusted. They lack character. Without both competence and good values, they can't get anyone to follow them. If vision is like the head in an organization and mission is like the heart, then values are like the soul. Who wants to be part of a soulless organization?

Because trust can seem so intangible, perhaps it would help to think of it like coins in your pocket. Each time you make good leadership decisions through competence or good values, you earn more coins. Each time you make poor decisions, you pay out some of your coins to the people you're asking to follow you.

All leaders have a certain number of coins or amount of change in their pocket when they start in a new leadership position. Whatever they do either builds up the number of coins or depletes it. If leaders make one bad decision after another, they keep paying out coins. Then one day, after making one last bad decision, they suddenly—and irreparably—reach into their pocket and find nothing there. They've run out of coins. It doesn't even matter if the last blunder was big or small. At that point it's too late. When you're out of coins, you're out as the leader. As Craig Weatherup, who retired as founding chairman and CEO of the Pepsi Bottling Group, acknowledged, "People will tolerate honest mistakes, but if you violate their trust you will find it very difficult to ever regain their confidence. That is one reason that you need to treat trust as your most precious asset. You may fool your boss but you can never fool your colleagues or subordinates."

Character and competence always go hand in hand. Journalist and former president of the US Business and Industrial Council Anthony Harrigan said,

The role of character always has been the key factor in the rise and fall of nations. And one can be sure that America is no exception to this rule of history. We won't survive as a country because we are smarter or more sophisticated but because we are—we hope—stronger inwardly. In short, character is the only effective bulwark against internal and external forces that lead to a country's disintegration or collapse.

Character and good values make trust possible. And trust makes leadership possible. That is the Law of Solid Ground.

## CHARACTER COMMUNICATES

Whenever you lead people, it's as if they consent to take a journey with you. The way that trip is going to turn out is predicted by your character. With good character, the longer the trip is, the better it seems. But if your character is flawed, the longer the trip is, and the worse it gets. Why? Because no one enjoys spending time with someone they don't trust.

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*Character makes trust possible. And  
trust makes leadership possible. That  
is the Law of Solid Ground.*

---

A person's character quickly communicates many things to others. Here are the most important ones:

### CHARACTER COMMUNICATES CONSISTENCY

Leaders without inner strength can't be counted on day after day because their ability to perform changes constantly. NBA great Jerry West commented, "You can't get too much done in life if you only work on the days when you feel good." If your people don't know what to expect from you as a leader, at some point they won't look to you for leadership.

When I think of leaders who epitomize consistency of character, the first person who comes to mind is Billy Graham. Regardless of personal religious beliefs, people trusted him. Why? Because he modeled high character for more than half a century. He lived out his values every day. He never made a commitment unless he was going to keep it. And he went out of his way to personify integrity.

## CHARACTER COMMUNICATES POTENTIAL

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*“No man can climb out beyond the limitations of his own character.”*

—JOHN MORLEY

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British politician and writer John Morley observed, “No man can climb out beyond the limitations of his own character.” Weak character is limiting. Who do you think has the greater potential to achieve great dreams and have a positive impact on others: someone who is honest, disciplined, and hardworking, or someone who is deceitful, impulsive, and lazy? It sounds obvious when it’s phrased that way, doesn’t it?

Poor character is like a time bomb ticking away. It’s only a matter of time before it blows up a person’s ability to perform and the capacity to lead. Why? Because people with weak character are not trustworthy, and trust is the foundation of leadership. Craig Weatherup explained, “You don’t build trust by talking about it. You build it by achieving results, always with integrity and in a manner that shows real personal regard for the people with whom you work.”<sup>10</sup>

When leaders have strong character, people trust them, and they trust in their ability to release their potential. That not only gives their followers hope for the future, but it also promotes a strong belief in themselves and their organization.

## CHARACTER COMMUNICATES RESPECT

When you don’t have character within, you can’t earn respect without. And respect is absolutely essential for lasting leadership. How do leaders earn respect? By making tough decisions, by admitting their mistakes, and by putting what’s best for their followers and the organization ahead of their personal agendas. Respect is earned on difficult ground.

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*How do leaders earn respect? By making tough decisions, by admitting their mistakes, and by putting what's best for their followers and the organization ahead of their personal agendas. Respect is earned on difficult ground.*

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Years ago a movie was made about the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts Infantry regiment and its colonel, Robert Gould Shaw. The film was called *Glory*, and though some of its plot was fictionalized, the Civil War story of Shaw's journey with his men—and of the respect he earned from them—was real.

The movie recounted the formation of this unit in the Union army, which was the first to be composed of Black soldiers. Shaw, a white officer, took command of the regiment, oversaw recruiting, selected the (white) officers, equipped the men, and trained them as soldiers. He drove them hard, knowing that their performance in battle would either vindicate or condemn the value of Black people as soldiers and citizens in the minds of many white Northerners. In the process, the soldiers and Shaw earned one another's respect.

A few months after their training was complete, the men of the Fifty-Fourth got the opportunity to prove themselves in the Union assault on Confederate Fort Wagner in South Carolina. Shaw's biographer Russell Duncan said of the attack: "With a final admonition to 'prove yourselves men,' Shaw positioned himself in front and ordered, 'Forward.' Years later, one soldier remembered that the regiment fought hard because Shaw was in front, not behind."<sup>11</sup>

Almost half of the six hundred men from the Fifty-Fourth who fought that day were wounded, captured, or killed. Though they fought valiantly, they were unable to take Fort Wagner. And Shaw, who had courageously led his men to the top of the fort's parapet in the first assault, was killed among his men.

Shaw's actions on that final day solidified the respect his men already had for him. Two weeks after the battle, Albanus Fisher, a sergeant in the

Fifty-Fourth, said, “I still feel more Eager for the struggle than I ever yet have, for I now wish to have Revenge for our galant Curnel [sic].”<sup>12</sup> J. R. Miller once observed, “The only thing that walks back from the tomb with the mourners and refuses to be buried is the character of a man. This is true. What a man is survives him. It can never be buried.” Shaw’s character, strong to the last, had communicated a level of respect to his men that lived beyond him.

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*“The only thing that walks back from  
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survives him. It can never be buried.”*

—J. R. MILLER

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## **RESPECT IN A TOUGH BUSINESS**

No leader can break trust with his people and expect to keep influencing them. Trust is the foundation of leadership. Violate the Law of Solid Ground, and you diminish your influence as a leader. But honor the law and build trust, and people will follow you even through the toughest of situations.

That is what Rick Hendrick has done in one of the toughest businesses. Hendrick grew up on a farm in Virginia, but his great love was vehicles. He worked on farm engines as well as the cars his father raced on drag strips. He was so captivated by cars and racing that with his father’s help, he built a 1931 Chevy into a race car. When the older boys at his high school bragged about their cars, he offered to meet them at the racetrack. They didn’t show up on the designated day, but he raced anyway—against the professionals. And he won! He was fourteen years old. Two years later he won a statewide engine troubleshooting contest.

I think it was inevitable that he would gravitate to the car business. He started at a small used car lot, and by age twenty-three, he was named the general manager. Three years later, General Motors approached him about taking over a tiny failing Chevy dealership in another town, promising that if he made that one work, they'd offer him a big dealership. So in 1976, he sold his assets, bought the failing franchise, moved, and started over. When he made the dealership successful, GM kept their promise. Those were the first steps toward what would become the Rick Hendrick Automotive Group, the collection of more than 130 dealerships he now owns.

Hendrick never lost his love for racing. He founded his own racing team which in 1985 he named Hendrick Motorsports.<sup>13</sup> His team has won thirteen NASCAR titles<sup>14</sup> and won more races than any other team in history.<sup>15</sup> In 2017, he was inducted into the NASCAR Hall of Fame.

How has Rick Hendrick become so successful? Trust! He is known for doing deals with nothing but a handshake. His high competence and strong character create solid ground for him, particularly marked by his care for people. When he visits one of his stores, he always enters through the back door so that he can greet the technicians, porters, and parts staff. He learns people's names. One of his mottos is People Before Profits.

That philosophy of business got tested during the COVID-19 pandemic. In March 2020 as COVID-19 spread, most people in the car business quickly downsized staff. Hendrick said his peers let go 20 percent of their employees. He wasn't going to do that. He let his eleven thousand employees know he was not letting *anyone* go. He would pay them out of his own pocket, and they would figure out how to get through the trouble together. Hendrick said, "If I preach 'my people are my biggest asset' and I tell them they're the most important part of our company, then when things happen, you've got to stand up and stand with them."<sup>16</sup>

Hendrick was prepared to carry his employees for many months, but as it turned out, things began to turn around after only two. While others in his industry scrambled to rebuild their teams, Hendrick's dealerships were already running on eight cylinders. And 2020 became the most profitable year in the company's history. "It wasn't profit over people," said Hendrick. "It was people over profits, and the profits came." No wonder his top fifteen



leaders have been with him an average of twenty-five years. They trust him deeply.

How do the members of your team feel about you? Are you on solid ground with them? Do they trust your competence and character? Do they know you have good values and practice them even in the toughest of times? If so, your influence will keep increasing. If not, you may need to do some work. You cannot escape the Law of Solid Ground, because trust is the foundation of leadership.

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*Applying*  
THE LAW OF SOLID GROUND

## *to Your Life*

1. How can you measure your people's trust in you? By gauging how open they are with you. Do your team members openly share opinions with you—even negative ones? Do they give you bad news as readily as good news? Do they *volunteer* information about their areas of responsibility? If not, they may not trust your character.

How about your leaders? Do they consistently put their trust in you? Do they regularly give you weight to carry? If so, they trust you. If not, you need to work on your competence, your character, or both.

2. How can you improve your character? I recommend that you focus on three main values: integrity, authenticity, and discipline. To develop your integrity, make a commitment to yourself to be scrupulously honest. Don't shave the truth, don't tell white lies, and don't fudge numbers. Be truthful even when it hurts. To develop authenticity, be yourself with everyone. Don't play politics, role-play, or pretend to be anything you're not. To strengthen your discipline, do the right things every day regardless of how you feel.
3. If you have broken trust with others in the past, then you must try to make things right. First, apologize to whomever you have hurt or betrayed. If you can make amends or restitution, then do so. And commit to work at reearning people's trust. The greater the violation, the longer it will take. The onus is not on them to trust. The onus is on you to earn trust back.

## THE LAW OF RESPECT

### *People Naturally Follow Better Leaders Than Themselves*

The odds were stacked against her in just about every possible way, but thousands and thousands of people called her their leader. Why? Because they could not escape the power of the Law of Respect.

If you had seen her, your first reaction might not have been respect. She wasn't a very impressive-looking person—just a little over five feet tall, in her late thirties, with dark brown weathered skin. She couldn't read or write. The clothes she wore were coarse and worn. When she smiled, it revealed that her top two front teeth were missing.

She lived alone. The story was that she had abandoned her husband when she was twenty-nine. She gave him no warning. One day he woke up, and she was gone.

Her employment was erratic. Most of the time she took domestic jobs in small hotels: scrubbing floors, making up rooms, and cooking. Just about every spring and fall she would disappear from her place of employment, come back broke, and work again to scrape together funds. When she was present on the job, she worked hard and seemed physically tough, but she also was known to suddenly fall asleep—sometimes in the middle of a conversation. She attributed her affliction to a blow to the head she had taken during a teenage fight.

Who would respect someone like that? The more than three hundred slaves who followed her to freedom out of the South—they recognized and respected her leadership. So did just about every abolitionist in New England. The year was 1857. The woman's name was Harriet Tubman.

## A LEADER BY ANY OTHER NAME

While she was only in her thirties, Harriet Tubman came to be called Moses because of her ability to go into the land of captivity and bring back so many people out of slavery's bondage. Tubman started life as a slave. Born in 1820, she grew up in the farmland of Maryland. When she was thirteen, she received the blow to her head that troubled her all her life. A white overseer in a store demanded her assistance so that he could beat an escaping slave. When she refused and blocked his way, the white man threw a two-pound weight that hit Tubman in the head. She nearly died, and her recovery took months.

At age twenty-four, she married John Tubman, a free Black man. But when she talked to him about escaping to freedom in the North, he wouldn't hear of it. He said if she tried to leave, he'd turn her in. When she resolved to take her chances and go north in 1849, she did so alone, without a word to him. Her first biographer, Sarah Bradford, said that Tubman told her: "I had reasoned this out in my mind: there was one of two things I had a *right* to, liberty or death. If I could not have one, I would have the other, for no man should take me alive. I should fight for my liberty as my strength lasted."

Tubman made her way to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, via the Underground Railroad, a secret network of free Blacks, white abolitionists, and Quakers who helped escaping slaves on the run. Though free herself, she vowed to return to Maryland and bring her family out. In 1850, she made her first return trip as an Underground Railroad "conductor"—someone who retrieved and guided out slaves with the assistance of sympathizers along the way.

## **A LEADER OF STEEL**

Each summer and winter, Tubman worked to make return trips to the South. Every spring and fall, she risked her life by going south and returning with more people. She was fearless, and her leadership was unshakable. Hers was extremely dangerous work, and when people in her charge wavered or had second thoughts, she was strong as steel. Tubman knew escaped slaves who returned would be beaten and tortured until they gave information about those who had helped them. So she never allowed any people she was guiding to give up. "Dead folks tell no tales," she would tell a fainthearted slave as she put a loaded pistol to his head. "You go on or die!"

Between 1850 and 1860, Harriet Tubman guided out more than three hundred people, including many of her family members. She made nineteen trips in all and was proud of the fact that she never once lost a single person under her care. "I never ran my train off the track," she said, "and I never lost a passenger." At the time, southern whites put a \$12,000 price on her head—that would be around \$400,000 today.<sup>1</sup> By the start of the Civil War, she had brought more people out of slavery than any other American in history—Black or white, male or female.

## **INCREASING RESPECT**

Tubman's reputation and influence commanded respect, and not just among slaves who dreamed of gaining freedom. Influential Northerners of both races sought her out. She spoke at rallies and in homes throughout Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Boston, Massachusetts; St. Catharines, Canada; and Auburn, New York, where she eventually settled. People of prominence sought her out, such as Senator William Seward, who later became Abraham Lincoln's secretary of state, and outspoken abolitionist and former slave Frederick Douglass. Tubman's advice and leadership were also requested by John Brown, the famed revolutionary abolitionist. Brown always referred to the former slave as "General Tubman," and he was quoted as saying she "was a better officer than most whom he had seen, and could command an army as successfully as she had led her small parties of fugitives."<sup>2</sup> That is the essence of the Law of Respect.

## **A TEST OF LEADERSHIP**

Harriet Tubman would appear to be an unlikely candidate for leadership because the deck was certainly stacked against her. She was uneducated. She began life as a slave. She lived in a culture that didn't respect Black people. And she labored in a country where women didn't have the right to vote yet. Despite her circumstances, she became an incredible leader. The reason is simple: people naturally follow better leaders than themselves. Everyone who came in contact with her recognized her strong leadership ability and felt compelled to follow her. That's how the Law of Respect works.

## **IT'S NOT A GUESSING GAME**

People don't follow others by accident. They follow individuals whose leadership they respect. People who are an 8 in leadership (on a scale from 1 to 10, with 10 being the strongest) don't go out and look for a 6 to follow—they naturally follow a 9 or 10. The less skilled follow the more highly skilled and gifted. Occasionally, a strong leader may choose to follow someone less effective than himself. But when that happens, it's for a reason. For example, the better leader may do it out of respect for the person's office or past accomplishments. Or he may be following the chain of command. In general, though, followers are attracted to people who are better leaders than themselves. That is the Law of Respect.

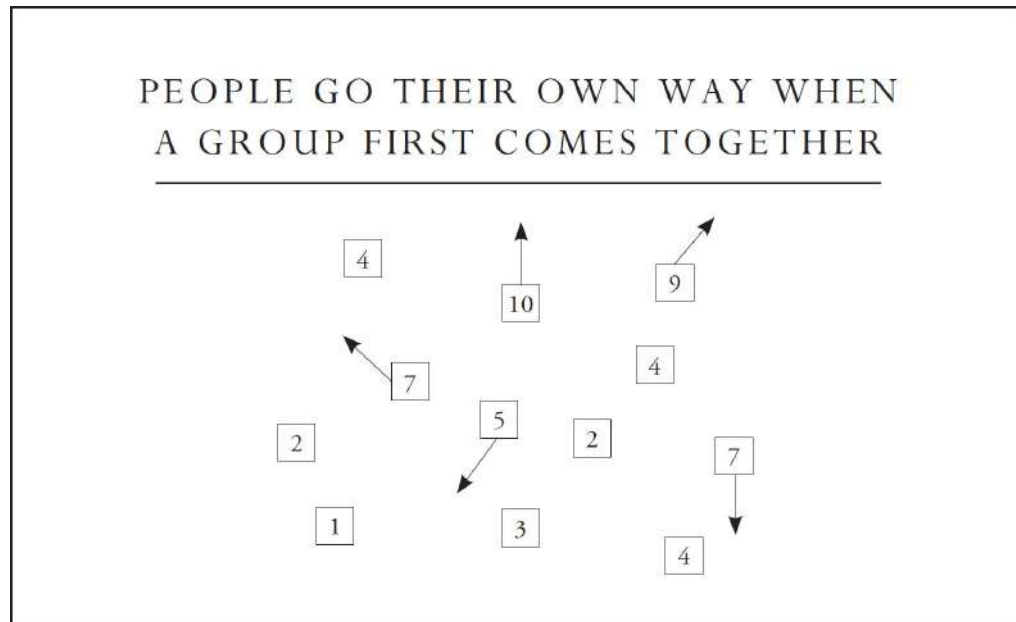
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*The more leadership ability a person has, the more quickly he recognizes leadership—or its lack—in others.*

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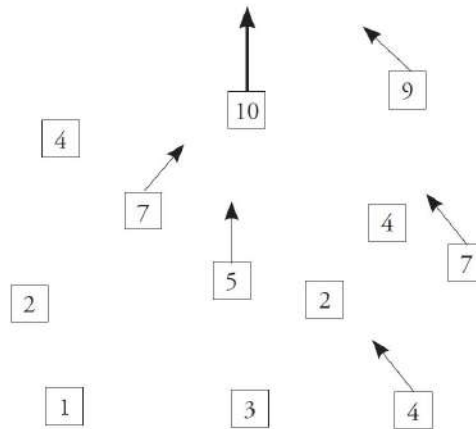
When people get together for the first time in a group, take a look at what happens. As they start interacting, the better leaders emerge, and they begin to influence the others. At first, many people may make tentative moves in several different directions, but after the people get to know one another, it doesn't take long for them to recognize the best leaders and to start following them.

Usually the more leadership ability a person has, the more quickly he recognizes leadership—or its lack—in others. In time, people in the group get on board and follow the strongest leaders. Either that or they leave the group and pursue their own agenda.



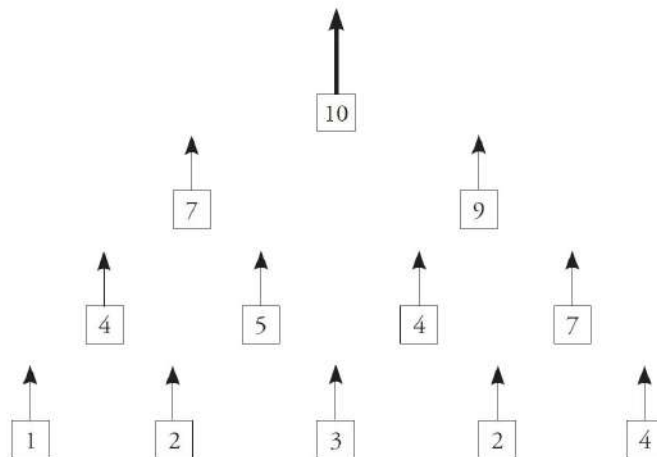
SOON PEOPLE CHANGE DIRECTION TO  
FOLLOW THE BETTER LEADERS

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PEOPLE NATURALLY ALIGN THEMSELVES  
AND FOLLOW LEADERS  
BETTER THAN THEMSELVES

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**GAINING RESPECT**



What causes one person to respect and follow another? Is it because of the qualities of the leader? Is it due to the interaction between the leader and follower? Does it occur because of circumstances? I believe all those factors can come into play and more. Based on my observations and personal experience, here are the top seven ways that leaders gain others' respect:

## 1. NATURAL LEADERSHIP ABILITY

First and foremost is leadership ability. All leaders are not created equal. Some people are born with greater skills and ability to lead. However, as I've stated in the Law of the Lid and the Law of Process, every person can become a better leader.

If you possess natural leadership ability, people will want to follow you. They will want to be around you. They will listen to you. They will become excited when you communicate vision. However, natural leadership ability alone is not enough. If you do not exhibit some of the additional practices and characteristics listed below, you will not reach your leadership capacity, and people may not continue to follow you. One of the greatest potential pitfalls for natural leaders is relying on talent alone.

## 2. RESPECT FOR OTHERS

The one common characteristic all leaders possess is the ability to see more than others and before others. This gives leaders an advantage. Dictators and other autocratic leaders use this ability to gain power and benefit themselves, and they often rely on violence and intimidation to keep it. Leaders with poor values use their advantage to exploit and manipulate others.

In contrast, respect for others sets good leaders apart from bad ones. Good leaders understand that much of leadership is voluntary. When leaders show respect for others—especially for people who have less power or a lower position than theirs—they gain respect. As a result, people *want* to follow them, because the more respect they have for someone, the more open they are to their leadership.

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*When people respect you as a person, they  
admire you. When they respect you as a friend,  
they love you. When they respect you as a  
leader, they follow you.*

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Gaining respect from others follows a pattern:

When people respect you as a person, they *admire* you.

When they respect you as a friend, they *love* you.

When they respect you as a leader, they *follow* you.

If you continually respect others and consistently lead them well, you will continue to have followers.

### **3. DIFFICULTIES OVERCOME**

Respect is gained on difficult ground. Any time leaders care enough about people to positively confront them to help them solve a problem, overcome a blind spot, or change a destructive behavior, both of them grow. The leaders grow in the respect they've earned. The followers grow because they experience breakthroughs they might otherwise never experience.

I've seen this over and over with the corporate clients I've mentored. When I teach leaders how to have candid conversations tackling difficult subjects with team members, the clients have come back and told us those were the most valuable skills they've learned. The conversations they had revolutionized their leadership, and they want more mentoring on how to tackle tough conversations.

### **4. COURAGE**

People do not follow titles; they follow courage. One of the reasons everyone respected Harriet Tubman so much was her tremendous courage. She was determined to succeed, or she was going to die trying. She didn't let the danger stop her. Her mission was clear, and she was absolutely fearless.

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*“A leader does not deserve the name unless he is willing occasionally to stand alone.”*

—HENRY KISSINGER

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Former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger remarked, “A leader does not deserve the name unless he is willing occasionally to stand alone.” Good leaders do what's right, even at the risk of failure, in the face of great danger, and under the brunt of relentless criticism. I can't think of even one great leader from history who was without courage. Can you? A leader's courage has great value: it gives followers hope.

### **5. SUCCESS**

Success is very attractive. People are naturally drawn to it. It's one reason why people in our society are so focused on celebrities' lives, cheer for their favorite sports team, and follow the careers of music stars.

Success is even more important when it applies to the people who lead us. People respect others' accomplishments. And it's hard to argue with a good track record. When leaders are successful in their own endeavors, people respect them. When they succeed in leading the team to victory, then followers believe they can do it again. As a result, followers follow them because they want to be part of success in the future.

### **6. LOYALTY**

We live in an era of free agency. The average worker, according to one source, will change occupations ten times by the time he reaches age thirty-six.<sup>3</sup> Professional athletes hop from team to team, looking for the best deal. CEOs negotiate ridiculously high financial packages, but when things go wrong, they bail out as millionaires.

In a culture of constant change, turnover, and transition, loyalty is an asset. When leaders stick with the team until the job is done, remain loyal to the organization when the going gets rough, and look out for followers even when it hurts them, followers respect them and their actions.

## **7. VALUE ADDED TO OTHERS**

Perhaps the greatest source of respect for a leader comes from his or her dedication to adding value to others. Because I've already discussed this extensively in the Law of Addition, I probably don't need to say much here. But you can be sure that followers value leaders who add value to them. And their respect for them carries on long after the relationship has ended.

## **MEASURE YOUR LEVEL OF RESPECT**

If you want to measure how much respect you have as a leader, the first thing you should do is to look at who you attract. Dennis A. Peer remarked, "One measure of leadership is the caliber of people who choose to follow you." The second thing you should do is to see how your people respond when you ask for commitment or change.

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*"One measure of leadership is the caliber of people who choose to follow you."*

—DENNIS A. PEER

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When leaders are respected and they ask for commitment, their people sign up and step up. They are ready to take risks, put in long hours, or do whatever else is necessary to get the job done. Likewise, when respected leaders ask for change, followers are willing to embrace it. But when leaders who are not respected ask for commitment or change, people doubt, they question, they make excuses, or they simply walk away. It is very hard for a leader who hasn't earned respect to get other people to follow when it's not easy or convenient.

## **A RESPECTED LEADER STEPS DOWN**

In 1997, college basketball saw the retirement of Dean Smith as head basketball coach of the University of North Carolina. Smith compiled a remarkable record while leading the Tar Heels and is considered one of the best to coach at any level. In thirty-two years as head coach at North Carolina, he won a remarkable 879 games.<sup>4</sup> His teams recorded twenty-seven consecutive twenty-win seasons. They won thirteen Atlantic Coast Conference titles, played in eleven Final Fours, and won two national championships. When Smith retired, even the president of the United States called to honor him.

Despite the record and accolades, the best place to see the Law of Respect at work in Smith's life is by looking at his former players. They respected him for many reasons. He taught them much about basketball as well as life. He pushed them to achieve academically, with nearly every player earning a degree. He made them winners. And he showed them incredible loyalty and respect. Charlie Scott, who played for Smith and graduated from North Carolina in 1970, advanced to play pro basketball and then went on to work as marketing director for Champion Products. Concerning his time with Smith, he said,

As one of the first black college athletes in the ACC, I experienced many difficult moments during my time at North Carolina, but Coach Smith was always there for me. On one occasion, as we walked off the court following a game at South Carolina, one of their fans called me a "big black baboon." Two assistants had to hold Coach Smith back from going after the guy. It was the first time I had ever seen Coach Smith visibly upset, and I was shocked. But more than anything else, I was proud of him.<sup>5</sup>

During his time at North Carolina, Smith made quite an impact on his players: a remarkable forty-nine men went on to play professional basketball. Included in that list are greats such as Bob McAdoo, James Worthy, and Michael Jordan—not only one of the best players ever to dribble a basketball, but also a fine leader in his own right. When Smith died in 2015, more than ten thousand people attended his memorial service. Even after his death, he was still giving to his players. A few weeks after his death, every letterman who played for him at North Carolina received a \$200 check with a note that said, "enjoy a dinner out compliments of Coach Dean Smith."<sup>6</sup>

## RESPECT CARRIED ON

James Jordan, Michael Jordan's father, credited Smith and his leadership for a lot of his son's success. Before a playoff game in Chicago in 1993, the elder Jordan observed:

People underestimate the program that Dean Smith runs. He helped Michael realize his athletic ability and hone it. But more important than that, he built character in Michael that took him through his career. I don't think Michael was privileged to any more teaching than anyone else. He had the personality to go with the teaching, and at Carolina he was able to blend the two of them together. That's the only way I can look at it, and I think that's what made Michael the player he became.<sup>7</sup>

Michael Jordan understood what it meant to follow a good leader. During the waning years of his career, he was adamant about his desire to play for only one coach—Phil Jackson.

It made sense. A leader like Jordan wanted to follow a better leader than himself. That's the Law of Respect.

If you ever become frustrated because people are reluctant to follow you, it very well may be that you are trying to lead people whose leadership is better than yours. That creates a difficult situation because no matter how compelling your vision or how well thought out your plan, if you're a 7 as a leader, 8s, 9s, and 10s aren't likely to follow you.

Mathematician André Weil observed, "A first-rate man will try to surround himself with his equals, or better if possible. The second-rate man will surround himself with third-rate men. The third-rate man will surround himself with fifth-rate men." That's not necessarily by design or because weaker leaders are insecure. It's because of the Law of Respect. Like it or not, that's just the way leadership works.

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*Applying*  
THE LAW OF RESPECT

## *to Your Life*

1. Think about the last time you asked employees, followers, or volunteers for commitment or asked them to change something they were doing. What was their response? If they gladly followed, they probably respect your leadership. If they resisted, they may not.
2. Take a look at the qualities that help a leader to gain respect:
  - Natural leadership ability
  - Respect for others
  - Difficulties overcome
  - Courage
  - Success
  - Loyalty
  - Value added to others

Rank yourself in each area on a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high). One of the best ways to raise your “leadership number” is to improve in each area. For each entry, write a practice, habit, or goal that will help you to improve in that area. Then work for a month on each to create improvement in that area. (Note: you will need to work much longer to gain a good success record.)

3. One of my favorite definitions of success is having the respect of those closest to me. I believe that if my family (who knows me the best) and my closest coworkers (who work with me every day) have respect for me, then I am successful.

If you have the courage, ask the people closest to you what they respect most about you. And ask them to identify areas where you most need to grow. Then strive to improve based on their honest feedback.

## 8

### THE LAW OF INTUITION

#### *Leaders Evaluate Everything with a Leadership Bias*

When Jamie Kern Lima created a makeup line that worked for women with skin conditions, no one would carry it. She was even told no one would buy beauty products from someone who looked like her. But because she followed the Law of Intuition, she became a billionaire.

**D**uring the last twenty-five years that I've spoken to audiences about the 21 Laws of Leadership, I've found that the Law of Intuition is the most difficult to teach. When I talk about it, natural leaders get it instantly, learned leaders get it eventually, and non-leaders just look at me blankly.

Leaders look at things differently than others do. They evaluate everything according to their leadership bias. What do I mean by that? While other people see a production problem, leaders look for the leadership breakdown that may have caused it. While others identify a cash-flow issue, leaders identify a failure in leadership planning. While investors celebrate a successful quarter, leaders are aware of the leadership decisions that made it possible. Good leaders have a bias or filter that causes them to



look for leadership dynamics first to explain results in an organization or on a team. That develops in them a leadership intuition that informs everything they do. It becomes an inseparable part of who they are. And when their intuition is right and they follow it, their leadership goes to entirely new levels.

## **FOLLOWING HER GUT**

In the week leading up to her long-hoped-for first appearance on QVC in 2010, Jamie Kern Lima had a big decision to make. This opportunity had been two years in the making, and everything was riding on it. In the ten minutes she would be on the air, the fate of her company would be decided.

Kern Lima had created her cosmetics company IT in 2008 because she couldn't find makeup that would cover the red blotches on her face caused by rosacea. With the help of dermatologists, she created products that not only did the job, but were good for her skin. She believed every woman would benefit using her products because it would make them feel beautiful. But no one came knocking on her door asking for IT cosmetics. Worse, for two years she had been knocking on the door of retailers everywhere, and no one would carry her products. When QVC finally agreed to give her one chance on their network, she and her husband Paulo spent nearly every penny they had, along with additional borrowed money, to have six thousand units of her concealer manufactured and delivered to QVC. If she didn't sell them, it would be the death of IT and they would go out of business.

With the stakes so high, she decided to get the advice of consultants. They insisted that she hire beautiful young models to demonstrate the product. But Kern Lima wanted to demonstrate it on ordinary women with skin problems. She sat outside the QVC studio every day for a week trying to make the gut-wrenching decision. Finally she decided to follow her intuition. "Even if it failed and I lost my chance to succeed at QVC," she said, "I was not going to throw away my shot at standing for something, my

shot at showing women that I truly believe they are beautiful and deserve to feel beautiful.”<sup>1</sup>

When the cameras went on, she showed her own naked red “before” face and the “after” using her makeup, and she explained what it could do for women of all ages, skin tones, and skin types. It took less than six minutes to sell all six thousand units. And three thousand more people called to be put on a waiting list. When it was over, she cried. Her husband hugged her, proclaiming, “We’re not going bankrupt!”

Kern Lima said,

When the opinions and words from the best experts didn’t align with what my gut was telling me, the safest and most tempting thing to do would have been to listen to their experience and track records. One of the greatest lessons I learned was, when you have a truly new idea, product, or vision, it shouldn’t be surprising that experts won’t believe it will succeed. . . . Often experts who mean well haven’t actually created or built anything themselves. And though they may believe they are visionaries, they often aren’t able to imagine the success of something they haven’t seen before.<sup>2</sup>

Kern Lima went on to appear on QVC more than one thousand times, and IT Cosmetics became the network’s largest beauty brand. Soon IT Cosmetics were carried in ULTA, Sephora, and other retailers. And in 2016, L’Oréal purchased IT for \$1.2 billion! Even during the negotiations with L’Oréal, her leadership instincts served her well. At the time L’Oréal approached her, several other potential buyers also showed their interest. When L’Oréal made their initial offer, Kern Lima followed her leadership intuition and *turned it down*. Even though the offer was more than she expected, she knew it was less than the company was worth. And she traces it back to that important decision she made before her first time on QVC: “Making the decision to trust my gut when literally everything was on the line opened every other door afterward.”<sup>3</sup>

## MORE THAN FACTS

Intuition is so difficult to explain because it’s not concrete. It doesn’t rely on just empirical evidence. Former secretary of state Colin Powell provided

a good explanation of the use of leadership intuition and its importance. He observed that many leaders have trouble when they desire to have an exhaustive amount of data or wait to have all their questions answered before making decisions. Powell said that his practice was to make a leadership decision after gathering only 40 to 60 percent of the information that could be obtained. He used his experience to make up the difference. In other words, he based his leadership decisions as much on intuition as on facts. He relied on the Law of Intuition.

## **HOW LEADERS THINK**

Because of their intuition, leaders evaluate everything with a leadership bias. People born with natural leadership ability are especially strong in the area of leadership intuition. Others have to work hard to develop and hone it. But either way, intuition comes from two things: learned skills and natural ability, which comes in a person's areas of strength. It is an informed intuition, and it causes leadership issues to jump out to a leader in a way that they don't with others.

I regard leadership intuition as the ability of a leader to read what's going on. For that reason, I say that leaders are readers:

### **LEADERS ARE READERS OF THEIR SITUATION**

In all kinds of circumstances, leaders pick up on details that might elude others. They "tune in" to leadership dynamics. Many leaders describe this as an ability to "smell" things in their organization. They can sense people's attitudes. They are able to measure the chemistry of a team. They can tell when things are humming and when they're winding down—or getting ready to grind to a halt. They don't need to sift through stats, read reports, or examine the balance sheet. They know the situation *before* they have all the facts. That is the result of their leadership intuition.

As I explained in the Law of Navigation, leaders see more and before others. They intuitively see and understand the big picture, the opportunity, the future. And they sense these things before others around them are aware

of them. That's what Jamie Kern Lima did. She understood that women everywhere wanted makeup and skin products that work for them, not just beautiful models in their twenties. That's why she started IT in her living room and was able to sell it as a billion-dollar business less than a decade later. Her intuition was so dead-on correct, that in the first two years IT was owned by L'Oréal, its revenue nearly *doubled!*<sup>4</sup> Kern Lima read the situation and followed her intuition, and time proved her right.

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*Natural ability and learned skills  
create an informed intuition that  
makes leadership issues jump out at  
leaders.*

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## **LEADERS ARE READERS OF TRENDS**

Most workers are focused on their current work. They think in terms of tasks at hand, projects, or specific goals. That is as it should be. Most managers are concerned with efficiency and effectiveness. They often possess a broader view than employees, thinking in terms of processes over weeks, months, or even years. But leaders take an even broader view. They look at years, decades, and even generations ahead.

Everything that happens around us does so in the context of a bigger picture. Leaders have the ability—and responsibility—to step back from what's happening at the moment and to discern not only where the organization has been, but also where it is headed. Sometimes they can accomplish this through analysis, but often the best leaders sense it first and find data to explain it later. Their intuition tells them that something is happening, that conditions are changing, and that trouble or opportunity is coming. Leaders must always be a few steps ahead of their best people, or they're not really leading. They can do that only if they are able to read trends.

## **LEADERS ARE READERS OF THEIR RESOURCES**

A major difference between leaders and everyone else is the way they see resources. A good worker encounters a challenge and thinks, *What can I do to help?* A high achiever asks, *How can I solve this problem?* A peak performer wonders, *What must I do to reach the next level so that I can overcome this?*

Leaders think differently. They think in terms of resources and how to maximize them. They see a challenge, problem, or opportunity, and they think, *Who is the best person to take this on? What resources—raw materials, technology, information, people, and so forth—can help us? What will this take financially? How can I encourage my team to achieve success?*

Leaders see everything with a leadership bias. Their focus is on mobilizing people and leveraging resources to achieve their goals rather than on just using their own individual efforts. Leaders who want to succeed maximize every asset and resource they have for the benefit of their organization. For that reason, they are continually aware of what they have at their disposal.

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*Leaders who want to succeed  
maximize every asset and resource  
they have for the benefit of their  
organization.*

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## **LEADERS ARE READERS OF PEOPLE**

President Lyndon Johnson once said that when you walk into a room, you don't belong in politics if you can't tell who's for you and who's against you. That statement also applies to any other kind of leader. Intuitive leaders can sense what's happening among people and know their hopes, fears, and concerns.

Reading people is perhaps the most important intuitive skill leaders can possess. After all, if what you are doing doesn't involve people, it's not leadership. And if you aren't influencing people to follow, you aren't really leading.

## LEADERS ARE READERS OF THEMSELVES

Finally, good leaders develop the ability to read themselves. Poet James Russell Lowell observed, “No one can produce great things who is not thoroughly sincere in dealing with himself.” Leaders must know not only their own strengths and blind spots, skills and weaknesses, but also their current state of mind. Why? Because leaders can hinder progress just as easily as they can help create it. Everything rises and falls on leadership. In fact, it’s easier for a bad leader to damage an organization than it is for a good leader to build one. We’ve all seen excellent organizations that took generations to build fall apart in a matter of years.

When leaders become self-centered, pessimistic, or rigid in their thinking, they often hurt their organizations because they are likely to fall into the trap of thinking they cannot or should not change. And once that happens, the organization has a hard time becoming better. Its decline is inevitable.

## HOW TO DEVELOP LEADERSHIP INTUITION

If you’re thinking to yourself, *I’d like to be able to read these dynamics in my organization, but I just don’t see things intuitively*, don’t despair. The good news is that you can improve your leadership intuition, even if you were not born with great leadership gifting. As I’ve already mentioned, leadership intuition is *informed* intuition. The less natural leadership talent you have, the more you will need to make up for it by developing skills and gaining experience. They can help you to develop thinking patterns, and thinking patterns can be learned.

I saw a great example of this many years ago when I was invited to the University of Southern California by then football head coach Larry Smith, who asked me to speak to the team before a big game. While I was there, he allowed me to visit the team’s offensive war room. On chalkboards covering every wall, the coaches had mapped out every possible situation their team could be in—according to down, yardage, and place on the field. And for every situation, the coaches had planned specific plays designed to

succeed, based on their years of experience and their intuitive knowledge of the game.

By game day, the offensive coordinator knew those plays cold, even without his play sheet. But he also assigned his three quarterbacks the task of memorizing them. The night before the game, I watched as the coaches grilled those young men, firing one situation after another at them. The job of the quarterbacks was to recite which play was right for the situation. The coaches wanted those players to be so well informed, so ready, that their intuition would take over during crunch time. It would help them to effectively lead the team. It was a real-life application of one of my favorite quotes by John Wooden: “When opportunity comes, it’s too late to prepare.”

Chances are, you’re not a Division I coach or quarterback, so you may not be able to apply their experience to yours. So to help you, I’ll tell you about the questions I ask myself when reading my leadership intuition. What do I feel? What do I know? What do I think? And what should I do?

### **1. WHAT DO I FEEL?**

To lean into my intuition, I always start by examining what I feel. When I say that, I don’t mean whether I’m happy or sad or angry. I’m talking about my gut, the way Jamie Kern Lima did. What are my instincts? What belief do I possess that perhaps I can’t explain using facts? Often I can sense opportunity, but I can’t easily put my finger on what it is. This is where I always start, and you should too. Pay attention to your instincts.

### **2. WHAT DO I KNOW?**

While I listen to my instincts, I don’t rely on them entirely. I test them using what I know. I try to bring as many pieces of information into play as I can. If I need to connect with someone who possesses knowledge I lack, I’ll do that. I’ll also rely on my past experience. If you have a great track record, this can really help you. If you don’t, you would be wise to rely on this less.

### **3. WHAT DO I THINK?**

Here is where I start putting things together. Where do my thinking and knowledge line up? Where do they contradict one another? If they're at odds, why? Sometimes this thinking phase is fast, either affirming or countering my instincts. But often I'll spend days or weeks reflecting before I come to a conclusion.

I need to pause here and give you some guidance about responding to these first three questions before moving on to the final question. I often teach that people are intuitive in the areas of their natural gifting. Because I possess leadership gifting, I lean very heavily into how I feel. How much credence do I give it? Around 80 percent. I follow my leadership instincts as far as I can because I've learned that I can trust them. I temper them with what I know and what I think. If you lack strong leadership gifting—and there's no shame in lacking it, only in pretending you have it—then rely only 20 percent on how you feel, and put 80 percent of your trust in what you know and think.

#### **4. WHAT SHOULD I DO?**

The final question is about action. The first three questions have little value without an answer to this fourth question. Once I've examined my feelings, knowledge, and thinking, I make a decision, create a plan of action, and follow through. That's what leaders are supposed to do.

I'll give you an example from my experience of how this played out. In the run-up to the 2016 presidential election, I was approached by a political group asking me to become a third-party candidate to run for president. It really took me by surprise, but it also appealed to me. So I took about two weeks to really consider it.

Here's how I *felt*. Like many people, I was frustrated with Washington. I was tired of the partisan politics and the fighting. I was frustrated that political leaders no longer communicated or worked with one another. And I could not support either Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump.

I also *knew* that many other voters felt the way I did, about Washington politics and the candidates. I knew I would be able to communicate with people and work with them to create positive compromises. But I also knew it was relatively late in the game to start a run for office. And I knew that a third-party candidate had never won a presidential election.



As much as I wanted to serve the country and work to change the sense of division and hostility in the United States, I *thought* I could never be anything other than a spoiler who took away votes from the other candidates but could not win. So I decided that what I *should do*, is pass.

## **LEADERS SOLVE PROBLEMS USING THE LAW OF INTUITION**

One of the most remarkable stories of intuition in the last fifty years is that of Apple, Inc. Just about everybody knows about Apple. The company was created in 1976 by Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak in a garage. Just four years later, the business went public, opening at twenty-two dollars a share and selling 4.6 million shares. It made more than forty employees and investors millionaires overnight.

In the years since then, Apple's success, stock value, and ability to capture customers have fluctuated wildly. Founder Steve Jobs was pushed out of Apple in 1985, but the company was unable to reestablish the success of its glory days when it sold 14.6 percent of all personal computers in the United States. By 1997, sales were down to 3.5 percent. That was when Apple again looked to the leadership of its original founder, Steve Jobs, for help and brought him back.

## **REINVENTING APPLE**

Jobs intuitively reviewed the situation and immediately took action. He knew that improvement was impossible without a change in leadership, so he quickly dismissed all but two of the previous board members and installed new ones. He made changes in the executive leadership. And he fired the company's ad agency and held a competition for the account among three firms.

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*Improvement is impossible without a change.*

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He also refocused the company. Jobs wanted to get back to the basics of what Apple had always done best: use its individuality to create products that made a difference. At the time Jobs said, “We’ve reviewed the road map of new products and axed more than 70% of the projects, keeping the 30% that were gems. Plus we’re adding new ones that are a whole new paradigm of looking at computers.”<sup>5</sup>

At that time, many computer manufacturers were working to create personal digital assistants (PDAs). Jobs followed his intuition and was busy inventing a new way for people to listen to music. In 2001, he launched the iPod and the Apple music store. Ben Knauss, who was on the inside of that project, said, “The interesting thing about the iPod, is that since it started, it had 100 percent of Steve Jobs’ time. Not many projects get that. He was heavily involved in every single aspect of the project.”<sup>6</sup> Why did Jobs do that? Because his intuition as a leader made him understand the impact that the device could make. It was consistent with his vision for creating a digital lifestyle. Within four years, Apple possessed 75 percent of the world market for digital music players!<sup>7</sup>

In 2007, Jobs launched the iPhone, which created an even bigger digital revolution. Not only did the iPhone make PDAs and MP3 players like the iPod obsolete, it changed the way people lived and interacted. Sadly, Jobs died of cancer in 2011, but the company was already on an incredible trajectory. In 2013, Apple, Inc. was named the most valuable company in the world. It remained at the top for five consecutive years.<sup>8</sup> And it continues to innovate without Jobs. In 2015, it introduced the Apple Watch. Nearly half of all the smartwatches ever sold in the world have been manufactured by Apple.<sup>9</sup>

The story of Steve Jobs and Apple is a reminder that leadership is really more art than science. The principles of leadership are constant, but the application changes with every leader and every situation. That’s why it requires intuition. Without it, leaders get blindsided, and that’s one of the

worst things that can happen to a leader. If you want to lead long, lead well, and stay ahead of others, you've got to obey the Law of Intuition.

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*Leadership is really more art than  
science.*

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*Applying*  
THE LAW OF INTUITION

## *to Your Life*

1. Have you trusted your intuition in the past? Make a list of important past leadership decisions that you've made. Next to each decision, put a plus or a minus indicating whether the outcome was more positive or negative. Then try to identify what you based the decision on. This will show you your intuitive track record. Look for patterns, both positive and negative.
2. Do some work to become better at trusting your intuition. Start by using the four questions from the chapter:
  - What do I feel?
  - What do I know?
  - What do I think?
  - What should I do?

Remember to weigh how much you rely on each of the first three questions based on your natural gifting. Once you start using the questions, track how successful you are at making intuition-based decisions so that you can keep improving.

3. One of the most important abilities in leadership is reading people. How would you rate yourself in this area? Can you tell what others are feeling? Can you sense when people are upset? Happy? Confused? Angry? Do you anticipate what others are thinking? If this is not an area of strength for you, then read books on relationships, engage more people in conversations, and become a people watcher.

## THE LAW OF MAGNETISM

### *Who You Are Is Who You Attract*

How does the new young CEO resurrect a formerly respected one-hundred-year-old brand and make it successful again? She leverages her knowledge of the Law of Magnetism.

**E**ffective leaders are always on the lookout for good people. I think each of us carries around a mental list of what kind of people we would like to have in our organization or department. Think about it. Do you know who you're looking for right now? What is your profile of perfect employees? What qualities would they possess? Would you want them to be aggressive and entrepreneurial? Kind and compassionate? Technically savvy? Highly relational? Stop right now, take a moment, and make a list of the qualities you'd like in the people on your team. Find a pencil or pen, and do it now before you read any further.

**My People Would Have These Qualities:**

[Your Notes]

Now, what will determine whether the people you want are the people you get, whether they will possess the qualities you desire? You may be surprised by the answer. Believe it or not, who you attract is not determined by what you *want*. It's determined by who you *are*.

Go back to the list you just made, and for each characteristic you identified, decide whether you possess that quality. For example, if you wrote that you would like "great leaders" and you are an excellent leader, that's a match. Put a check (✓) by it. But if your leadership is no better than average, put an X and write "only average leader" next to it. If you wrote that you want people who are "entrepreneurial" and you possess that quality, put a check. Otherwise, mark it with an X, and so on. Now review the whole list.

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*Who you attract is not determined by  
what you want. It's determined by  
who you are.*

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If you see a whole bunch of Xs, then you're in trouble because the people you describe are not the type who will want to follow you. In most situations unless you take strong measures to counteract it, you draw people to you who possess the same qualities you do. That's the Law of Magnetism: who you are is who you attract.

## **BIRDS OF A FEATHER**

When I was a kid, my mother used to tell me that birds of a feather flock together. She sometimes said it to warn me away from bad influences. But even as a child, I think I instinctively recognized that good students spent time with good students, athletes with other athletes, leaders with leaders. And I've seen it play out during my entire adult life, too.

In 2011, I cofounded an organization called the John Maxwell Team (JMT) to prepare entrepreneurs to become independent coaches, trainers,

and speakers. Not everyone in my other organizations believed it could be successful. One skeptic stated his belief that we would never recruit more than a couple hundred people. But I, along with a few others, were convinced we could attract many people who craved success in these areas. Why? Because I had always been entrepreneurial in my thinking, and I had spent more than forty years dedicated to learning, growing, and working as a speaker, trainer, and coach. And I was convinced that other people who had similar aspirations would be attracted to our organization and the training we would provide.

I'm glad to say that the organization has been highly successful. In ten years, we have attracted and trained forty thousand entrepreneurs to become coaches, trainers, and speakers. In fact, many have come because they initially learned from some of our coaches and wanted to become certified themselves. Our trainees come in ready to learn and hungry for success. Our faculty teaches them skills, but they also teach them the values that are important to us that we want them to carry with them as they coach others and speak:

- Valuing People
- Maintaining a Positive Attitude
- Growing Daily
- Leading by Example
- Living with Intentionality
- Exceeding Clients' Expectations
- Equipping Others
- Being Catalysts for Transformation
- Leaving Room for Faith

When we teach these values, everyone at the training knows that if they don't want to embrace these values, we'll refund their money with no hard feelings, and they can seek out a different training that appeals to them. As far as I know, no one has ever declined our values and asked for a refund. And I'm glad to say that the people we train go out and add value to people in more than 160 countries all around the world.



## WHERE DO THEY MATCH UP?

Maybe you've started thinking about the people that you have attracted in your organization. You might say to yourself, *Wait a minute. I can name twenty things that make the people I lead different from me.* And my response would be, "Of course, you can." We're all individuals. But the people who are drawn to you probably have more similarities than differences, especially in a few key areas.

### GENERATION

Most organizations reflect the characteristics of their key leaders, and that includes their age. During the dot-com boom of the 1990s, thousands of companies were founded by people in their twenties and early thirties. And who did they hire? Others in their twenties and thirties. In just about any type of organization, much of the time the people who come on board are similar in age to the leaders who hire them.

### ATTITUDE

Rarely have I seen positive and negative people attracted to one another. People who view life as a series of opportunities and exciting challenges don't want to hear others complain about how bad things are all the time. Attitude is one of the most contagious qualities a human being possesses. People with good attitudes tend to make people around them feel more positive. Those with a terrible attitude tend to bring others down.

### BACKGROUND

In the chapter on the Law of Process, I wrote about Theodore Roosevelt. One of his memorable accomplishments was his daring charge up San Juan Hill with the Rough Riders during the Spanish–American War. Roosevelt personally recruited that all-volunteer cavalry company, and it was said to be a remarkably peculiar group of people. It was comprised primarily of two types of men: wealthy aristocrats from the Northeast and cowboys from the Wild West. Why? Because TR was an aristocratic-born,

Harvard-educated New Yorker who turned himself into a real-life cowboy and big-game hunter in the Dakotas of the West. He was a strong and genuine leader in both worlds, and as a result, he attracted both kinds of people.

People attract—and are attracted to—others of similar background. Blue-collar workers tend to stick together. People with education tend to respect and value others who are also well educated. And to be blunt, people tend to hire employees of the same race unless they make an intentional effort to break that pattern. That's why the NFL introduced the Rooney Rule, which requires teams to interview at least one minority candidate for every head coaching position. This natural magnetism is so strong that organizations that value diversity have to fight against it.

## **VALUES**

People are attracted to leaders whose values are similar to theirs. Think about the people who flocked to President John F. Kennedy after he was elected in 1960. He was a young idealist who wanted to change the world, and he attracted people with a similar profile. When he formed the Peace Corps and called people to service, saying, “Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country,” thousands of young, idealistic people stepped forward to answer the challenge.

The law of magnetism is in effect whether the shared values are positive or negative. Think about someone like Adolf Hitler. He was a strong leader (as you can judge by his level of influence), but his values were rotten to the core. What kinds of people did he attract? Leaders with similar values: Joseph Goebbels, a bitter anti-Semite who ran Hitler's propaganda machine; Reinhard Heydrich, second in command of the Nazi secret police, who ordered mass executions of Nazi opponents; and Heinrich Himmler, chief of the SS and director of the Gestapo who initiated the systematic execution of Jews. They were all strong leaders, and they were all utterly evil men. The Law of Magnetism is powerful. Whatever character you possess is what you will likely find in the people who follow you.

## **ENERGY**

It's a good thing that people with similar levels of energy are attracted to one another, because when you pair a high-energy person with a low-energy person and ask them to work closely together, they can drive one another crazy. The high-energy person thinks the low-energy one is lazy, and the low-energy person thinks the high-energy one is out of control.

## **GIFTEDNESS**

People are most likely to respect and follow someone who possesses their kind of talent. Businesspeople want to follow leaders with skill in building an organization and making a profit. Football players want to follow coaches who can win championships. Creative people want to follow other creatives who are willing to think outside the box. Like attracts like.

## **LEADERSHIP ABILITY**

Finally, the people you attract will have leadership ability similar to your own. As I said in discussing the Law of Respect, people naturally follow leaders *stronger* than themselves. But you also have to factor in the Law of Magnetism, which states that who you are is who you attract. If you are a 7 when it comes to leadership, you are more likely to draw 5s and 6s to you than 2s and 3s. The leaders you attract will be similar in style and ability to you.

## **GOING AGAINST THE GRAIN**

The Law of Magnetism is a double-edged sword. If you've never done more than go with the flow, you'll attract others like you. However, if you've worked hard, developed your skills, leveraged your talent, and achieved success, you will attract similarly driven and successful people. But they may be so much like you that your team has serious holes and blind spots that work against it.

As you read this chapter, which of these two situations do you find yourself in? Are you saying to yourself, *I'm not crazy about the people I'm*

*attracting. Am I stuck with my situation?* The answer is no. If you are dissatisfied with the leadership ability of the people you are attracting, then embrace the Law of Process and work to increase your leadership skill. If you want to grow an organization, grow the leader. If you find the people you attract to be unreliable or untrustworthy, then examine your character. Developing stronger character can be a more difficult road, but the payoff is huge. Good character improves every aspect of a person's life.

On the other hand, you may be saying, *I like who I am, and I like the kind of people I attract.* That's great! Now, take the next step in effective leadership. Work at recruiting people who are *different* from you. Hire people different from you with strengths where you are weak.

## **HARNESSING THE OLD AND ATTRACTING THE NEW**

Someone who both used the Law of Magnetism and needed to fight against it to be successful is Angela Ahrendts, the former senior vice president of retail at Apple and CEO of Burberry. In 2006 when Ahrendts accepted the job at Burberry, she left a job she loved as an executive vice president at fashion company Liz Claiborne. The main reason she left was because she wanted a chance to work with a luxury brand.<sup>1</sup> But Burberry was a brand that was in trouble.

The organization had a long history. Founded in 1856 by Thomas Burberry, the company took off when the founder invented gabardine, a breathable weatherproof fabric that revolutionized rainwear. After outfitting explorers such as Roald Amundsen and Earnest Shackleton, the reputation of Burberry's patented gabardine took off. The coats made of the fabric were so hard-wearing and useful that the British army gave Burberry a contract to manufacture them during World War I. Those coats came to be known as trench coats.<sup>2</sup> Humphrey Bogart wore a Burberry trench coat in *Casablanca*, and forms of that coat are still in style today.

Despite Burberry's notoriety and success, and the reception of two royal warrants, the company was no longer a respected brand. Where they once produced high-end apparel, for years Burberry had sold their name through

dozens of licenses to manufacturers around the world who produced all manner of nonluxury products, including doggy diapers with Burberry's patented and once-revered plaid design.

Ahrendts was determined to turn Burberry around and make it not only respected again, but appealing to younger buyers. She also wanted to make it the largest luxury fashion brand in the world. Fortunately, already working at Burberry was a designer she had worked with and greatly respected: Christopher Bailey. She partnered with him to set Burberry in a new direction.

"We really reconnected and we actually put the strategy together on the back of a napkin," said Ahrendts.<sup>3</sup> She saw a clear way forward: "We would reinforce our heritage, our Britishness, by emphasizing and growing our core luxury products, innovating them and keeping them at the heart of everything we did."<sup>4</sup>

Because Ahrendts was now leading a large staff whom she had not herself attracted, she needed to work to get everyone on board. "I have to admit that some managers were cynical. A lot of them had been at Burberry for a really long time."<sup>5</sup> So she came up with a solution. She said,

Maybe six months in, we had had a huge offsite [meeting], and we had 200 of the top executives from around the world we flew in.

And I'm a pretty good read of people. My right brain kicks in and I'm just watching. And this was two or three days. And at the very end I got up and I said, "Look, this is the strategy. This is what we're doing. And I know some of you are skeptical and I know you've been here for a long time and I know the way you think you're doing it in Hong Kong or Korea is the best, but it's not. We won't win. We're not winning now and you're not, right?"

And I said, "So, I am happy to meet with you after this meeting and give you the greatest retirement package. I'm not looking to hurt anybody, but you need to walk out of here 100% believing in everything we're doing—or I don't want you on the team and I will take care of you. But we can't afford it. We have no time."<sup>6</sup>

Another significant thing she did was facilitate changes to Burberry's board. Most of its members were older, and since Ahrendts wanted the brand to become more tech savvy and to appeal to younger customers, especially millennials, she put younger people on the board and asked the older members who were stepping off to mentor them. The move struck a great balance between attracting and empowering people more like herself while harnessing the wisdom and experience of those who served the

company before her. And she hired younger staff. In 2013, she noted that most of the employees at their corporate headquarters in London were under thirty.<sup>7</sup>

In 2014, Ahrendts left the company to work for Apple. In the eight years Ahrendts led Burberry as its CEO, the company's stock price doubled. So did revenue and operating income. According to Interbrand, Burberry was the fastest growing luxury brand and the fourth-fastest growing brand globally, behind Apple, Google, and Amazon.<sup>8</sup>

Once you understand the Law of Magnetism, you can see it at work in just about any kind of situation: business, government, sports, education, the military, and more. And once you embrace it, you can use it to improve your team and organization.

How do the people you are currently attracting look to you? Are they the strong, capable, potential leaders you desire? Or could they be better? Remember, their quality depends less on a hiring process, a human resources department, or even what you consider to be the quality of your area's applicant pool. It depends more on you. Who you are is who you attract. That is the Law of Magnetism. If you want to attract better people, become the kind of person you desire.

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*Applying*  
THE LAW OF MAGNETISM

## *to Your Life*

1. If you skipped the exercise of writing down the qualities you desire in your team members, then do it now. With the list in hand, think about *why* you desire the qualities you listed. When you wrote them, did you think you were describing people like you or different from you? If there is a disparity between your image of yourself and of your employees, then your level of self-awareness may be low, and it may be hindering your personal development. Talk to a trusted colleague or friend who knows you well to help you identify your blind spots.
2. Based on who you are attracting, you may need to grow in the areas of character and leadership. Find mentors willing and able to help you grow in each area. Possible character mentors could include a pastor, spiritual advisor, or professional coach. Ideally, your leadership mentor would work in the same or a similar profession and be several steps ahead of you in his or her career.
3. If you are already attracting the kinds of people you desire, then it's time to take your leadership to the next level. Work at staffing your weaknesses and recruiting people who will complement your leadership. Write a list of your five greatest strengths. Then write your five greatest weaknesses. Now create a profile of who you are looking for. Start with a list of strengths and natural gifts that would compensate for your weaknesses. Add to that values and attitude similar to yours. Also consider the benefits of seeking someone different in age, background, education, and race. Keep in mind that whoever you choose must possess leadership potential or at the very least an understanding of, and appreciation for, leadership.



## THE LAW OF CONNECTION

### *Leaders Touch a Heart Before They Ask for a Hand*

Who would take out a full-page ad in a national newspaper on Boss's Day to thank their CEO? Employees who've been touched by a leader who lives the Law of Connection.

**T**here are incidents in the lives and careers of leaders that become defining moments for their leadership. In the perception of followers, the general public, and historians, those moments often represent who those leaders are and what they stand for. Here's an example: the presidency of George W. Bush can be summed up by two defining moments that occurred during his time in office.

### **A CONNECTION MADE**

The first moment occurred early in his presidency, and it defined his first term in office. On September 11, 2001, the United States was attacked by

terrorists who crashed planes into the World Trade Center and Pentagon. People in the US were angry. They were fearful. They were uncertain about the future. And they were in mourning for the thousands of people who had lost their lives to the terrorists.

Just four days after the collapse of the World Trade Center towers, Bush visited Ground Zero. He spent time there with the firefighters, police officers, and rescue workers. He shook hands. He listened. He took in the devastation. He thanked the people working there and told them, “The nation sends its love and compassion to everybody who’s here.” Reports said that the spirits of the tired searchers lifted when the president arrived and started interacting with them.

Cameras captured Bush standing in the wreckage with his arm around firefighter Bob Beckwith. When some members of the crowd shouted that they couldn’t hear him, Bush called back, “I can hear you. The rest of the world hears you. And the people who knocked these buildings down will hear all of us soon.”<sup>1</sup> The people cheered. They felt validated and understood. Bush had connected with them in a way no one had seen him do prior to that moment.

## **NOBODY’S HOME**

The second incident came during Bush’s second four years in office, and it defined that second term. On August 31, 2005, just two days after the landfall of Hurricane Katrina and the levees in New Orleans broke and water flooded into the city, instead of visiting the city as he did in New York after 9/11, Bush flew over New Orleans in Air Force One. A photograph captured him peering through one of the jet’s small windows to see the damage. To the people of the Gulf Coast, it was a picture of indifference as they suffered terrible loss. They felt abandoned, forgotten, and betrayed.

After the worst of the tragedy was over, no matter what President Bush said or how much help he provided, he was unable to regain the people’s confidence and trust. Democratic mayor Ray Nagin thanked Bush for

“delivering for the citizens of New Orleans.” And Donna Brazile, another Democrat, described Bush as “very much engaged” in the rebuilding process and praised him for prompting Congress to dedicate money to rebuilding the levees.<sup>2</sup> It didn’t matter. Bush could not undo the image of indifference he had created. He had broken the Law of Connection. He had failed to connect with the hearts of the people.

## **THE HEART COMES FIRST**

When people become leaders, I believe they must give up the right to think of themselves first. As soon as they start leading, they need to think about other people—think of them first and think of them most. One time when I was sitting quietly in the green room waiting to speak at a venue in Akron, Ohio, one of the other speakers asked me what I was thinking about.

“The people I’m getting ready to talk to,” I answered.

“Really?” he responded. “Not your subject?”

“I already know my subject,” I said. “I need to know the people.” I was focusing on who they were, how I could connect with them, and how I would try to add value to them.

When it comes to leading and working with people, the heart comes before the head. That’s true whether you are communicating to a stadium full of people, leading a team meeting, or trying to relate to your spouse. Think about how you react to people. If you listen to a speaker or teacher, do you want to hear a bunch of dry statistics or a load of facts? Or would you rather the speaker engaged you on a human level—maybe with a story or joke? If you’ve been on any kind of winning team in business, sports, or service, you know that the leader didn’t simply give instructions and then send you on your way. No, he or she connected with you on an emotional level too.

For leaders to be effective, they must connect with people. Why? If you want to lead well, you must touch people’s hearts before you ask them for a hand. That is the Law of Connection. All great leaders and communicators

recognize this truth and act on it almost instinctively. You can't move people to action unless you first move them with emotion.

Frederick Douglass was an outstanding orator and leader of the nineteenth century. It's said that he had a remarkable ability to connect with people and move their hearts when he spoke. Historian Lerone Bennett said of Douglass, "He could make people *laugh* at a slave owner preaching the duties of Christian obedience; could make them *see* the humiliation of a Black maiden ravished by a brutal slave owner; could make them *hear* the sobs of a mother separated from her child. Through him, people could cry, curse, and *feel*; through him they could *live* slavery."

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*The heart comes before the head. . . .  
You can't move people to action  
unless you first move them with  
emotion.*

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## THE GREAT CONNECTOR

Good leaders work at connecting with others all the time, whether they are communicating to an entire organization or working with a single individual. The stronger the relationship you form with followers, the greater the connection you forge—and the more likely those followers will want to help you.

I used to tell my staff, "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." They would groan because they heard me say it so many times, but they recognized the truth of it nonetheless. You develop credibility with people when you connect with them and show that you genuinely care and want to help them. And as a result, they usually respond in kind and want to help you.

An excellent example of a leader who was able to connect with both audiences and individuals was President Ronald Reagan. His ability to develop rapport with an audience is reflected in the nickname he received

as president: the Great Communicator. But he also had the ability to touch the hearts of the individuals close to him. He really could have been called the Great Connector.

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*The stronger the relationship and connection between individuals, the more likely the follower will want to help the leader.*

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Former Reagan speechwriter Peggy Noonan said that when Reagan used to return to the White House from long trips and the staff heard his helicopter landing on the lawn, everyone would stop working, and staff member Donna Elliott would say, “Daddy’s home!” They couldn’t wait to see him. Some employees dread it when their boss shows up. Reagan’s people felt encouraged because he connected with them.

## **CONNECT WITH PEOPLE ONE AT A TIME**

One key to connecting with others is recognizing that even in a group, you have to relate to people as individuals. I’ve had the opportunity to speak to some wonderful audiences during the course of my career. The largest have been in stadiums with more than sixty thousand people in attendance. People ask me, “How in the world do you communicate with that many people?” The secret is simple. I don’t try to talk to the thousands. I focus on talking to one person. That’s the only way to connect with people. It’s the same way when writing a book. I don’t think of the millions of people who have read my books. I think of one person: *you*. I believe that if I can connect with you as an individual, then what I have to offer might be able to help you. If I’m not connecting, you’ll stop reading and go do something else.

*To connect with people in a group,  
relate to them as individuals.*

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How do you connect? Whether you're speaking in front of a large audience or chatting in the hallway with an individual, there are three things you need to keep in mind:

### **WHAT PEOPLE NEED TO KNOW: YOU BELIEVE IN THEM**

One of the most precious gifts a leader can give people is belief in them. Too many have a difficult time finding their way in life. They've never had someone who truly believes in them and speaks into their lives. They don't know their own strengths and weaknesses. They are uncertain about the future. Leaders who connect help people believe in themselves and in the work they're doing. But that doesn't mean giving insincere compliments. People can smell a phony a mile away. Legendary NFL coach Bill Walsh observed, "Nothing is more effective than sincere, accurate praise, and nothing is more lame than a cookie-cutter compliment."

French general Napoleon Bonaparte said, "A leader is a dealer in hope." When you genuinely believe in people and can communicate that belief, you give them hope and a better future.

### **WHAT PEOPLE NEED TO SEE: YOU WILL BE AN EXAMPLE**

Perhaps the most impacting thing you can do as a leader and communicator is to practice what you preach. That's where credibility comes from. Modeling good values demonstrates trustworthiness and consistency—and consistency compounds.

Plenty of people say one thing but do something else. People with that kind of "do what I say, not what I do" attitude don't last as leaders because people don't want to follow people who lack integrity. Authenticity connects with people.

### **WHAT PEOPLE NEED TO FEEL: YOU VALUE THEM**

In the end, your greatest asset for connecting with people is caring for them. People can tell when you genuinely care about them and value them as individuals, and it draws them to you. I learned this as a child from one of my teachers, Miss Tacey. Once when I got sick, she came to visit me at home to see how I was doing, and to tell me how much she missed having me in class. You can bet I couldn't wait to get well and get back.

As a leader, you cannot value people and add value to them if you do not care about them or secretly resent them. You must develop genuine respect for them and place value on them, not for what they can do for you, but simply because they have value as human beings. Do that, and you will be able to connect with them.

There's one more point I need to make about connecting with people: it's the leader's job, not the follower's. Some leaders have problems with the Law of Connection because they put the responsibility for connecting on the people they lead. That is especially true of positional leaders. They often think, *I'm the boss. These are my employees. Let them come to me.* But successful leaders who obey the Law of Connection are always initiators. They take the first step with others and then make the effort to continue building relationships. That's not always easy, but it's important to the success of the organization. A leader has to do it, no matter how many obstacles there might be.

## **THE TOUGHER THE CHALLENGE, THE GREATER THE CONNECTION**

Never underestimate the power of making connections and building relationships with people before asking them to follow you. If you've ever studied the lives of notable military commanders, you have probably noticed that the best ones practiced the Law of Connection. I read that during World War I in France, General Douglas MacArthur told a battalion commander before a daring charge, "Major, when the signal comes to go over the top, I want you to go first, before your men. If you do, they'll follow." Then MacArthur removed the Distinguished Service Cross from

his own uniform and pinned it on the major. He had, in effect, awarded him for heroism before asking him to exhibit it. And of course, the major led his men, they followed him over the top, and they achieved their objective.

Not all military examples of the Law of Connection are quite so dramatic, but they are still effective. For example, it's said that Napoleon made it a practice to know every one of his officers by name and to remember where they lived and which battles they had fought with him. More recently, General Norman Schwarzkopf, leader of US Central Command during Operation Desert Storm, connected with his troops during the Gulf War. On Christmas in 1990, he spent the day in the mess halls among the men and women who were so far away from their families. In his autobiography, he said,

I shook hands with everyone in the line, went behind the serving counter to greet the cooks and helpers, and worked my way through the mess hall, hitting every table, wishing everyone Merry Christmas. Then I went into the second and third dining facilities and did the same thing. I came back to the first mess tent and repeated the exercise, because by this time there was an entirely new set of faces. Then I sat down with some of the troops and had my dinner. In the course of four hours, I must have shaken four thousand hands.<sup>3</sup>

Schwarzkopf was a general. Did he have to do that? No, but he did. He used one of the most effective methods for connecting with others, something I call walking slowly through the crowd. By doing that, he let his service members know that he believed in them, he set the example for them, and he valued them.

As a leader, do the same. Go where your people are. Make yourself available to them. Learn people's names. Tell them how much you appreciate them. Find out how they're doing. And most important, listen. Leaders who relate to their people and really connect with them are leaders that people will follow to the ends of the earth.

## **THE RESULT OF CONNECTION**

When a leader truly has done the work to connect with his people, you can see it in the way the organization functions. Employees exhibit loyalty and



a strong work ethic. The vision of the leader becomes the aspiration of the people. The impact is incredible.

One of the companies I admire is Southwest Airlines, a pioneer in budget airlines and now the largest domestic airline in the United States. The company has been successful and profitable while other airlines have filed for bankruptcy and folded. The person responsible for the initial success of the organization and the creation of its culture is Herb Kelleher, the company's founder.

I love what Southwest's employees did on Boss's Day in 1994 because it shows the kind of connection Kelleher made with his people. They took out a full-page ad in *USA Today* and addressed the following message to Kelleher:

Thanks, Herb

For remembering every one of our names.

For supporting the Ronald McDonald House.

For helping load baggage on Thanksgiving.

For giving everyone a kiss (and we mean everyone).

For listening.

For running the only profitable major airline.

For singing at our holiday party.

For singing only once a year.

For letting us wear shorts and sneakers to work.

For golfing at The LUV Classic with only one club.

For outtalking Sam Donaldson.

For riding your Harley Davidson into Southwest Headquarters.

For being a friend, not just a boss.

Happy Boss's Day from Each One of Your 16,000 Employees.<sup>4</sup>

A display of affection like that occurs only when a leader has worked hard to connect with his people.

Don't ever underestimate the importance of building relational bridges between yourself and the people you lead. There's an old saying: to lead yourself, use your head; to lead others, use your heart. That's the nature of the Law of Connection. Always touch a person's heart before you ask for a hand.

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*Applying*  
THE LAW OF CONNECTION

## *to Your Life*

1. How dedicated are you to believing in people, being a positive example to them, and genuinely valuing them? How would the people you lead assess you in these three areas? If you could stand to improve, examine your motives for leading. If your desire to help people and improve the team is overshadowed by personal ambition or selfishness, your ability to connect with people will suffer. Change your mind-set and your attitude so that you can become a better leader.
2. Learn to walk slowly through the crowd. When you are out among your employees or coworkers, make relationship building and connecting a priority. Before talking about work matters, make a connection. With people you don't yet know, that may take some time. With people you know well, still take a moment to connect relationally. It may cost you only a few minutes a day, but it will pay huge dividends in the future. And it will make the workplace a more positive environment.
3. Good leaders are good communicators. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate yourself as a public speaker? If you give yourself anything lower than an 8, you need to work on improving your skills. Read books on communication, take a class, become a certified speaker, or join Toastmasters. Then sharpen your skills by practicing teaching and communicating. If you don't have opportunities to do that on the job, then try volunteering.

## THE LAW OF THE INNER CIRCLE

### *Those Closest to You Determine the Level of Your Success*

No leaders—past, present, or future  
—are successful without this. It will  
either make or break them. What am I  
referring to? It's none other than the  
Law of the Inner Circle.

**I**n the life of all leaders, there comes a time when their goals, dreams, and vision exceed their ability to accomplish them. They realize there are not enough hours in a day or days in a year. There are talents they need that they do not possess. The skills they possess, which made them successful, are not the ones essential to climb the next mountain. When they reach that point, what do they do? Effective leaders rely on the Law of the Inner Circle. They understand that those closest to you determine your level of success.

When we see incredibly gifted people, we can be tempted to believe that talent alone made them successful. To think that is to buy into a lie. Nobody does anything great alone. Leaders do not succeed alone. Those closest to

them determine the level of their success. What makes the difference is the leader's inner circle.

## **MY INNER CIRCLE**

I've been very fortunate, because I've had a fantastic inner circle that has made me a better leader and helped me accomplish more than I ever could on my own. It started with my parents when I was a kid. I married well. Margaret faithfully supports me and loves me unconditionally in spite of my quirks and shortcomings. My brother Larry, a fantastic entrepreneur, advises me on business matters. I've had advisors and mentors who have helped me and shaped me. And I've been aided by people who compensate for my weaknesses and bring skills to the table that I lack.

The people in my inner circle have changed over the years, with some people leaving and others arriving to help me. For example, when I was in my midthirties, Barbara Brumagin came alongside me and made me better. She was my executive assistant for eleven years. After she moved away to take a leadership position, Linda Eggers, who was already working with me, became my executive assistant. She still serves me in that capacity today more than thirty-five years later. She is indispensable to me, not only in handling the details of my life, but because she knows how I think and answers others in my place. Over 90 percent of the time she doesn't even need to consult me.

I tell leaders all the time, the first and most important hiring decision executives can make is who they will choose as their assistant. If you have a good one in your inner circle, it improves your leadership significantly. He or she will save you time, help your life to run more smoothly, and enable you to remain focused on what only you can do. A good assistant should be in the room with you for every important meeting. When Linda accompanies me, I don't have to carry anything into the meeting or out of it after we're done.

Another longtime member of my inner circle is Charlie Wetzel, my writing partner. I hired him as my researcher, but in the first months he

worked with me he proved his value when he reworked the manuscript of *Developing the Leaders Around You* at the request of my publisher. That first year he helped me write three books, as well as articles, product descriptions, and marketing pieces. It wasn't long before I wanted him in the room any time we were discussing writing or publishing. Charlie has been with me for twenty-eight years and together we've produced more than a hundred books.

The third longtime member of my inner circle is Mark Cole. I wasn't even the person who hired Mark. He was hired by someone in one of my companies and worked in the stock room and then in sales. As he rose in responsibility, I got to know him better. By the time he became a vice president, he became a confidant. When he proved himself, he became the CEO of all four of my organizations. Today, he's not only the CEO but also a co-owner of the companies and my successor. No one serves me or helps me the way Mark does and has for twenty years.

Leaders are hired to deliver results. There is no substitute for performance. But without a good team, they often don't get the opportunity. Those closest to them determine the level of their success. That is the Law of the Inner Circle.

## **WHY YOU AND I NEED A TEAM**

As I began teaching the laws of leadership twenty-five years ago, I could tell that many people were daunted by the idea of 21 Laws. I understood their feelings. I am a great believer in making things as simple as possible. I would have loved to compile fewer than 21 Laws of Leadership. But when I boil leadership down to its essence, I still see twenty-one things a leader must do well to lead effectively. However, at the same time I also recognize that *no single leader* can do all twenty-one things well. That's why every leader needs a team of people. As Mother Teresa observed, "You can do what I cannot do. I can do what you cannot do. Together we can do great things." That is the power of the Law of the Inner Circle.

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*“You can do what I cannot do. I can  
do what you cannot do. Together we  
can do great things.”*

—MOTHER TERESA

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Leadership expert Warren Bennis was right when he maintained, “The leader finds greatness in the group, and he or she helps the members find it in themselves.”<sup>1</sup> Think of any highly effective leader, and you will find someone who surrounded himself with a strong inner circle. You can see it in business, ministry, sports, and even family relationships. Those closest to you determine the level of your success.

## **WHO ARE YOU DRAWING INTO YOUR INNER CIRCLE?**

Most human beings have some kind of inner circle—people close to them who help to make or break them. However, many people are not strategic in choosing them. Few people give enough thought to how those closest to them impact their effectiveness or leadership potential. We naturally tend to surround ourselves with either people we like or people with whom we are comfortable. But people who bring nothing more than fun or easiness will not help you to be successful. You see it all the time with certain athletes who transition to the professional ranks and with entertainers who achieve professional success. Some plateau or self-destruct because their inner circle is composed of people who are not helpful or are even harmful to them.

To practice the Law of the Inner Circle, you must be *intentional* in your relationship building. You need to invest in the best people around you and see how they respond. As you look for potential inner circle members, take the advice of longtime executive and retired president, CEO, and chairman of Agilent Technologies, Ned Barnholt. He believes there are three kinds of

people in an organization when it comes to leadership: (1) those who get it almost immediately and they're off and running with it; (2) those who are skeptical and not sure what to do with it; and (3) another third who start out negative and hope it will go away. "I used to spend most of my time with those who were the most negative," says Barnholt, "trying to convince them to change. Now I spend my time with the people in the first [group]. I'm investing in my best assets."<sup>2</sup>

As people rise up, think about these three prequalifications before you begin drawing them in closer to become inner circle members. Only if they are solid in these three areas should you bring them into your circle.

## 1. WHO THEY ARE

Anyone who is going to be an integral part of your life needs to have good character and share the same values you have. When I invite people onto my team or consider them for my inner circle, I expect them to

- **HAVE INTEGRITY:** They need to be honest and truthful and do what they say they'll do.
- **POSSESS A POSITIVE ATTITUDE:** A negative attitude never led anyone to a positive solution.
- **VALUE EXCELLENCE:** Nothing hurts a business or a team more than settling for average.
- **SHOW FLEXIBILITY:** I want to be able to change on a dime to pursue new opportunities or improve on something we're already doing.
- **EXHIBIT LOYALTY:** We all need to work together toward a common cause and respect one another as we do.
- **VALUE PEOPLE:** Anyone who works with me must care about people and treat them with respect and dignity.

I could go on, but I'm sure you get the idea. I will say this. In the past when I haven't paid close enough attention to the values of someone I brought into my inner circle, I regretted it. So make sure to come up with your own list of values and then make sure a potential inner-circle member possesses those values.



## **2. WHAT THEY DO**

Every person in my inner circle is fantastic at what they do. If they weren't, they wouldn't be there. They make me, the team, and the organization better because of their skills, talents, and ability.

Because of my leadership giftedness, I naturally attract leaders. However, one of the best things I have done in my leadership career is to bring people into my inner circle who possess strengths that I don't. Because of this, they can point out my blind spots, compensate for my weaknesses, push back with perspectives different from my own, and bring different strengths to the organization. It's a great win-win.

I'm a big believer in team chemistry. If your inner circle is going to work together and function as a team, then you need to consider how members interact with each other, how they fit. Just as members of a championship basketball team have complementary skills and compatible roles, you want all inner circle members to have places where they contribute. And they should make one another better, raise one another's game, whether by sharing information and wisdom or engaging in friendly competition. When they improve one another, they improve your entire team.

## **3. HOW THEY LESSEN MY LOAD**

I discussed in the Law of Addition how people add, subtract, multiply, or divide when it comes to others. The people in your inner circle must be adders or multipliers. They should have a proven track record as assets to the organization. And they should take some of the leadership load off you.

When I was growing up, my mother used to recite a poem to me by Ella Wheeler Wilcox. I've never forgotten it:

There are two kinds of people on earth to-day,  
Just two kinds of people; no more, I say.  
Not the sinner and saint, for it's well understood,  
The good are half bad, and the bad are half good. . . .  
No; the two kinds of people on earth I mean,  
Are the people who lift and the people who lean.<sup>3</sup>

Your inner circle members need to be lifters, not just professionally, but also to you personally. They should add value to you. That may sound selfish, but it's not. Only if you reach your potential as a leader will the people on your team or in your organization have a chance to reach their potential. If the people around you don't make you better, then you need to get around other people.

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*Only if you reach your potential as a leader do your people have a chance to reach their potential.*

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I'll mention one other factor to consider when thinking about potential inner circle members. Some people naturally belong in your inner circle because of their importance to the organization. For example, by virtue of being my CEO, Mark Cole should be in my inner circle because my organizations cannot function without his leadership. However, Mark didn't become an inner circle member because of his position. Because he exhibits the three characteristics I already described, he became a member of my inner circle, and from there he earned the right to become my CEO. If people are in your inner circle due only to their position and you wouldn't otherwise put them there, then you may need to start looking for someone else to fill the position.

## **CIRCLES OF INFLUENCE**

People often ask me about the way I've developed my inner circle. I am strategic about bringing leaders around me, but the way they actually become part of my inner circle usually happens organically. As I work with people, I find myself relying on them more. I want them to be present in specific meetings, or I want them to lead particular projects. Over time, I discover how highly valuable they are to the team, the organization, and me. I don't perform a special ceremony and declare them to be inner circle

members. A day comes when I become aware that they are in the inner circle.

Every person in my inner circle is a high performer and either extends my influence beyond my reach, provides essential skills I lack, or helps me to grow and become a better leader.

I learned the principle of the inner circle in the eighties and identified it as a Law of Leadership in 1997 when I wrote the first edition of this book. But in recent years, I've had a new revelation about the Law of the Inner Circle, an addition to the law that I want to teach you. I now recognize the importance of having an *outer* circle too.

The outer circle is a group of people who help you expand your horizons, think bigger, get out of your comfort zone, and give you ideas. They can be a great source of creativity. Look at the differences between the people in each group:

#### **INNER CIRCLE MEMBERS**

Assist Me Day to Day  
Help Me Lead Better  
Remain with Me  
Compensate for My Weaknesses  
Focus on Today  
Help Me Implement  
Cover the Details  
Close Doors for Me

#### **OUTER CIRCLE MEMBERS**

Assist Me from Time to Time  
Help Me Lead Bigger  
Change As I Change  
Complement My Strengths  
Focus on Tomorrow  
Help Me Innovate  
Uncover the Big Picture  
Open New Doors in Me

Developing an outer circle in addition to an inner circle is one of the most valuable things I've done in the last five years.

Lee Iacocca said that success comes not from what you know, but from who you know and how you present yourself to each of those people. There is a lot of truth in that. If you want to increase your capacity and maximize your potential as a leader, your first step is always to become the best leader you can. The next is to surround yourself with the best leaders you can find.

As you develop the circles of people who influence you and help you influence others, start with your inner circle because those closest to you

determine the level of your success. Without an inner circle, no leader can go far. After you've developed a strong inner circle, start working on your outer circle. A leader who has one can go *farther* than one who doesn't. And never forget that those closest to you determine the level of your success. That's the Law of the Inner Circle. That's the only way you can reach the highest level possible.

## HE SPEAKS WITH MY VOICE

Often inner circle members will come from within the organizations you lead. You've invested in them, and they become highly valuable to you. Other times they are family members you rely on. Or mentors who have guided you and made you a better leader. But occasionally they come to be in your inner circle by another path. That was the case for John Vereecken.

I met John (or Juan as many friends call him) almost thirty years ago at a leadership event in Cancun. At that time, he worked for Lidere, a training organization that works with corporations and nonprofits. Though John is originally from Michigan, he moved to Mexico right out of school to lead a church there. I always liked John because he has a great personality, but I didn't see him very often.

Then in the early 2000s, my nonprofit organization wanted to start training leaders in Latin America, so we began working with Lidere. That's when I got to know John better and discovered what a fantastic leader he is. It wasn't long before he became a valuable member of my outer circle. He challenged my thinking, helped me to expand my vision, and taught me about Latin culture in South and Central America. The better I got to know him, the more I wanted him in the room when we talked about introducing training or transformation to new countries—and the more often I wanted him to lead some of our initiatives. He naturally transitioned from my outer circle to my inner circle.

The first time I asked him to interpret for me when I was communicating on stage in a Spanish-speaking country, John blew me away. I was astounded by how talented he was. I've spoken in scores of

countries with the help of hundreds of interpreters, and hands down, John Vereecken is the best I've ever had. In fact, he is now my voice in every Spanish-speaking country in the world. The John Maxwell Leadership Foundation would not be as successful as it is without John. And neither would I. That's the power of the Law of the Inner Circle. It clearly proves that those closest to you determine the level of your success.

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*Applying*  
THE LAW OF THE INNER CIRCLE

## *to Your Life*

1. Who is in your inner circle? List their names and next to each write how that person contributes to you and what they're working to accomplish. If they do not have a clear role or function, then write how you believe they have *the potential* to contribute. Look for holes and duplications. Then begin looking for people to fill the gaps.
2. Great inner circles do not come together by accident. Effective leaders are continually developing current and future inner circle members. How do they do it?
  - They spend extra time with them strategically to mentor them and to develop relationships.
  - They give them extra responsibility and place higher expectations on them.
  - They give them more credit when things go well and hold them accountable when they don't.

Examine your list of inner circle members to determine whether you are taking these steps with them. If not, make changes. In addition, be sure to use this development strategy with a pool of new potential inner circle members.

3. If you have already developed an inner circle and it is functioning well, then start looking for individuals to help you in your outer circle. Search for people who challenge you and spark your creativity. As your guide, remember the words of Solomon of ancient Israel, who wrote, "As iron sharpens iron, friends sharpen the minds of each other."<sup>4</sup>

## 12

### THE LAW OF EMPOWERMENT

#### *Only Secure Leaders Give Power to Others*

Henry Ford is considered an icon of American business for revolutionizing the automobile industry. So what caused him to stumble so badly that his son feared Ford Motor Company would go out of business? He was held captive by the Law of Empowerment.

Nearly everyone has heard of Henry Ford, the revolutionary automobile industry innovator and legend in American business history. In 1903, he cofounded the Ford Motor Company with the belief that the future of the automobile lay in putting it within the reach of the average American worker. Ford said,

I will build a motorcar for the multitude. It will be large enough for the family but small enough for the individual to run and care for. It will be constructed of the best materials, by the best men to be hired, after the simplest designs that modern engineering can devise. But it will be so low in price that no man making a good salary will be unable to own one—and enjoy with his family the blessings of hours of pleasure in God's great open spaces.<sup>1</sup>



Henry Ford carried out that vision with the Model T, and it changed the face of twentieth-century American life. By 1914, Ford was producing nearly 50 percent of all automobiles in the United States. The Ford Motor Company looked like an American success story.

## **A LESS-KNOWN CHAPTER OF THE STORY**

However, all of Ford's story is not about positive achievement, and one reason is that he didn't embrace the Law of Empowerment. He held on to power instead of empowering others. Ford was so in love with his Model T that he never wanted to change or improve it—nor did he want anyone else to tinker with it. One day when a group of his designers surprised him by presenting him with the prototype of an improved model, Ford furiously ripped its doors off the hinges and proceeded to destroy the car with his bare hands.

For almost twenty years, the Ford Motor Company offered only one design, the Model T, which Henry Ford had personally developed. It wasn't until 1927 that he finally—grudgingly—agreed to offer a new car to the public. The company finally produced the Model A, but it was incredibly far behind its competitors in technical innovations. Despite its early head start and the incredible lead over its competitors, the Ford Motor Company's market share kept shrinking. By 1931, it was down to only 28 percent, a little more than half of what it produced seventeen years earlier.

Henry Ford was the antithesis of an empowering leader. He continually undermined his leaders and looked over the shoulders of his people to control them. He even created a sociological department within Ford Motor Company to check up on his employees and direct their private lives.

Perhaps Ford's most peculiar dealings were with his executives, especially his son Edsel. The younger Ford had worked at the company since he was a boy. As Henry became more eccentric, Edsel worked harder to keep the company going. If it weren't for Edsel, the Ford Motor Company probably would have gone out of business in the 1930s. Henry eventually gave Edsel the presidency of the company, but at the same time

he undermined him. Whenever any promising leader was rising up in the company, Henry tore him down, causing the company to lose its best executives. The few who stayed did so because they hoped to see Edsel finally take over and set things right. But Edsel died in 1943 at age forty-nine.

## **ANOTHER HENRY FORD**

Edsel's oldest son, the twenty-six-year-old Henry Ford II, left the navy so that he could return to Dearborn, Michigan, and take over the company. At first, he faced opposition. But within two years, he gathered the support of several key people, received the backing of the board of directors (his mother controlled 41 percent of Ford Motor Company's stock), and convinced his grandfather to step down so that he could become president in his place.

Young Henry was taking over a company that hadn't made a profit in fifteen years and was losing \$1 million *a day*! The young president knew he was in over his head, so he brought in high-level leaders such as Colonel Charles "Tex" Thornton, who led a team at the War Department during World War II; and Ernie Breech, an experienced General Motors executive and the former president of Bendix Aviation. By 1949, Ford Motor Company was on a roll again.

But there was too much of his grandfather in Henry Ford II. He felt threatened by these good leaders, so he pitted one executive against another. Anytime an executive gained power and influence, Henry undercut the person's authority by moving him to a position with less clout, supporting the executive's subordinates, or publicly humiliating him. This maneuver continued all the days Henry II was at Ford.<sup>2</sup> As one-time Ford president Lee Iacocca commented after leaving the company, "Henry Ford, as I would learn firsthand, had a nasty habit of getting rid of strong leaders." Iacocca said Henry Ford II once described his leadership philosophy to him: "If a guy works for you, don't let him get too comfortable. Don't let him get

cozy or set in his ways. Always do the opposite of what he expects. Keep your people anxious and off-balance.”<sup>3</sup>

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO LEAD WELL?

The leadership of both Henry Fords violated the Law of Empowerment. Rather than building leaders up; giving them resources, authority, and responsibility; and then empowering them to achieve, they often undermined their best people. Their insecurity made it impossible for them to give power to others. Ultimately, it diminished their personal leadership potential, created havoc in the lives of the people around them, and damaged their organization. If leaders want to be successful, they have to be willing to empower others. I like the way President Theodore Roosevelt stated it: “The best executive is the one who has sense enough to pick good men to do what he wants done, and the self-restraint enough to keep from meddling with them while they do it.”

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*“The best executive is the one who  
has sense enough to pick good men to  
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restraint enough to keep from  
meddling with them while they do it.”*

—THEODORE ROOSEVELT

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To lead others well, we must help them to reach their potential. That means being on their side, encouraging them, sharing the power we have with them, and helping them to succeed. That’s not traditionally what we’re taught about leadership. The two leadership games I was taught as a kid were King of the Hill and Follow the Leader. What was the object of King of the Hill? To knock other people down so that you can be on top. And what was the point in Follow the Leader? To do things you *knew* followers

couldn't do to separate yourself from them and beat them. The problem with those games is that to win, you have to make everyone else lose. The games are based on insecurity and power, the opposite of the way to raise up leaders.

I believe people have a natural desire to gain power and hold on to it. Some do it to enrich themselves. Others desire to control other people to get what they want from them. Some people tell themselves they want power so that they can do good, but the moment they manipulate others or justify bad behavior to hold on to power, they begin doing harm, no matter how they justify it. Lord Acton stated, "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."<sup>4</sup> The recent #MeToo and Black Lives Matter movements are reactions against powerful people using their power to harm others with less power.

When I travel to developing countries, I am made especially aware of how alien the idea of empowerment can be to emerging leaders. In cultures where people need to fight to make something of themselves, the assumption is that they need to fight others to maintain their leadership. They put others down to lift themselves up. But that reflects a scarcity mind-set. The truth is that if you give some of your power away to others, there is still plenty to go around. Pushing people down takes you down with them. Lifting others up lifts you up.

## HOW TO EMPOWER OTHERS

The best solution to avoiding the corrupting influence of the desire for power is to share whatever power you have with others. You can do that using a simple process of equipping that I've taught for years. When you equip those you lead to do something, you're not just stepping back and giving them the *freedom* to succeed. You're giving them the *means* to succeed. You're sharing knowledge, skills, and permission for them to be more effective. And you're giving them the resources they need to be successful.

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*When you equip those you lead to do something, you're not just stepping back and giving them the freedom to succeed. You're giving them the means to succeed.*

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## **STEP 1: I DO IT**

The process of empowerment starts with your power or ability to be productive. As I mentioned in the Law of Influence, having a title or position doesn't make you a leader. Being able to get along well with people, while essential to leadership, also doesn't make you a leader. What makes you a leader is being productive, being able to lead a team to accomplish something. That ability gives you credibility. You can't give what you don't have.

Have you learned your craft and striven for excellence? Are you helping your team win? Are you leveraging your talents, skills, and abilities to achieve goals? If you are, you have the credibility of the *I Do It* phase. You are becoming a leader worth emulating. If not, start by developing your credibility by being successful.

## **STEP 2: I DO IT AND YOU ARE WITH ME**

The sharing process begins when you invite someone along and show them what you do and how to do it. This is where empowerment begins. When you show someone your mistakes instead of hoping they make the same ones, when you show them the "secrets" of your success instead of hiding them to keep your advantage, you've begun to share your power with them.

When I was in my twenties, after seeing an organization I had led go backwards after I left it, I started to figure out that instead of doing everything myself and being Mr.

Answer Man, I needed to train others to do what I knew how to do. My great breakthrough came when I made it my practice to take someone I wanted to train with me every time I led something. By watching me,

people learned to do what I could do, got a feel for why I did it, and learned the ropes.

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*My great breakthrough came when I made it my practice to take someone I wanted to train with me every time I led something.*

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### **STEP 3: YOU DO IT AND I AM WITH YOU**

This is the pivot point in empowerment. When you ask people to do what you've demonstrated, you are helping them take a step in their development and their ability. Notice that the leader doesn't *send* them off to do it. The leader *accompanies* them. Why? The first reason is to coach them. When you're with them, you can show them where they got off track. You can praise them for what they did well. You can encourage them through doubt. You can help them gain confidence. You can celebrate their success. The second reason is to hold them accountable. When you give power and responsibility to leaders, you want to make sure they are using them well to accomplish the work and help other people.

### **STEP 4: YOU DO IT**

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*Your greatest hope shouldn't be for them to just be successful. It should be for them to be more successful than you!*

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This is the handoff of power. When the people you train and empower are capable of working on their own, you release them to succeed. This is where they have the opportunity to sharpen their abilities and skills and develop excellence. If you've done your job well and have the right mind-

set, your greatest hope shouldn't be for them to just be successful. It should be for them to be *more successful than you!* That's true empowerment.

## **STEP 5: YOU DO IT AND SOMEONE ELSE IS WITH YOU**

After step four, it might sound like the job is done, but there's still one more important step. You need to encourage the people you equip to take others along so that they can be equipped too. This not only expands the effectiveness of the organization, but it also helps those you train to give their power away instead of hoarding it.

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*Leading well is not about enriching  
yourself—it's about empowering  
others.*

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Leading well is not about enriching yourself—it's about empowering others. Leadership analysts Lynne McFarland, Larry Senn, and John Childress affirm the “empowerment leadership model shifts away from ‘position power’ to ‘people power,’ within which all people are given leadership roles so they can contribute to their fullest capacity.”<sup>5</sup> Only empowered people can reach their potential. When leaders can't or won't empower others, they create barriers within the organization that followers cannot overcome. If the barriers remain long enough, then the people give up and stop trying, or they go to another organization where they can maximize their potential.

## **BARRIERS TO EMPOWERING OTHERS**

If empowerment is so positive, then why don't more leaders do it? Many have never been taught how. But more often when leaders fail to empower others, it is usually due to one of these three reasons:

## **THE #1 BARRIER TO EMPOWERMENT: DESIRE FOR JOB SECURITY**

The greatest enemy of empowerment is the fear of losing what we have. Many leaders worry that if they help subordinates, they themselves will become dispensable. But the truth is that the only way to make yourself *indispensable* is to raise up leaders. If you are able to continually empower others and help them develop so that they become capable of taking over your job, you will become so valuable to the organization that you become indispensable. That's a paradox of the Law of Empowerment.

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*The greatest enemy of empowerment  
is the fear of losing what we have.*

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*What if I work myself out of a job by empowering others, you may ask, and my superiors don't recognize my contribution?* That can happen in the short term. But if you keep raising up leaders and empowering them, you will develop a pattern of achievement, excellence, and leadership that will be recognized and rewarded. If the teams you lead always seem to succeed, people will figure out that you are leading them well.

## **THE #2 BARRIER TO EMPOWERMENT: RESISTANCE TO CHANGE**

Nobel Prize-winning author John Steinbeck asserted, "It is the nature of man as he grows older . . . to protest against change, particularly change for the better."<sup>6</sup> By its very nature, empowerment brings constant change because it encourages people to grow and innovate. Change is the price of progress. That's not always easy to live with.

Most people don't like change, yet one of the most important responsibilities of leaders is to continually improve their organizations. As a leader, you must train yourself to embrace change, to desire it, to make a way for it. Effective leaders are not only willing to change; they become change agents.



## THE #3 BARRIER TO EMPOWERMENT: LACK OF SELF-WORTH

Murphy's Twelfth Law states: "You can't lead a cavalry charge if you think you look funny on a horse."<sup>7</sup> Self-conscious people are rarely good leaders. They focus on themselves, worrying how they look, what others think, whether they are liked. They can't give power to others because they feel that they have no power themselves. And you can't give what you don't have.

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*"Great leaders gain authority by  
giving it away."*

—JAMES B. STOCKDALE

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Only secure leaders are able to give themselves away. Mark Twain once remarked that great things happen when you don't care who gets the credit. But I believe you can take that a step farther. I believe the greatest things happen *only* when you give others the credit. One-time vice-presidential candidate Admiral James B. Stockdale declared, "What we need for leaders are men [and women] of heart who are so helpful that they, in effect, do away with the need of their jobs. But leaders like that are never out of a job, never out of followers. Strange as it sounds, great leaders gain authority by giving it away."<sup>8</sup> If you aspire to be a great leader, you must live by the Law of Empowerment.

## THE PRESIDENT OF EMPOWERMENT

One of the greatest leaders of the United States was known for his humility and willingness to give his power and authority to others: President Abraham Lincoln. The depth of his security as a leader can be seen in the selection of his cabinet. Most presidents pick like-minded allies. But not Lincoln. At a time of turmoil for the country when factions were strong,

Lincoln brought together a group of leaders who would bring strength through diversity and mutual challenge. One Lincoln biographer said this of his method:

For a President to select a political rival for a cabinet post was not unprecedented; but deliberately to surround himself with all of his disappointed antagonists seemed to be courting disaster. It was a mark of his sincere intentions that Lincoln wanted the advice of men as strong as himself or stronger. That he entertained no fear of being crushed or overridden by such men revealed either surpassing naïveté or a tranquil confidence in his powers of leadership.<sup>9</sup>

Lincoln's desire to unify the country was more important than his personal comfort. His strength and self-confidence allowed him to practice the Law of Empowerment and bring strong leaders into his circle.

Perhaps the greatest example of Lincoln's desire to empower his leaders could be seen in how he treated his generals during the war. For example, in June 1863, when Lincoln put the command of the Army of the Potomac into the hands of General George G. Meade, Lincoln sent him a message:

Considering the circumstances, no one ever received a more important command; and I cannot doubt that you will fully justify the confidence which the Government has reposed in you. You will not be hampered by any minute instructions from these headquarters. Your army is free to act as you may deem proper under the circumstances as they arise. . . . All forces within the sphere of your operations will be held subject to your orders.<sup>10</sup>

Lincoln's use of the Law of Empowerment was as consistent as Henry Ford's habit of breaking it. When his generals performed well, Lincoln gave them the credit; when they performed poorly, Lincoln took the blame. Lincoln expert Donald T. Phillips acknowledged, "Throughout the war Lincoln continued to accept public responsibility for battles lost or opportunities missed."<sup>11</sup> Lincoln was able to stand strongly during the war and continually give power to others because of his rock-solid security.

## THE POWER OF EMPOWERMENT

Reading about a leader like Lincoln is inspiring. But it can also be intimidating because he was such a strong leader at such a difficult time. But you don't have to be a great leader to empower others. You just need to be willing. The main ingredient for empowering others is a high belief in people. If you believe in others, they will believe in themselves.

Recently I received a note from Mark Cole thanking me for my belief in him. In part, here is what he wrote:

John,

I'm writing this to you because 20-plus years ago, you and the team at INJOY took a chance on a young man who was broken by leadership failures. Y'all took me in, gave me a role that played to my strengths, and trusted me more and more to expand my leadership (even though I swore I'd never lead again).

That led to a bigger role with more responsibility, which led to another role with even greater responsibility. I learned to channel my passions into my strengths time and again, using each new opportunity from you as a chance to become better. As a result, I went from selling event tickets out of a converted broom closet to becoming the owner, CEO, and President of The John Maxwell Enterprise.

How was I able to grow along that journey? You took the time to invest in me and empower me. For 20-plus years now, I've been privileged to study at your side. You've poured into me, mentored me, coached me, challenged me, and given me the space and freedom to make mistakes. You challenged me to grow in areas where I was very uncomfortable.

Stephanie, Tori, Maci and I are grateful every single day for your presence in our lives.

Your legacy lives in me, and in every coach, trainer, and leader you've ever empowered or developed to take the message of Transformation to the world. We're proud to continue your good work, receive your baton, and run our own race as well as you've run yours.

Thank you for knowing, going, and showing us the way.

Mark

When I receive an encouraging note from someone close to me, I tuck it away and save it. I cherish such things. I am grateful to Mark for all he has done for me, and I believe he has returned to me much more than I have given to him. And I've genuinely enjoyed the time I've spent helping him grow.

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*Enlarging others makes you larger.*

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The truth is that empowerment is powerful—not only for the person being developed, but also for the empowerer. Enlarging others makes you larger. Mark has made me better than I am, not just because he helped me achieve much more than I could have done on my own, but also because the whole process made me a better leader. That is the impact of the Law of Empowerment. It is an impact you can experience as a leader as long as you are willing to believe in people and give your power away.

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*Applying*  
THE LAW OF EMPOWERMENT

## *to Your Life*

1. How secure are you as a leader? Are you confident? Are you confident enough to train and empower others to take your place? If not, you will need to examine your self-worth and explore why you're hesitant to share your power with others.
2. How much do you believe in people? Make a list of the people who work for you. If there are too many to list, then write the names of your top three to five people. Now, rate each person's potential—not their current ability—on a scale of 1 to 10 (low to high). If the numbers are low, your belief in people isn't high enough, and you will have difficulty empowering others. Change your thinking by focusing on people's positive qualities and characteristics. Look for people's greatest strengths, and envision how they can leverage those strengths to achieve significant things. Then help them do that.
3. Become an empowering leader. Use the five-step process to train and empower your best people. Take them with you, train them, coach them, and give them the responsibility and authority to succeed. Once you experience the joy and effectiveness of empowering others, you will have a hard time *not* giving your power away.

## THE LAW OF THE PICTURE

### *People Do What People See*

Easy Company withstood the German advance at the Battle of the Bulge and dashed Hitler's last hope for stopping the Allies' advance. They were able to do it because their leaders embraced the Law of the Picture.

In 2001, filmmaker Steven Spielberg and actor Tom Hanks produced a TV miniseries called *Band of Brothers* based on the book of the same name by historian Stephen Ambrose. The ten episodes chronicled the story of Easy Company, a group of paratroopers from the 101st Airborne who fought during World War II. The men of Easy Company were as tough as soldiers get, and they fought heroically from the invasion of Normandy to the end of the war.

The story of Easy Company is a great study in leadership, for the various officers and sergeants who commanded the men displayed leadership styles both good and bad. When the leadership was good, it made the difference, not only in the way the soldiers performed, but in the outcome of their battles and, ultimately, the war.

## THE WRONG PICTURE

From the very first episode of the television series, the contrasting leadership styles were on display. Herbert Sobel, Easy Company's commanding officer during its training, was shown to be a brutal and autocratic leader with a sadistic streak. He drove the men harder than the commander of any other company. He arbitrarily revoked passes and inflicted punishment. But judging from Ambrose's research, Sobel was even worse than he was depicted in the series.

Sobel drove the men mercilessly, which was fine, since he was preparing them for combat. But he didn't push himself the same way, being *barely* capable of passing the physical test required of paratroopers. Nor did he display the high level of competence he demanded from everyone else. Ambrose wrote about an incident during training that was representative of Sobel's leadership:

On one night exercise he [Sobel] decided to teach his men a lesson. He and Sergeant Evans went sneaking through the company position to steal rifles from sleeping men. The mission was successful; by daylight Sobel and Evans had nearly fifty rifles. With great fanfare, Evans called the company together and Sobel began to tell the men what miserable soldiers they were.<sup>1</sup>

What Sobel didn't realize was that the men he was berating weren't his own. He had wandered into the wrong camp and stolen the rifles belonging to Fox Company. Sobel didn't even realize his mistake until the commander of Fox Company came up with forty-five of his men.

The soldiers who served under Sobel mocked him and undermined him. By the time Easy Company began preparations for the invasion of Normandy, many men were taking bets on which of them would shoot Sobel when they finally joined the war in Europe. Fortunately, for both him and his men, Sobel was removed as company commander and reassigned before they went into combat.

## A DIFFERENT KIND OF PICTURE



Fortunately, most of Easy Company's leaders were excellent, and one in particular, who was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, was considered by the men to be "the best combat leader in World War II."<sup>2</sup> That person was Dick Winters. He started out as a platoon leader in Easy Company during their training and was promoted to company commander after Normandy and later to battalion executive officer. He finished his brief military career with the rank of major.

Time after time, Winters helped his soldiers to perform at the highest level. And he always led from in front, setting the example, taking the risks along with them. Ambrose described Winters's philosophy of leadership in battle simply: "Officers go first."<sup>3</sup> Whenever his troops needed to assault an enemy position, Winters was in front leading the charge.

One of the most remarkable incidents demonstrating Winters's way of leading by example occurred soon after D-Day on the road to Carentan, a town that Easy Company needed to take from the Germans. As the American paratroopers under his command approached the town, they became pinned down by German machine-gun fire. Huddled in ditches on either side of the road, the soldiers froze and wouldn't move forward when ordered to. Yet if they didn't move, they would eventually be cut to pieces. Winters tried rallying them. He coaxed them. He kicked them. He ran from one ditch to the other as machine-gun bullets flew by. Finally, he jumped into the middle of the road, bullets glancing off the ground near him, and shouted at the men to get moving. Everyone got up and moved forward as one. And they helped to take the town.

More than thirty-five years later, Floyd Talbert, who was a sergeant, wrote to Winters about the incident and said, "I'll never forget seeing you in the middle of that road. You were my total inspiration. All my boys felt the same way."<sup>4</sup> In 2006, Winters summed up his approach to leadership, saying, "I may not have been the best combat commander, but I always strove to be. My men depended on me to carefully analyze every tactical situation, to maximize the resources that I had at my disposal, to think under pressure, and then to lead them by personal example."<sup>5</sup>

When Ambrose was asked what allowed Easy Company to distinguish itself during the war, to "rise above" its peers, Ambrose was clear in his response: "They weren't all that much better than other paratroopers, or the

Rangers, or the Marines. They were one of many elite units in the war. But what made them special even among those who were already self-selected and special, was their leadership. . . . The great COs, platoon leaders and sergeants—not all elite units had such luck in their leaders, and that’s the difference.”<sup>6</sup> Why did that make such a difference? Because people do what people see. That is the Law of the Picture. When the leaders show the way with the right actions, their followers copy them and can succeed.

## MAKING THE PICTURE COME ALIVE

Great leaders always seem to embody two seemingly disparate qualities. They are both highly *visionary* and highly *practical*. Their vision enables them to see beyond the immediate. They can envision what’s coming and what must be done. Leaders possess an understanding of how . . .

Mission provides *purpose*—answering the question, *Why?*

Vision provides a *picture*—answering the question, *What?*

Strategy provides a *plan*—answering the question, *How?*

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*Great leaders always seem to embody  
two seemingly disparate qualities.  
They are both highly visionary and  
highly practical.*

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As author Hans Finzel observed, “Leaders are paid to be dreamers. In fact, the higher you go in leadership, the more your work is about the future.”<sup>7</sup>

At the same time, leaders are practical enough to know that vision without action achieves nothing. They make themselves responsible for helping their team members to take action. That can be difficult because the people who follow them often cannot envision the future as the leader does.

They can't picture what's best for the team. They lose track of the big picture. Why? Because vision has a tendency to leak.

Leaders are stewards of the vision. So what should they do to bridge the vision gap between them and their followers? The temptation for many leaders is to merely communicate the vision. Don't get me wrong: communication is certainly important. Good leaders must communicate the vision clearly, creatively, and continually. The leader's effective *communication* of the vision makes the picture clear. But that is not enough. The leader must also *live* the vision. The leader's effective *modeling* of the vision makes the picture come alive!

Good leaders are always conscious of the fact that they are setting the example and members of their team are going to do what they do, for better or worse. In general, the better the leaders' actions, the better their people's.

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*The leader's effective modeling of the vision makes the picture come alive!*

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I'm certainly not suggesting that leaders have all the answers. Anyone who has led anything knows that. The leaders who make the greatest impact are often those who lead well in the midst of uncertainty. Andy Stanley, an excellent leader and communicator, has addressed this issue. A few years ago at the Catalyst conference for leaders, he said:

Uncertainty is not an indication of poor leadership. Rather it indicates a need for leadership. The nature of leadership demands that there always be an element of uncertainty. The temptation is to think, *If I were a good leader, I would know exactly what to do.* Increased responsibility means dealing with more and more intangibles and therefore more complex uncertainty. Leaders can afford to be uncertain, but we cannot afford to be unclear. People will not follow fuzzy leadership.

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*"Leaders can afford to be uncertain,  
but we cannot afford to be unclear.  
People will not follow fuzzy  
leadership."*

When times are tough, uncertainty is high, and chaos threatens to overwhelm everyone, followers are in greatest need of a clear picture from their leaders. They need a leader who embraces the Law of the Picture. The living picture they see in their leader produces energy, passion, and motivation to keep going.

## MODELING INSIGHTS FOR LEADERS

If you desire to be the best leader you can become, you must not neglect the Law of the Picture. As you strive to improve as an example to your followers, remember these things:

### 1. THE PEOPLE YOU LEAD ARE ALWAYS WATCHING WHAT YOU DO

If you are a parent, you have probably already realized that your children are always watching what you do. Say anything you want, but your children learn more from what they see than from anywhere else. As parents, Margaret and I realized this early. No matter what we taught our children, they insisted on behaving like us. How frustrating. Legendary UCLA basketball coach John Wooden once quoted a poem that explains it perfectly:

No written word  
nor spoken plea  
Can teach our youth  
what they should be  
Nor all the books  
on all the shelves  
It's what the teachers  
are themselves.<sup>8</sup>

Just as children watch their parents and emulate their behavior, so do employees watching their bosses. If the bosses come in late, then employees feel that they can too. If the bosses cut corners, employees cut corners. People do what people see.

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*Followers may doubt what their  
leaders say, but they usually believe  
what they do.*

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Followers may doubt what their leaders say, but they usually believe what they do. And they imitate it. Former US Army general and secretary of state Colin Powell observed, “You can issue all the memos and give all the motivational speeches you want, but if the rest of the people in your organization don’t see you putting forth your best effort every single day, they won’t either.”<sup>9</sup>

Whitley David asserted, “A good supervisor is a catalyst, not a drill sergeant. He creates an atmosphere where intelligent people are willing to follow him. He doesn’t command; he convinces.” Nothing is more convincing than living out what you say you believe.

## **2. IT’S EASIER TO TEACH WHAT’S RIGHT THAN TO DO WHAT’S RIGHT**

Writer Mark Twain quipped, “To do what is right is wonderful. To teach what is right is even more wonderful—and much easier.” Isn’t that the truth? It’s always easier to teach what’s right than it is to do it yourself. That’s one of the reasons why many parents (and bosses) say, “Do as I say, not as I do.”

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*“To do what is right is wonderful. To  
teach what is right is even more  
wonderful—and much easier.”*

—MARK TWAIN

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One of my earliest challenges as a leader was to raise my living to the level of my teaching. I can still remember the day that I decided that I would not teach anything I did not try to live out. That was a tough decision, but as a young leader, I was learning to embrace the Law of the Picture. Author Norman Vincent Peale stated, “Nothing is more confusing than people who give good advice but set a bad example.” I would say a related thought is also true: “Nothing is more *convincing* than people who give good advice and set a good example.”

I once received calls on the same day about teaching ethics in the business arena from two reporters, one from the *Chicago Tribune* and the other from *USA Today*. Both asked similar questions. They wanted to know if ethics could be taught. My answer was yes.

“But many of the companies that teach ethics classes had ethics problems,” one reporter pushed back.

“That’s because ethics can be instilled in others only if it is taught *and modeled* for them,” I replied. Too many leaders are like bad travel agents. They send people places they have never been. Instead, they should be more like tour guides, taking people places they have gone and sharing the wisdom of their own experiences.

John Wooden used to say to his players, “*Show* me what you can do; don’t *tell* me what you can do.” I believe team members have the same attitude toward their leaders. They want to *see* their leaders in action, doing their best, showing the way, and setting the example. V. J. Featherstone remarked, “Leaders tell but never teach until they practice what they preach.” That is the Law of the Picture.

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*“Leaders tell but never teach until  
they practice what they preach.”*

—V. J. FEATHERSTONE

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### **3. WE SHOULD WORK ON CHANGING OURSELVES BEFORE TRYING TO IMPROVE OTHERS**

Leaders are responsible for the performance of the people they lead. The buck stops with them. They accordingly monitor their team members' progress, give them direction, and hold them accountable. And to improve the performance of the team, leaders must act as change agents. However, a great danger to good leadership is the temptation to try to change others without first making changes to yourself.

As a leader, the first person I need to lead is me. The first person that I should try to change and improve is me. My standards of excellence should be higher for myself than those I set for others. To remain a credible leader, I must always work first, hardest, and longest on changing myself. This is neither easy nor natural, but it is essential. In all honesty, I am a lot like Lucy in the *Peanuts* comic strip who tells Charlie Brown that she wants to change the world. When an overwhelmed Charlie Brown asks Lucy where she would start, her response is, "I would start with you, Charlie Brown. I would start with you."

Not long ago, I was teaching on the idea of 360-degree leaders, people who exert influence not just down with those they lead but also up with their boss and across with their colleagues. During a Q&A session, an attendee asked, "Which is the most difficult—leading up, across, or down?"

"None of the above," I answered quickly. "Leading myself is the toughest."

To lead any way other than by example, we send a fuzzy picture of leadership to others. If we work on improving ourselves first and make that our primary mission, then others are more likely to follow.

### **4. THE MOST VALUABLE GIFT A LEADER CAN GIVE IS BEING A GOOD EXAMPLE**

A survey conducted by Opinion Research Corporation for Ajilon Finance asked American workers to select the one trait that was most important for a person to lead them. Here are the results:

<b>RANK</b>	<b>CHARACTERISTIC</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
1.	Leading by example	26%

2.	Strong ethics or morals	19%
3.	Knowledge of the business	17%
4.	Fairness	14%
5.	Overall intelligence and competence	13%
6.	Recognition of employees	10% <sup>10</sup>

More than anything else, employees want leaders whose beliefs and actions line up. They want good models who lead from the front.

Leadership is more caught than taught. How does one “catch” leadership? By watching good leaders in action! When I think about my leadership journey, I feel that I have been fortunate to have had excellent leadership models from whom I have “caught” various aspects of leadership:

- I caught *perseverance* by watching my father face and overcome adversity.
- I caught *encouragement* by looking at how Ken Blanchard valued people.
- I caught *vision* by seeing Bill Bright make his vision become reality.

I continue to learn from good models, and I strive to set the right example for the people who follow me—my children and grandchildren, the employees in my companies, and the people who attend my conferences and read my books. Living what I teach is the most important thing I do as a leader. As Nobel Peace Prize winner Albert Schweitzer observed, “Example is leadership.”<sup>11</sup>

## WITHOUT A PICTURE, IT’S JUST TALK

In the Law of Magnetism, I wrote about the John Maxwell Team (JMT), the thousands of men and women we’ve trained and certified as speakers and coaches. And I wrote about the values we instill in them:



Valuing People  
Maintaining a Positive Attitude  
Growing Daily  
Leading by Example  
Living with Intentionality  
Exceeding Clients' Expectations  
Equipping Others  
Being Catalysts for Transformation  
Leaving Room for Faith

From the very beginning, I have believed these values to be the most important thing we teach them, more than coaching, speaking, or leadership skills. Because I lend these individuals my name, I want them to represent me well and embody the same values I embrace.

For that reason, every time we have trained a new group of coaches at our International Maxwell Certification event, I've taught a session on our values. But because I understand the Law of the Picture, I knew in my gut that teaching alone wouldn't give new coaches the picture of leadership I wanted them to live. How was I going to *show* it to them when I had only a couple of days with them in person at the event? Then I got an idea. I'd introduce them to experienced JMT coaches who were successful because they were living out our values. From that time on, I featured coaches they could see, learn from, and follow. Their example set the course for the new coaches. As a result, not only do the new coaches benefit from seeing good pictures of leadership, but those experienced coaches who are exemplifying good values become recognized and honored for their work. It's a win for everyone.

As you lead others, never forget that you set the tone for everyone you lead. The values you model will be shared by the people on your team. If you work hard, they're likely to work hard. If you're growing and learning with humility, they'll realize that is the road to greater success. If you maintain a positive attitude with an abundance mind-set, they will emulate you. If you're highly ethical in everything you do and refuse to cut corners, they'll understand that honesty and integrity are the standards for the team. People do what people see. That is the Law of the Picture.

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*Applying*  
THE LAW OF THE PICTURE

## *to Your Life*

1. If you are already practicing the Law of Process, then you are currently working to sharpen your skills to increase your leadership ability. (If you're not, get started!) But there is more to leadership than just technical skills. Character is also vital to leadership, and that is communicated through the Law of the Picture. Your values and how you live them determine your character.

Give yourself a character audit. First, make a list of your core values, such as integrity, hard work, honesty, and so on. Then, think about your actions of the last month. What incidents, if any, stand out as inconsistent with those values? List as many things as you can recall. Don't dismiss anything too quickly, and don't rationalize any of your shortcomings. These items will show you where you need to work on yourself.

2. Ask a trusted colleague or friend to watch you for an extended period of time (a week, a month). Ask him or her to observe and record any inconsistencies between your stated values and your behavior. This will take great courage from both of you. At the end of the agreed-upon time period, meet with your observer. Listen to the results. You may ask simple questions for clarification, but you are not allowed to defend yourself. Take time after the meeting to reflect. Then plan how to change to improve your character.
3. What are the three to five things you wish your team members did better than they do now? List them. Now, grade *your performance* for each. (You may want to ask someone else to grade you as well to make sure your perception of yourself is accurate.) If your self-scores are low, then you need to change yourself in these areas before addressing them with others. If your self-scores are high, then you need to be more intentional about setting the example for your people.

## THE LAW OF BUY-IN

### *People Buy into the Leader, Then the Vision*

They freed their nation by passively protesting, even when it cost them their lives by the thousands. What would inspire them to do such a thing? The Law of Buy-In.

**I**n the fall of 1997, a few members of my staff and I had the opportunity to travel to India and teach four leadership conferences, something the organization would do many more times around the world in the decades since. That trip left a strong impression on me. India is an amazing country, full of contradictions. It's a place of beauty with warm and generous people. It was there that I was reminded of the Law of Buy-In.

I'll never forget when our plane landed in Delhi. Exiting the airport, I felt as if we had been transported to another planet. There were crowds everywhere. People on bicycles, in cars, on camels and elephants. People on the streets, some sleeping right on the sidewalks. Animals roamed free, no matter where we were. And everything was in motion. As we drove along the main street toward our hotel, I also noticed something else. Banners. Wherever we looked, we could see banners celebrating India's fifty years of liberty, along with huge pictures of one man: Mahatma Gandhi.

## **OBSCURE BEGINNINGS**

Today, people take for granted that Gandhi was a great leader. But the story of his leadership is a marvelous study in the Law of Buy-In. Mohandas K. Gandhi, called Mahatma (which means “great soul”), was educated in London. After finishing his education in law, he traveled back to India and then on to South Africa. There he worked for twenty years as a barrister and political activist. And in that time he developed as a leader, fighting for the rights of Indians and other minorities who were abused and discriminated against by South Africa’s oppressive government.

By the time he returned to India in 1914, Gandhi was very well known and highly respected among his countrymen. Over the next several years, as he led protests and strikes around the country, people rallied to him and looked to him more and more for leadership. In 1920—a mere six years after returning to India—he was elected president of the All India Home Rule League.

The most remarkable thing about Gandhi isn’t that he became a leader in India, but that he was able to change the people’s vision for obtaining freedom. Before he began leading them, the people used violence in an effort to achieve their goals. For years riots against the British establishment had been common. But Gandhi’s vision for change in India was based on nonviolent civil disobedience. He once said, “Nonviolence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man.”<sup>1</sup>

## **A NEW APPROACH**

Gandhi challenged the people to meet oppression with peaceful disobedience and noncooperation. Even when the British military massacred more than one thousand people at Amritsar in 1919, Gandhi called the people to stand—without fighting back. Rallying everyone to his way of thinking wasn’t easy. But because the people had come to buy into

him as their leader, they embraced his vision. And then they followed him faithfully. He asked them not to fight, and eventually, they stopped fighting. When he called for everyone to burn foreign-made clothes and start wearing nothing but home-spun material, millions of people responded by doing it. When he decided that a March to the Sea to protest the Salt Act would be their rallying point for civil disobedience against the British, the nation's leaders followed him the two hundred miles to the city of Dandi, where government representatives arrested them.

Their struggle for independence was slow and painful, but Gandhi's leadership was strong enough to deliver on the promise of his vision. In 1947, India gained home rule. Because the people had bought into Gandhi, they accepted his vision. And once they had embraced the vision, they were able to carry it out. That's how the Law of Buy-In works. The leader finds the dream and then the people. The people find the leader, and then the dream.

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*The leader finds the dream and then  
the people. The people find the leader  
and then the dream.*

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## **DON'T PUT THE CART FIRST**

When I teach leadership, I field a lot of questions about vision. Invariably, someone will come up to me during a break, give me a brief description of their vision, and ask me, "Do you think my people will buy into my vision?"

My response is always the same: "First tell me this. Do your people buy into you?"

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*People don't at first follow worthy  
causes. They follow worthy leaders*

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*who promote causes they can believe  
in.*

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You see, many people who approach the area of vision in leadership have it all backward. They believe that if the cause is good enough, people will automatically buy into it and follow. But that's not how leadership usually works. People don't at first follow worthy causes. They follow worthy leaders who promote causes they can believe in. People buy into the leader first, then the leader's vision. Having an understanding of that will change your whole approach to leading people.

During the dot-com boom, I read an article in *Business Week* that profiled entrepreneurs who partnered with venture capitalists in the computer industry. At that time, Silicon Valley in California was full of people who worked in the computer industry for a short time and then tried to start their own companies. Every day, hundreds of them were buzzing around trying to find investors so that they could get their ideas and enterprises off the ground. Most never found backing. But whenever an entrepreneur succeeded once, she found it pretty easy to find money the next time around. Many times, the investors weren't even interested in finding out what the entrepreneur's vision was. If they'd bought into the person, then they readily accepted the ideas.

The writer of the article interviewed software entrepreneur Judith Estrin and her partner. At that time, they had founded two companies. She said that funding her first company took six months and countless presentations, even though she had a viable idea and believed in it 100 percent. But the start-up of her second company happened almost overnight. It took only two phone calls that lasted mere minutes for her to land \$5 million in backing. When the word got out that she was starting her second company, she said, "We had venture capitalists calling us and begging us to take their money."<sup>2</sup>

Why had everything changed so drastically for her? Because of the Law of Buy-In. People had bought into her, so they were ready to buy into whatever vision she offered, sight unseen.

# **BUY-IN IS A PROCESS**

As leaders, we have to give people reasons to buy into us. That process usually occurs in three progressive steps.

## **1. THEY BUY INTO YOUR CHARACTER**

The process of buy-in always starts with trust. I don't need to talk too much about this because I explain it in the Law of Solid Ground. I'll simply say this. Until people trust you, they will always hold back. They will not completely buy into you or your leadership.

## **2. THEY BUY INTO YOUR COMPETENCE**

There is no leadership without competence. People don't buy into leaders who can't produce and have no track record. You must prove your competence. The more you demonstrate competence, the more they will buy in.

## **3. THEY BUY INTO YOUR COMMITMENT**

The final piece of the puzzle is commitment. People don't buy into leaders who lack commitment. Only commitment will keep the leader engaged in the cause, and only the demonstration of that commitment will prompt others to buy in.

Let me say one more thing about the buy-in process. It's not permanent. There have been times in my life when I had the buy-in of people, but I had to reearn it after my vision changed. For example, when I resigned my position as a pastor and stopped leading in a local church, there were people who believe I had sold out and told me so. They thought I was betraying my values and chasing money. I knew the transition was right because in the long run, I was convinced I would add value to more people and be able to share my values with a larger audience. It took twenty years for some people to accept my decision and buy back into me as a leader.

I lost the buy-in of leaders in my own organizations more than once and had to earn it back. As I already mentioned, when I wanted to create the



John Maxwell Team, leaders in my organization thought it was a bad idea to lend my name to thousands of people who might misrepresent me. And when I wanted to shift my nonprofit organization from training leaders to transforming leaders, some members of my board couldn't understand my thinking and didn't buy into it, and as a result, they resigned. It broke my heart, but I had 100 percent confidence that it was the right decision. I believed in myself and my vision.

If you face a situation as a leader where people won't buy into you, then you must earn their buy-in. How did I accomplish that with the leaders in my organizations? I took action. You can't win people's buy-in with just words. And resources and opportunities won't come to you until you're moving forward. I re-proved my competence to them by winning small victories that showed the vision was working. If you can deliver on small pieces of the vision while continuing to demonstrate good character and ongoing commitment, you have a chance to regain people's buy-in.

## **YOU ARE THE MESSAGE**

Every message people receive is filtered through the messenger who delivers it. If you consider the messenger to be credible, then you believe the message has value. That's one reason that actors and athletes are hired as promoters of products. People buy Nike shoes because they have bought into Cristiano Ronaldo, LeBron James, Serena Williams, and Tiger Woods, not necessarily because of the quality of the shoes.

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*Every message that people receive is  
filtered through the messenger who  
delivers it.*

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The same is true when actors promote causes. Have the actors suddenly become experts in the cause they're promoting? Usually not. But that doesn't matter. People want to listen to them because they believe in them

as people or because they have credibility as performers. Once people have bought into someone, they are willing to give the person's vision a chance. People want to go along with people they get along with.

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*People want to go along with people  
they get along with.*

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## IT'S NOT AN EITHER/OR PROPOSITION

You cannot separate leaders from the causes they promote. It cannot be done, no matter how hard you try. It's not an either/or proposition. The two always go together. Take a look at the following table. It shows how people react to leaders and their vision under different circumstances:

LEADER	+	VISION	=	RESULT
Don't buy in		Don't buy in		Get another leader
Don't buy in		Buy in		Get another leader
Buy in		Don't buy in		Get another vision
Buy in		Buy in		Get behind the leader

Let's take a look at each of these.

### WHEN FOLLOWERS DON'T LIKE THE LEADER OR THE VISION . . . THEY LOOK FOR ANOTHER LEADER

The only time people will follow a leader they don't like with a vision they don't believe in is when the leader has some kind of leverage. That

could be something as sinister as the threat of physical violence or as basic as the ability to withhold a paycheck. If the followers have a choice in the matter, they don't follow. And even if they don't have much of a choice, they start looking for another leader to follow. This is a no-win situation for everyone involved.

### **WHEN FOLLOWERS DON'T LIKE THE LEADER BUT THEY DO LIKE THE VISION . . . THEY LOOK FOR ANOTHER LEADER**

You may be surprised by this. Even though people may think a cause is good, if they don't like the leader, they will go out and find another one. That's one reason that coaches change teams so often in professional sports. The vision for any team always stays the same: everyone wants to win a championship. But the players don't always believe in their leader. And when they don't, what happens? The owners don't fire all of the players. They fire the leader and bring in someone they hope the players will buy into. The talent level of most professional coaches is pretty similar. The effectiveness of their systems isn't that different. What often separates them from each other are their leadership and their level of credibility with players.

### **WHEN FOLLOWERS LIKE THE LEADER BUT NOT THE VISION . . . THEY CHANGE THE VISION**

When followers don't agree with their leader's vision, they react in many ways. Sometimes they work to convince their leader to change the vision. Sometimes they abandon their point of view and adopt their leader's. Other times they find a compromise. But as long as they still buy into the leader, they rarely out-and-out reject him. They usually keep following.

An excellent example occurred in Great Britain. Tony Blair had a long tenure in office as prime minister. He was a popular leader, elected to serve three times. Yet at the same time, the majority of people in Great Britain were against Blair's policy of involving the nation in the war with Iraq. Why did Blair remain in office so long? Because they had bought into him

as a leader. As a result, they were willing to live with their philosophical difference with him.

### **WHEN FOLLOWERS LIKE THE LEADER AND THE VISION . . . THEY GET BEHIND BOTH**

When people believe in their leader and the vision, they will follow their leader no matter how bad conditions get or how much the odds are stacked against them. That's why the Indian people in Gandhi's day refused to fight back as soldiers mowed them down. That's what inspired the US space program to fulfill John F. Kennedy's vision to put a man on the moon. That's the reason people continued to have hope and keep alive the dream of Martin Luther King Jr., even after he was gunned down. That's what continues to inspire followers to keep running the race, even when they feel they've hit the wall and given everything they've got.

As a leader, having a great vision and a worthy cause is not enough to get people to follow you. You have to become a better leader. You must get your people to buy into you. That is the price you have to pay if you want your vision to have a chance of becoming a reality. You cannot ignore the Law of Buy-In and remain successful as a leader.

## **BUYING TIME FOR PEOPLE TO BUY IN**

If in the past you tried to get people to act on your vision but were unable to make it happen, you probably came up against the Law of Buy-In—maybe without even knowing it. When leaders are able to take their teams or organizations forward in especially tough times, you know those leaders have the buy-in of their people.

That was the case for Ed Bastian, the CEO of Delta Air Lines, during the COVID-19 pandemic. In April 2021, Delta announced that employees would be asked to return to work in person at Delta's headquarters. And on June 12, 2021, Ed posted a message on Instagram welcoming them back. He wrote,

After the most challenging year in our history, it's an exciting day in Atlanta as we welcome back members of the Delta Air Lines family for the official reopening of our global headquarters. Our people and culture are the Delta difference. Collaboration is such a vital part of what we create, and it's at its best when we are physically together. I'm grateful for the resilience of the Delta people throughout the past year—especially those across our operation who showed up to work smiling, masked and prepared every single day to serve our customers and offer a safe, clean travel experience. . . . It's going to be a great summer as we safely reunite with our colleagues, families and friends. Now, it's time to get back out and see the world.<sup>3</sup>

And in an environment where 81 percent of workers in the United States didn't want to return to their offices full time<sup>4</sup> and 39 percent were considering quitting instead of returning,<sup>5</sup> all of Delta's employees returned.<sup>6</sup> Why? Because Ed Bastian had a twenty-two-year history with the airline creating credibility. Employees bought into him, so they followed his leadership.

Ed started at Delta in 1998 as a vice president of finance and as the controller. Two years later, he was made a senior vice president. In the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001, Delta, like all the other major airlines, was struggling. Ed believed Delta needed to make major changes through bankruptcy and restructuring. When his advice went unheeded, he left to pursue another opportunity, but after only six months, Delta's CEO Jerry Grinstein brought him back as the CFO to lead the company's restructuring.<sup>7</sup> Ed was vital to saving the company and putting it back on a successful track. In 2007, he became Delta's president, and in 2016, its CEO. Under his leadership, Delta grew and became more financially stable, shared profits with its employees, became the world's most-awarded airline,<sup>8</sup> and was consistently recognized by *Fortune* as one of the world's most admired companies.<sup>9</sup>

Ed says the key to his success is “taking care of our people.” He roots his leadership in what he calls the virtuous circle, which says, “If you take care of your people, they take care of your customers, whose business and loyalty allows you to reward your investors.”<sup>10</sup> Ed's vision isn't just to make Delta a great company. He wants to create a legacy and be known as “someone who helped make the company the airline of that next generation.”<sup>11</sup> That's something a leader can do only when people buy into him.

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*As a leader, your success is measured  
by your ability to actually take the  
people where they need to go. But you  
can do that only if the people first buy  
into you.*

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Do you have the buy-in of the people you lead? Are they willing to follow you as you follow your vision? As a leader, you don't earn any points for failing in a noble cause. You don't get credit for being "right" as you bring the organization to a halt. Your success is measured by your ability to actually take the people where they need to go. But you can do that only if the people first buy into you as a leader. That's the reality of the Law of Buy-In.

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*Applying*  
THE LAW OF BUY-IN

## *to Your Life*

1. Do you have a vision for your leadership and your organization? What are you trying to accomplish? Write your thoughts in a vision statement. Is that vision worthy of your time and effort? Is it something you're willing to give a significant portion of your life to? (If not, rethink what you are doing and why.)
2. Has your team bought into you? If your team is small, list all of its members. If it is large, list the key players who influence the team. Now rate each person's buy-in on a scale of 1 to 10 (with 1 meaning they don't follow you, and 10 meaning they would follow you anywhere). Average those scores. If they're low, your people have not bought into you, and they will not help you execute your vision.
3. Develop a strategy to add value to each person and gain greater credibility. Here are some suggestions for what you can do with each person:
  - Develop a better relationship.
  - Be honest and authentic to develop greater trust.
  - Set a good example.
  - Help the person to become more successful.
  - Help the person to achieve personal goals.
  - Develop the person as a leader.



## THE LAW OF VICTORY

### *Leaders Find Ways for the Team to Win*

What saved England from the Blitz, broke apartheid's back in South Africa, and won the Chicago Bulls multiple world championships? In all three cases the answer is the same. Their leaders lived by the Law of Victory.

**H**ave you ever thought about what separates the greatest leaders who achieve victory from those who suffer defeat? What does it take to make a team a winner? It's hard to identify the quality that separates winners from losers. Every leadership situation is different. Every crisis has its own challenges. But I think that victorious leaders have one thing in common: they share an unwillingness to accept defeat. The alternative to winning is totally unacceptable to them. As a result, they figure out what must be done to achieve victory.

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*Victorious leaders possess an unwillingness to accept defeat. The*

*alternative to winning is totally  
unacceptable to them.*

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## THIS WAS HIS FINEST HOUR

Crisis seems to bring out the best—and the worst—in leaders because at such times, the pressure is intense and the stakes are high. That was certainly true during World War II when Adolf Hitler was threatening to crush Europe and remake it according to his vision. But against the power of Hitler and his Nazi hordes stood a leader determined to win, a practitioner of the Law of Victory: British prime minister Winston Churchill. He inspired the British people to resist Hitler and ultimately win the war.

Long before he became prime minister in 1940, Churchill spoke out against the Nazis. He seemed like the lone critic in 1932 when he warned, “Do not delude yourselves. . . . do not believe, that all Germany is asking for is equal status . . . They are looking for weapons and when they have them believe me they will ask for the return of lost territories or colonies.”<sup>1</sup> As a leader, Churchill could see what was coming, and for years he tried to prepare the people of England for what he saw as an inevitable fight. But Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and the other leaders of Great Britain would not make a stand against Hitler. They were not prepared to do what it took to achieve victory. And more of Europe fell to the Nazis.

By mid-1940, most of Europe was under Germany’s thumb. But then something happened that probably changed the course of history for the free world. The leadership of England fell to the sixty-five-year-old Winston Churchill, a courageous leader who had practiced the Law of Victory throughout his life. In his first speech after becoming prime minister, he said,

We have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind. We have before us many, many long months of struggle and of suffering. You ask, what is our policy? I can say: It is to wage war, by sea, land and air, with all our might and with all the strength that God can give us; to wage war against a monstrous tyranny, never surpassed in the dark, lamentable catalogue of

human crime. That is our policy. You ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word: Victory—victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory, however long and hard the road may be; for without victory, there is no survival.<sup>2</sup>

For more than a year, Churchill and Great Britain stood alone facing the threat of German invasion, defying Hitler. When Germany began bombing England, the British stood strong. Meanwhile, Churchill looked for ways to win and did everything in his power to prevail. He deployed troops in the Mediterranean against Mussolini's forces. Although he hated communism, he allied himself with Stalin and the Soviets, sending them aid even when Great Britain's supplies were threatened, and its own survival hung in the balance. And he developed his personal relationship with Franklin Roosevelt, hoping to develop an alliance with the president of the United States. In time his efforts paid off. On December 7, 1941, when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, ushering the United States into the war, Churchill is said to have remarked to himself, "So we have won after all."

The stakes during the war were undoubtedly high. Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr. noted, "The Second World War found democracy fighting for its life. By 1941, there were only a dozen or so democratic states left on earth. But great leadership emerged in time to rally the democratic cause."<sup>3</sup> The team of Roosevelt and Churchill provided that leadership like a one-two punch. Just as the prime minister had rallied England, the president brought together the American people and united them in a common cause as no one ever had before or has since.

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*"What is our aim? I can answer in one word: Victory—victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory, however long and hard the road may be; for without victory, there is no survival."*

—WINSTON CHURCHILL

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To Churchill and Roosevelt, victory was the only option. If they had accepted anything less, the world would be a very different place today. Schlesinger stated, “Take a look at our present world. It is manifestly not Adolf Hitler’s world. His Thousand-Year Reich turned out to have a brief and bloody run of a dozen years. It is manifestly not Joseph Stalin’s world. That ghastly world self-destructed before our eyes.”<sup>4</sup> Without Churchill and England, all of Europe would have fallen. Without Roosevelt and the United States, it might never have been reclaimed for freedom. But not even an Adolf Hitler and the army of the Third Reich could stand against two leaders dedicated to the Law of Victory.

## GREAT LEADERS FIND WAYS TO WIN

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*When the pressure is on, great leaders are at their best. Whatever is inside them comes to the surface.*

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When the pressure is on, great leaders are at their best. Whatever is inside them comes to the surface. They find ways for their team to win. In 1994, Nelson Mandela became president of South Africa following that country’s first full elections at the end of its apartheid government. It was a huge victory for the people of South Africa, and it was a long time coming.

The road to that victory was paved with twenty-seven years of Mandela’s life spent in prison. Along the way, he found ways to turn losses into wins and he did whatever it took to bring victory one step closer. He joined the African National Congress, which became an outlawed organization. He staged peaceful protests. He went underground and traveled overseas to try to enlist support. When he needed to, he stood trial and accepted a prison sentence, with dignity and courage. And when the time was right, he negotiated changes in the government with F. W. de Klerk. Mandela described himself as “an ordinary man who had become a leader because of extraordinary circumstances.”<sup>5</sup> I say he was a leader made

extraordinary because of the strength of his character and dedication to victory for the sake of others. Mandela found ways to win, and that's what leaders do for their people.

The best leaders feel compelled to rise to a challenge and do everything in their power to achieve victory for their people. In their view . . .

Leadership is responsible.

Losing is unacceptable.

Passion is unquenchable.

Creativity is essential.

Quitting is unthinkable.

Commitment is unquestionable.

Victory is inevitable.

With that mind-set, they embrace the vision and approach the challenges with the resolve to take their people to victory.

## THREE COMPONENTS OF VICTORY

The Law of Victory is a factor on every type of team and in any kind of organization. Good leaders find ways for their teams to win in war, business, sports, education, nonprofits, and politics. They recognize that there is a chance that victory can be won if three factors are present.

### 1. UNITY OF VISION

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*A team doesn't win a championship if  
its players are working from different  
agendas.*

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Teams succeed only when the players have a unified vision. No matter how much talent or potential there is, a team doesn't win a championship if its players are working from different agendas. That's true in professional sports. That's true in business. That's true in nonprofits.

I learned this lesson in high school when I was a junior on the varsity basketball team. We had a very talented group of kids, and many experts had picked us to win the state championship. But we had a problem. The juniors and seniors on the team refused to work together. They wouldn't even pass the ball to one another! They didn't look for ways for the *team* to win. It got so bad that the coach eventually gave up trying to get us to play together and divided us into two different squads for our games, one comprised of seniors, the other comprised of juniors. In the end the team had miserable results. Why? We didn't share a common vision. People played for the members of their class, not the team.

## **2. DIVERSITY OF SKILLS**

It almost goes without saying that a team needs diversity in skills. Can you imagine a hockey team comprised entirely of goalies? Or a football team of quarterbacks? How about a business where there are *only* salespeople or nothing but accountants? Or a nonprofit organization with just fund-raisers? Or only strategists? It doesn't make sense. Every organization requires diverse talents to succeed.

Some leaders have blind spots in this area. In fact, I used to be one of them. I'm embarrassed to say there was a time in my life when I thought that if people would just be more like me, they would be successful. I'm wiser now and understand that every person has something to contribute. We're all like parts of the human body. For that body to do its best, it needs *all* of its parts, each doing its own job.

I recognize how each person on my team contributes using his or her unique skills, and I express my appreciation for them. The newer you are to leadership and the stronger your natural leadership ability, the more likely you will be to overlook the importance of others on the team. Don't fall into that trap.

### 3. A LEADER DEDICATED TO VICTORY AND RAISING PLAYERS TO THEIR POTENTIAL

It's true that having good players with diverse skills is important. As former Notre Dame head football coach Lou Holtz said, "You've got to have great athletes to win, I don't care who the coach is. You can't win without good athletes, but you can lose with them. This is where coaching makes the difference." In other words, you also require leadership to achieve victory.

Unity of vision doesn't happen spontaneously. The right players with the proper diversity of talent don't come together on their own. It takes a leader to make those things happen. It takes a leader to provide the motivation, empowerment, and direction required to win.

## THE LAW OF VICTORY IN THE SPOTLIGHT

We can often see the Law of Victory in action at sporting events. In other areas of life, leaders do most of their work behind the scenes, and you rarely get to see it. But at a ball game, you can actually watch a leader as he works to achieve victory. And when the game ends, you know exactly who won and why. Games have immediate and measurable outcomes.

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*"You've got to have great athletes to win, I don't care who the coach is. You can't win without good athletes, but you can lose with them. This is where coaching makes the difference."*

—LOU HOLTZ

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One of the greatest sports leaders when it came to the Law of Victory was basketball's Michael Jordan. He was an awesome athlete, but he was

also an exceptional leader. He lived and breathed the Law of Victory every day that he played. I was reminded of this when I recently watched *The Last Dance* on Netflix. When the game was on the line, Jordan found ways for the team to win.

Jordan's biographer, Mitchell Krugel, said that Jordan's tenacity and passion for victory were evident in every part of his life. He even showed both in practice when his team, the Chicago Bulls, would scrimmage. Krugel explained:

At Bulls' practices, the starters were known as the white team. The second five wore red. [Former Bulls coach] Loughery had Jordan playing with the white team from his first day. With Jordan and [teammate] Woolridge, the white team easily rolled up leads of 8-1 or 7-4 in games to 11. The loser of these games always had to run extra wind sprints after practice. It was about that time of the scrimmage that Loughery would switch Jordan to the red team. And the red team would wind up winning more often than not.<sup>6</sup>

Jordan showed the same kind of tenacity every time he took the court.

When Jordan started in the NBA, he relied heavily on his personal talent and efforts to win games. But as he gained the respect of his teammates and matured as a leader, he turned his attention more to being a leader and making the whole team play better. Jordan thinks that many people have overlooked that. He once said, "That's what everybody looks at when I miss a game. Can they win without me? . . . Why doesn't anybody ask why or what it is I contribute that makes a difference? I bet nobody would ever say they miss my leadership or my ability to make my teammates better." Yet that is exactly what he provided. Leaders always find ways for the team to win. Under the leadership of Jordan, the Bulls won six NBA championships. And if Bulls general manager Jerry Krause hadn't been determined to break up the team and rebuild it, Jordan is certain they could have won a seventh.<sup>7</sup>

Finding ways to help their team win has been the mark of many outstanding athletes. Bill Russell, center for the NBA's Boston Celtics, measured his play by whether it helped the whole team play better. And the result was a remarkable eleven NBA titles. More recently, LeBron James has elevated his teams. As of this writing, he has won four NBA championships, been named NBA Finals MVP four times and league MVP four times, and been an All Star seventeen times.<sup>8</sup> In Major League



Baseball, Derek Jeter was a dominant leader for nearly two decades, leading the Yankees to five World Series wins. In soccer, Cristiano Ronaldo broke innumerable records, but also led his teams to five championships.<sup>9</sup> In football, Peyton Manning was voted to the Pro Bowl fourteen times, was named league MVP five times, and won two Super Bowls.<sup>10</sup> And three-time MVP Tom Brady has won seven Super Bowls, the most recent after changing teams at forty-three years old!<sup>11</sup>

Good leaders who practice the Law of Victory keep fighting. They never stop looking for ways for their teams to win. Does that mean they always *do* win? No, of course not. But even a loss can be turned into a win when you learn from it. In fact, losses often teach us more than victories. My mentor John Wooden once told me something he hated as a coach: “cheap wins,” the times his team won but didn’t deserve to. “Players don’t listen well after victory,” he explained. “They listen after a loss.” Wooden was always seeking out ways for his players to win, not just at basketball, but at life.

What is your level of expectation when it comes to helping your team or organization to succeed? How dedicated are you to helping your team find wins in your “game”? Are you going to have the Law of Victory in your corner as you fight? Are you going to be relentless in finding ways for your team to win? Or when times get difficult, are you going to throw in the towel? Your answer to that question may determine whether you succeed or fail as a leader and whether your team wins or loses.

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*Applying*  
THE LAW OF VICTORY

## *to Your Life*

1. The first step in practicing the Law of Victory is taking responsibility for the success of the team, department, or organization you lead. It must become *personal*. Your commitment must be higher than that of your team members. Your passion should be inexhaustible. Your dedication must be unquestioned.

Do you currently demonstrate that kind of commitment? If not, you need to examine yourself. If you search yourself and are unable to convince yourself to bring that kind of commitment, then one of three things is probably true:

- You are pursuing the wrong vision.
- You are in the wrong organization.
- You are not the right leader for the job.

You will have to make adjustments accordingly.

2. If you are dedicated to leading your team to victory, you will have your best shot at victory if you have the right people on the team. Think about all the skills necessary to achieve your goals. Write them down. Now compare that list with the names of the people on your team. If there are functions or tasks for which no one on the team is suited, you need to add members to the team or train the ones you have.
3. The other crucial component for leading your team to victory is unity of vision. Do a little informal research to find out what's important to your team members. Ask them what they want to achieve personally. And ask them to describe the purpose or mission of the team, department, or organization. If you get a diversity of answers, you need to work on communicating a single vision clearly, creatively, and continually until everyone is on the same page. You should also work with each team member to show how personal goals can align with the team's overall goals.

## THE LAW OF THE BIG MO

### *Momentum Is a Leader's Best Friend*

Jaime Escalante has been called the best teacher in America. But his teaching ability is only half the story. His and Garfield High School's success came because of the Law of the Big Mo.

**I**f you've got all the passion, tools, and people you need to fulfill a great vision, yet you can't seem to get your organization moving and going in the right direction, you're dead in the water as a leader. If you can't get things going, you will not succeed. What do you need in such circumstances? You need to look to the Law of the Big Mo and harness the power of the leader's best friend: momentum.

## STARTING FROM SCRATCH

Ed Catmull grew up wanting to become an animator and filmmaker. But when he went to college, he realized he wasn't a good enough artist. He changed his major to physics and computer science and earned a bachelor's degree in each in four years. He worked for a few years, but when he learned about a new field within computer science—computer graphics—it rekindled his dreams of movie making. He enrolled in graduate school, eventually earning a PhD.

Five years later, in 1979, Catmull was hired by filmmaker George Lucas to run the computer graphics division of Lucasfilm Ltd. For the next seven years Catmull worked to create editing systems and computer software, hiring some of the best technicians in the country and talent, such as John Lasseter, who had once worked at Disney. They broke new ground, such as creating the first completely computer animated sequence in a feature film for *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*,<sup>1</sup> but they just couldn't seem to find their niche, gain momentum, and become profitable. The division was very expensive to keep running and the technology was still in its early stages, so in 1986, Lucas threw in the towel and sold it to Steve Jobs for \$5 million. Jobs sunk an additional \$5 million into the company and named it Pixar, but it continued to struggle.

## **BABY STEPS**

Desperate to find a way forward, Pixar began making short films to demonstrate the power of its technology. The first was called *Luxo Jr.* It shows two animated desk lamps interacting as a parent and child would. Typically in those days after any kind of computer-animation film was shown, the questions industry experts asked were about algorithms and software. But Catmull and Lasseter, who directed the film, knew they had made a significant step forward when one of the first questions asked was whether the “parent” lamp was the mother or the father. That's when they had proof that computer animation could succeed in telling a story. Lasseter said,

We had absolutely no money, no computers, no people, no time. . . . We just locked the camera down and had no background, but it made the audience focus on what was important in the film—the story and the characters. So for the first time, this film was entertaining people because it was made with computer animation.<sup>2</sup>

*Luxo Jr.* was so good that it was nominated for an Academy Award, but Catmull was still working hard just to keep the company alive. So they started to make computer-animated commercials just to survive.

Pixar got its first big break when John Lasseter approached Disney, his former employer, to pitch the idea of a one-hour TV special. Instead, Disney amazed him by offering a contract to fund the creation of three full-length feature movies using computer animation, which Disney would distribute. It finally looked like Pixar would have an opportunity to fulfill Catmull's dream of making animated movies.

Pixar got to work on what would become *Toy Story*, but the team had trouble with the characters and story. At the same time, they continued to develop computer-animation technology that made other movies possible, such as *Jurassic Park* and *Terminator 2*. "It was kind of frustrating for us," said Catmull, "because we were busy making this movie for Disney, and everybody was taking credit for these other films. But we were the ones who wrote the software for them!"<sup>3</sup> After struggling with *Toy Story* for two years, they were told by Disney's chief of animation, "Guys, no matter how much you try to fix it, it just isn't working."<sup>4</sup>

## BREAKTHROUGH

Lasseter asked for one last chance. "We called all hands on deck, stayed up all night, and redid the whole first act of 'Toy Story' within two weeks," Lasseter recalled. "When we showed it to Disney, they were stunned."<sup>5</sup> Lasseter's project had gone from something the executives hated to something that captivated them. It was the momentum creator they needed. It took them another two years to make the film, but they did it. They created the first-ever computer-animated feature film. *Toy Story* opened in November 1995.

Back when Pixar signed the contract with Disney, Steve Jobs estimated that if the first movie was “a modest hit—say \$75 million at the box office—we’ll both break even. If it gets \$100 million, we’ll both make money. But if it’s a real blockbuster and earns \$200 million or so at the box office, we’ll make good money and Disney will make a lot of money.”<sup>6</sup> *Toy Story* nearly earned back its budget the first weekend. Nobody expected it to make \$394 million worldwide.<sup>7</sup>

Three years later, Catmull and Pixar proved that *Toy Story* wasn’t a fluke when they successfully followed it with *A Bug’s Life*, which earned \$363 million.<sup>8</sup> And a year later, *Toy Story 2* debuted, which earned a total of \$497 million worldwide.<sup>9</sup> Pixar was making money and receiving critical acclaim. The release of a new Pixar film became an event. They were gaining more and more momentum every year.

As I write this, Pixar has made seventy-four films including more than twenty features. Those films have earned \$14.7 *trillion* worldwide!<sup>10</sup> And along the way, they have been awarded twenty-three Academy Awards, been nominated for an additional forty more, and won the Best Animated Feature Film award from the Academy ten times.<sup>11</sup> Plus they’ve been awarded more than forty patents.<sup>12</sup> They were so successful that in 2006, Disney bought Pixar. And Ed Catmull, the guy who dreamt of making animated movies but wasn’t a good enough artist to become an animator, became the president of Walt Disney Animation Studios.<sup>13</sup>

## TRUTHS ABOUT MOMENTUM

Why do I say that momentum really is a leader’s best friend? Because many times it’s the only thing that makes the difference between losing and winning. When you have no momentum, even the simplest tasks seem impossible. Small problems look like insurmountable obstacles. Morale becomes low. The future appears dark. An organization with no momentum is like a train at a dead stop. It’s hard to get going, and even small wooden blocks on the track can keep it from going anywhere.

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*Why is momentum a leader's best friend? Many times momentum is the only thing that makes the difference between losing and winning.*

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On the other hand, when you have momentum on your side, the future looks bright, obstacles appear small, and troubles seem inconsequential. An organization with momentum is like a train that's moving at sixty miles per hour. You could build a steel-reinforced concrete wall across the tracks, and the train would plow right through it.

If you want your organization, department, or team to succeed, you must learn the Law of the Big Mo and make the most of it in your organization. Here are some things about momentum that you need to know:

## **1. MOMENTUM IS THE GREAT EXAGGERATOR**

The Law of the Big Mo is easily seen at work in sports because the swings in momentum occur in the space of a few minutes right before your eyes. When a team gets on a roll, every play seems to work. Every shot seems to score. The team seems to do no wrong. The opposite is also true. When a team is in a slump, no matter how hard they work or how many solutions they try, nothing seems to work. Momentum is like a magnifying glass; it makes things look bigger than they really are. That's why I call it the great exaggerator. And it's one reason that leaders work so hard to create and use momentum.

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*Momentum is like a magnifying glass; it makes things look bigger than they really are.*

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Because momentum has such a great impact, leaders try to control it. In basketball games, for instance, when the opposing team is scoring a lot of



unanswered points, a good coach will call a time-out. Why? He's trying to stop the other team's momentum before it becomes too strong. If he doesn't, the other team will likely run away with the game.

When was the last time you heard of a team on the cusp of winning a championship complain about injuries? Or second-guess their ability? Or totally rethink strategy? It doesn't happen. Is that because no one is injured, and everything is perfect? No. It's because success is exaggerated by momentum. When you have momentum, you don't worry about small problems, and many larger ones seem to work themselves out.

## **2. MOMENTUM MAKES LEADERS LOOK BETTER THAN THEY ARE**

When leaders have momentum on their side, people think they're geniuses. They look past shortcomings. They forget about the mistakes the leaders have made. Momentum changes everyone's perspective of leaders. People like associating themselves with winners.

Young leaders often get less credit than they deserve. I often encourage young leaders not to lose heart. When leaders are new in their careers, they don't have any momentum yet. But once a leader creates some success for his organization and develops career momentum, then people give him *more* credit than he deserves. Why? Because of the Law of the Big Mo. Momentum exaggerates a leader's success and makes him look better than he really is. It may not seem fair, but that's just the way it works.

## **3. MOMENTUM HELPS FOLLOWERS PERFORM BETTER THAN THEY ARE**

When leadership is strong and there is momentum in an organization, people are motivated and inspired to perform at higher levels. They become effective beyond their hopes and expectations. That's what happened with the 1980 US Olympic hockey team. If you followed them—or if you've seen one of the movies made about them—then you know what I'm talking about. The team was good, but not good enough to win the gold medal. Yet that's what they did. Why? Because leading up to the championship game, they won game after game against very tough teams. They gained so much

momentum that they performed beyond everyone's expectations. And after they beat the Russians, nothing could stop them from coming home with the gold medal.

The same kind of thing is true in business and nonprofit organizations. When an organization has great momentum, everyone working is more successful than they would be otherwise. Often they don't realize how much momentum helped them until they leave the organization to join another and suddenly their performance becomes merely average. When that happens, you know the Law of the Big Mo was at work. Even average people can perform far above average in an organization with great momentum.

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*Even average people can perform far  
above average in an organization  
with great momentum.*

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#### **4. MOMENTUM IS EASIER TO STEER THAN TO START**

Have you ever been waterskiing? If you have, you know that it's harder to get up on the water than it is to steer once you're up there. Think about the first time you skied. Before you got up, the boat was dragging you along, and you probably thought your arms were going to give way as the water flooded against your chest and into your face. For a moment, you might have believed you couldn't hold on to the tow rope any longer. But then the force of the water drove your skis onto the surface, and off you went. At that point, you were able to make a turn with only a subtle shift of weight from one foot to another. That's the way the momentum of leadership works. Getting started is a struggle, but once you're moving forward, you can really start to do some amazing things.

#### **5. MOMENTUM IS THE MOST POWERFUL CHANGE AGENT**

The story of Pixar is a classic example of the power of momentum. It changed the organization from an underfunded and understaffed organization scrapping to survive into an entertainment powerhouse. During

the early days before it had momentum, the company considered creating hardware for medical companies so they could store and read MRIs. If that had happened, the organization would have lost its most talented and productive people. Instead, it transformed into an organization that has retaught Disney, the father of animated movies, how to regain its former glory.

Given enough momentum, nearly any kind of change is possible in an organization. People like to get on a winning bandwagon. Followers trust leaders with a proven track record. They accept changes from people who have led them to victory before. Momentum puts victory within reach.

## **6. MOMENTUM IS THE LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY**

It takes a leader to create momentum. Followers can catch it. Good managers are able to use it to their advantage once it has begun. Everyone can enjoy the benefits it brings. But *creating* momentum requires someone who has vision, can assemble a good team, and motivates others. Creating positive change is the best way to prove you can lead others well. And everyone deserves to be led well.

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*It takes a leader to create momentum.*

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If the leader is looking for someone to motivate him, then the organization is in trouble. If the leader is waiting for the organization to develop momentum on its own, then the organization is in trouble. It is a leader's responsibility to initiate momentum and keep it going. President Harry Truman once said, "If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen." But for leaders, that statement should be changed to, "If you can't *make* some heat, get out of the kitchen."

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*If you can't make some heat, get out  
of the kitchen.*

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## 7. MOMENTUM BEGINS INSIDE THE LEADER

Momentum begins within the individual leader. It starts with vision, passion, and enthusiasm. It starts with energy. Inspirational writer Eleanor Doan observed, “You cannot kindle a fire in any other heart until it is burning within your own.”

If you don’t believe in the vision and enthusiastically pursue it, doing all that you can to bring it to fruition, then you won’t start making the small gains required to get the ball rolling to create momentum. However, if you model enthusiasm to your people day in and day out, attract like-minded people to your team, and motivate them to achieve, you will begin to see forward progress. Once you do, you will begin to generate momentum. And if you’re wise, you’ll value it for what it is: the leader’s best friend. Once you have it, you can do almost anything. That’s the power of the Big Mo.

## MOVING THE IMMOVABLE

Of all the leaders I meet, the ones who become the most frustrated are those who try to make progress and develop momentum in bureaucratic organizations. In those organizations, team members are often marking time. They’ve given up, and they either don’t want change or don’t believe it’s possible.

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*“You cannot kindle a fire in any other  
heart until it is burning within your  
own.”*

—ELEANOR DOAN

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Several years ago I saw a movie called *Stand and Deliver* that illustrates the hopelessness many people feel in an organization without momentum. Maybe you’ve seen it too. It’s about a real-life teacher named Jaime

Escalante, a native of Bolivia, who worked at Garfield High School in East Los Angeles, California, and became the city's finest teacher.

At age forty-three, Escalante was hired by Garfield High School to teach computer science. But the school *had* no computers. Instead, they asked him to teach basic math classes, but he found that almost impossible because of the chaos he faced every day. Discipline was nonexistent. Fights broke out continually. Trash and graffiti were everywhere. Students—and even outsiders from the neighborhood—roamed all over the campus throughout the day. Gang activity was rampant. It was a nightmare.

He thought of quitting, but his passion for teaching and his dedication to improving the lives of his students wouldn't allow him to give up. And he was enough of a leader to know that the students were doomed if the school didn't change. They were all sliding backward fast, and they needed something to move them forward and start creating momentum.

Escalante believed that the way to improve the school was to challenge the school's best and brightest students with a calculus class that would prepare them for the AP exam that would earn them college credit. A few AP tests were already being given on campus in Spanish, and occasionally, a student might attempt a test in physics or history. But not math. The school didn't have a leader with vision to take up the cause. That's where Escalante came into play.

## SMALL BEGINNINGS

Escalante organized the first calculus class in 1978 with fourteen qualified students out of Garfield's 3,500 students. By the end of the second week of school, he had lost half of them. Even the ones who stayed were not well prepared for calculus, and by late spring, he was down to only five students. All of them took the AP test in May, but only two passed.

Escalante was disappointed, but he refused to give up. He knew that if he could help his students experience some wins, it would build their confidence and give them hope. He did whatever it took to motivate them. He wanted them to develop what he called *ganas*—desire.

The next fall, Escalante started another calculus class, this time with nine students. At the end of the year, eight took the test and six passed. Because his students were making progress, word of his success spread. Students heard that Garfield students were earning free college credit, and the class grew. In the fall of 1980, he had fifteen calculus students, fourteen of whom passed the AP test. Escalante's program was building momentum.

The next group of students, numbering eighteen, was the subject of the movie *Stand and Deliver*. Like their predecessors, they worked very hard to learn calculus, many coming to school at 7:00 a.m. every day—a full hour and a half before school started. And often they stayed until 5:00, 6:00, or 7:00 p.m. And though Educational Testing Service (ETS) questioned the validity of the first test the students took, and they had to take it a second time, 100 percent of them passed.

After that, the math program had great momentum and it exploded. In 1983, the number of students passing the AP calculus went from eighteen to thirty-one. The next year it doubled to sixty-three and continued growing. In 1987, eighty-five of Escalante's students received college credit for calculus. Garfield High School in East Los Angeles, once considered the sinkhole of the district, produced 27 percent of all passing AP calculus test scores by students of Mexican descent in the entire United States!

## **THE MOMENTUM EXPLOSION**

If that were the end of the story, that would be extraordinary. But the momentum created by Escalante in math created momentum for all of Garfield High School's students. The school started offering classes to prepare students for other AP exams. In time, Garfield held regular AP classes in Spanish, calculus, history, European history, biology, physics, French, government, and computer science with more than 325 students taking AP examinations. Places in the school became so coveted that Garfield had a waiting list of more than four hundred students from areas outside its boundaries wanting to enroll.

The school that was once the laughingstock of the district and almost lost its accreditation had become one of the top three inner-city schools in the entire nation!<sup>14</sup> That's the power of the Law of the Big Mo.

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*Applying*  
THE LAW OF THE BIG MO



## *to Your Life*

1. Momentum begins inside the leader and spreads from there. Have you taken responsibility for the momentum where you lead? Are you passionate about the vision? Do you display enthusiasm? Do you encourage others? Do you find ways for your team to win? If you are a leader, these things are your responsibility.
2. Motivation is a key factor in developing momentum. The first step toward building motivation is removing demotivating elements within the organization. What is causing your team members to lose their passion and enthusiasm? How can you go about removing or at least minimizing those factors? Become your team's advocate.
3. To encourage momentum, you need to help your people celebrate their accomplishments. Make it a regular practice to honor people who "move the ball forward." Always praise effort, but *reward* only accomplishment. The more you reward success, the more people will strive for it.

## THE LAW OF PRIORITIES

### *Leaders Understand That Activity Is Not Necessarily Accomplishment*

They called him the wizard. His priorities were so focused that if you gave him a date and time, he could have told you exactly what drill his players were performing and why! It won him ten championships. What can the Law of Priorities do for you?

**L**eaders never advance to a point where they no longer need to prioritize. It's something that good leaders keep doing, whether they're leading a billion-dollar corporation, running a small business, pastoring a church, coaching a team, or leading a small group. I think good leaders intuitively know that to be true. However, not every leader practices the discipline of prioritizing. Why? I believe there are a few reasons.

First, when we are busy, we naturally believe that we are achieving. But busyness does not equal productivity, and activity is not necessarily accomplishment. Second, prioritizing requires leaders to continually think ahead, to know what's important, to know what's next, to see how

everything relates to the overall vision. That's hard work. Third, prioritizing causes us to do things that are at the least uncomfortable and sometimes are downright painful.

## TIME TO RETHINK PRIORITIES

I know the pain of reprioritizing from personal experience. In 1996, I was living in San Diego, one of my favorite places on the planet. San Diego is a gorgeous city with one of the best climates in the world. If you live in San Diego, you can be on the beach in minutes or on the ski slopes in hours. The city has culture, professional sports, and fine restaurants. It's a place where you can play golf year-round. Why would I ever want to leave? I expected to live there the rest of my life. It was very comfortable. But leadership has nothing to do with comfort and everything to do with progress.

Back then I spent a lot of time on airplanes. Living in San Diego, I spent entire days traveling to airline hubs like Dallas, Chicago, and Atlanta just to make connections. Most of my speaking and consulting work was east of the Mississippi River, and the travel was taking a toll. I knew in my gut that I needed to make a change. So I asked Linda, my assistant, to figure out exactly how much time I was spending traveling. What I learned shocked me. In the previous year, I had spent the equivalent of twenty-seven full days traveling back and forth just between San Diego and Dallas to make flight connections. It made me realize that I needed to sit down and reevaluate my priorities.

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*“A leader is the one who climbs the tallest tree, surveys the entire situation, and yells, ‘Wrong jungle!’”*

—STEPHEN COVEY

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If I was going to *live* consistently with the priorities I had established for myself, I was going to have to move myself and my companies to one of the hub cities. Author Stephen Covey said, “A leader is the one who climbs the tallest tree, surveys the entire situation, and yells, ‘Wrong jungle!’” I felt a little like that when I realized what we were about to do.

After a lot of research, we settled on Atlanta. It was a major airline hub. From there my staff and I would be able to reach 80 percent of the people in the United States within two hours by plane. And it was a city that offered a lot. I knew people could live well there. It would not be an easy move, but it was a necessary one.

It’s been nearly twenty-five years since we made the move, and it’s definitely been worth it. Travel has become so much easier for everyone in my companies. Our productivity has skyrocketed. Can you imagine getting twenty-seven days of your life back every year? In the twenty-five years since the move, I’ve gained 675 days. If a normal work year for most people is 250 days, it’s like gaining almost three extra years of productivity. And many days when I travel, I can be home with my wife by the end of a day instead of being in a hotel room!

## THE THREE RS

Leaders can’t afford to just think inside the box. Sometimes they need to reinvent the box—or blow it up. Executive and author Max De Pree said, “The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality.” That requires the Law of Priorities. When you’re the leader, everything is on the table.

Every year I spend about two weeks in December reevaluating my priorities. I review the previous year’s schedule. I look at my upcoming commitments. I evaluate my family life. I think about my goals. I look at the big picture of what I’m doing to make sure the way I’m living aligns with my values and priorities.

One of the guiding principles I use during this process is the Pareto Principle. I’ve taught it for years, and I also explain it in depth in my book, *Developing the Leader Within You 2.0*. The idea is this: if you focus your

attention on the activities that rank in the top 20 percent in terms of importance, you will have an 80 percent return on your effort. For example, if you have ten employees, you should give 80 percent of your time and attention to the best two. If you have one hundred customers, the top twenty will provide you with 80 percent of your business, so focus on them. If your to-do list has ten items on it, the two most important ones will give you an 80 percent return on your time and effort. If you haven't already observed this phenomenon, test it and you'll see that it really plays out that way. One year as I went through this process, I realized that I had to totally refocus and restructure one of my organizations.

The other guideline I use whenever I evaluate my priorities is the three Rs. No, not reading, writing, and 'rithmetic. My three Rs are requirement, return, and reward. I believe that to be effective, leaders must order their lives according to these three questions:

## **1. WHAT IS REQUIRED OF ME?**

We're all accountable to somebody for the work we do—an employer, a board of directors, stockholders, the government, and so on. We also have responsibility for the important people in our lives, such as our spouse, children, and parents. For that reason, any list of priorities must begin with what is required of us.

The question I ask myself is, *What must I do that nobody can or should do for me?* As I have gotten older, that list has gotten shorter and shorter. If I'm doing something that's not necessary, I should eliminate it. If I'm doing something that's necessary but not required of me personally, I need to delegate it.

## **2. WHAT GIVES THE GREATEST RETURN?**

As a leader, you should spend most of your time working in your areas of greatest strength. Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton have done extensive research on this subject, which you can read about in their book *Now, Discover Your Strengths*. People are more productive and more content when their work is within their natural gifting and strengths. Ideally, leaders should get out of their comfort zone but stay in their strength zone.

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*Leaders should get out of their  
comfort zone but stay in their strength  
zone.*

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What's the practical application for this? Here's my rule of thumb. If something I'm doing can be done 80 percent as well by someone else, I delegate it. If you have a responsibility that someone else could do according to that standard—or that could *potentially* meet that standard—then develop and train a person to handle it. Just because you *can* do something does not mean that you *should* do it. Remember, leaders understand that activity is not necessarily accomplishment. That's the Law of Priorities.

### **3. WHAT BRINGS THE GREATEST REWARD?**

This final question relates to personal satisfaction. Tim Redmond, president of Redmond Leadership Institute, observed, “There are many things that will catch my eye, but there are only a few things that will catch my heart.”

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*“There are many things that will  
catch my eye, but there are only a few  
things that will catch my heart.”*

—TIM REDMOND

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Life is too short not to do some things you love. I love teaching leadership. I love writing and speaking. I love spending time with my wife, children, and grandchildren. I love playing golf. No matter what else I do, I will make time for those things. They are the fire lighters in my life. They energize me and keep me passionate. And passion provides the fuel in a person's life to keep him going.

## REORDERING PRIORITIES

A few years ago when I went through this process of reprioritizing, I revisited the way I was spending my time and determined to allot my work time according to the following guideline:

AREA	TIME ALLOTTED
1. Leadership	19 percent
2. Communicating	38 percent
3. Creating	31 percent
4. Networking	12 percent

These four areas represent my greatest strengths. They are the most rewarding aspects of my career. And they are also aligned with my responsibilities to my companies.

I realized as I was reviewing these areas that I was not maintaining the balance I desired. I was spending too much time in hands-on leadership at one of my companies, and it was taking away from higher priorities. Once again, I had to recognize that activity is not necessarily accomplishment. I knew I was in for another difficult business decision. If I was going to continue to be effective in fulfilling my vision, I would have to change and work according to the Law of Priorities. I made the decision to sell one of my companies. It wasn't easy, but it was the right thing for me to do.

## PRIORITIES WERE THE NAME OF HIS GAME

Examine the lives of all effective leaders, and you will see them putting priorities into action. If you want to be an effective and successful leader, you will need to live according to the Law of Priorities. You must recognize that activity is not necessarily accomplishment. And if you want to go to the

highest level, like the best leaders, you must get the Law of Priorities to work for you by satisfying multiple priorities with each activity, as they do. This actually enables them to increase their focus while reducing their number of actions.

A leader who was a master at that was one of my idols: John Wooden, the former head basketball coach of the UCLA Bruins. He was called the Wizard of Westwood because the amazing feats he accomplished in the world of college sports were so incredible that they seemed to be magical.

Evidence of Wooden's ability to make the Law of Priorities work for him could be seen in the way he approached basketball practice. Wooden claimed that he learned some of his methods from watching Frank Leahy, the great former Notre Dame head football coach. He said, "I often went to his [Leahy's] practices and observed how he broke them up into periods. Then I would go home and analyze why he did things certain ways. As a player, I realized there was a great deal of time wasted. Leahy's concepts reinforced my ideas and helped in the ultimate development of what I do now."

## **EVERYTHING HAD A PURPOSE BASED ON PRIORITIES**

People who have served in the military say that they often have to hurry up and wait. That seems to be true in sports too. Coaches ask their players to work their hearts out one minute and then to stand around doing nothing the next. But that's not the way Wooden approached practice. He orchestrated every moment and planned each activity with specific purposes in mind. He employed economy of motion. Here's how he worked.

Every year, Wooden determined a list of overall priorities for the team, based on observations from the previous season. Those objectives might include items such as, "Build confidence in Drollinger and Irgovich," or "Use 3 on 2 continuity drill at least three times a week." Usually, he had about a dozen or so items that he wanted to work on throughout the season. But Wooden also reviewed his agenda for his teams every day. Each



morning, he and an assistant meticulously planned the day's practice. They usually spent two hours strategizing for a practice that might not even last that long. Wooden drew ideas from notes jotted on three-by-five cards that he always carried with him. He planned every drill, minute by minute, and recorded the information in a notebook prior to practice. Wooden once boasted that if you asked what his team was doing on a specific date at three o'clock in 1963, he could tell you precisely what drill his team was running. Like all good leaders, Wooden always did the hard work of thinking ahead for the benefit of his team.

Wooden always maintained his focus, and he found ways for his players to do the same thing. His special talent was for addressing several priority areas at once. For example, to help players work on their free throws—something that many of them found tedious—Wooden instituted a free-throw shooting policy during scrimmages that would encourage them to concentrate and improve instead of just marking the time. The sooner a sidelined player made a set number of free throws, the sooner he could get back into the scrimmage. And Wooden continually changed the number of shots required of the guards, forwards, and centers so that team members rotated in and out at different rates. That way everyone, regardless of position or starting status, got experience playing with everyone else, a critical priority for Wooden's development of total teamwork.

The most remarkable aspect about John Wooden—and the most telling about his ability to focus on his priorities—is that he never scouted opposing teams. Instead, he focused on getting his players to reach *their* potential. And he addressed those things through practice and personal interaction with the players. It was never his goal to win championships or even to beat the other team. His desire was to get each person to play to his potential and to put the best possible team on the floor. And of course, Wooden's results were incredible. In more than forty years of coaching, he had only *one* losing season—his first. And he led his UCLA teams to four undefeated seasons and a record ten NCAA championships.<sup>1</sup>

Wooden was a great leader. He just might be the finest person to coach in any sport. Why? Because every day he lived by the Law of Priorities. We should strive to do the same.

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*Applying*  
THE LAW OF PRIORITIES

## *to Your Life*

1. Are you prepared to really shake up your life and get out of your comfort zone so that you can live and work according to your priorities? Pick an area of your life where your activity is high, but your accomplishment isn't what it could or should be. What are you doing that you should not be doing? Eliminate it. What should you be delegating? Train someone to do it. What should you be doing that only you can do? Make it a priority.
2. If you have never done so before, take the time to write out your answers to the three R questions:

What is required of me?

What gives the greatest return?

What brings the greatest reward?

Be sure to include family and other responsibilities, not just career.

Once you have answered those three questions, create a list of the things you are doing that don't fit solidly into one of the three Rs. You need to delegate or eliminate these things.

3. Use the Pareto Principle to prioritize your daily activity. For the next two weeks, create a to-do list for the coming day and number the items in order of importance. The next day, begin with number one and work your way down the list. Your goal is *not* to complete the list every day. Your goal is to accomplish at least the top 20 percent of your list. At the end of three weeks, compare your productivity to your prior weeks' results.

## THE LAW OF SACRIFICE

### *A Leader Must Give Up to Go Up*

What would you give up for the people who followed you? This leader gave his life. Why? Because he understood the power of the Law of Sacrifice.

**W**hy does an individual step forward to lead other people? For every person the answer is different. A few do it to survive. Some do it to make money. Many desire to build a business or organization. Others do it because they want to change the world. That was the reason for Martin Luther King Jr.

## SEEDS OF GREATNESS

King's leadership ability began to emerge when he was in college. He had always been a good student. In high school, he skipped ninth grade. And when he took a college entrance exam as a junior, his scores were high enough that he decided to skip his senior year and enroll in Morehouse College in Atlanta. At age eighteen, he received his ministerial license. At nineteen, he was ordained and received his bachelor's degree in sociology.

King continued his education at Crozer Seminary in Pennsylvania. While he was there, two significant things happened. He heard a message about the life and teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, which forever marked him. And he emerged as a leader among his peers and was elected president of the senior class. From there, he studied for his PhD at Boston University. It was also during this time that he married Coretta Scott.

## SEEDS OF SACRIFICE

King accepted his first pastorate in Montgomery, Alabama, at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in 1954, and settled into family life when his first child was born the next year in November. But that peace didn't last long. Less than a month later, Rosa Parks refused to relinquish her seat on a bus to a white passenger and was arrested. Local Black leaders arranged a one-day boycott of the transit system to protest her arrest and the city's segregation policy. When it was successful, they decided to create the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) to continue the boycott. Already recognized as a leader in the community, King was unanimously elected president of the newly formed organization.

For the next year, King led a boycott and negotiated with city leaders demanding courteous treatment of Black people by bus operators, first-come-first-served seating for all bus riders, and employment of Black drivers. He also helped community leaders to organize carpools, raise funds to support the boycott financially, mobilize the community, and coordinate legal challenges with the NAACP. Finally in November 1956, the US Supreme Court struck down the laws allowing segregated seating on buses.<sup>1</sup>

The Montgomery bus boycott was a major step in the American civil rights movement, and it's easy to see what was gained as a result of it. But King also began paying a personal cost for it. Soon after the boycott began, King was arrested for a minor traffic violation. A bomb was thrown onto his porch. And he was indicted on a charge of being party to a conspiracy to hinder and prevent the operation of business without "just or legal cause."<sup>2</sup>

## THE PRICE KEEPS GETTING HIGHER

Each time King climbed higher and moved forward in leadership for the cause of civil rights, the greater the price he paid for it. His wife, Coretta Scott King, remarked in *My Life with Martin Luther King, Jr.*, "Day and night our phone would ring, and someone would pour out a string of obscene epithets. . . . Frequently the calls ended with a threat to kill us if we didn't get out of town. But in spite of all the danger, the chaos of our private lives, I felt inspired, almost elated."

King did some great things as a leader. He met with presidents. He delivered rousing speeches that are considered some of the most outstanding examples of oration in American history. He led 250,000 people in a peaceful march on Washington, D.C. He received the Nobel Peace Prize. And he prompted change in this country. But the Law of Sacrifice demands that the greater the leader, the more he must give up. During that same period, King was arrested many times and jailed on many occasions. He was stoned, stabbed, and physically attacked. His house was bombed. Yet his vision—and his influence—continued to increase. Ultimately, he sacrificed everything he had. But what he gave up he parted with willingly. In his last speech, delivered the night before he was assassinated in Memphis, he said,

I don't know what will happen to me now. We've got some difficult days ahead. But it doesn't matter to me now. Because I've been to the mountaintop. I won't mind. Like anybody else, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to

the mountain. And I've looked over and I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you, but I want you to know tonight that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land. So I'm happy tonight . . . I'm not fearing any man. "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord."<sup>3</sup>

The next day he paid the ultimate price of sacrifice.

King's impact was profound. He influenced millions of people to peacefully stand up against a system and society that fought to exclude them. The United States is still in need of improvement, but it has changed greatly for the better because of his leadership.

## **SACRIFICE IS THE HEART OF LEADERSHIP**

There is a common misperception among people who aren't leaders that leadership is all about the position, perks, and power that come from rising in an organization. Many people today want to climb up the corporate ladder because they believe that freedom, power, and wealth are the prizes waiting at the top. The life of a leader can look glamorous to others on the outside. But the reality is that leadership requires sacrifice. A leader must give up to go up. In recent years, we've observed more than our share of leaders who used and abused their organizations for their personal benefit—and the resulting scandals that came because of their greed and selfishness. The heart of good leadership is sacrifice, not personal gain.

If you desire to become the best leader you can be, then you need to be willing to make sacrifices in order to lead well. If that is your desire, then here are some things you need to know about the Law of Sacrifice:

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*The heart of good leadership is sacrifice.*

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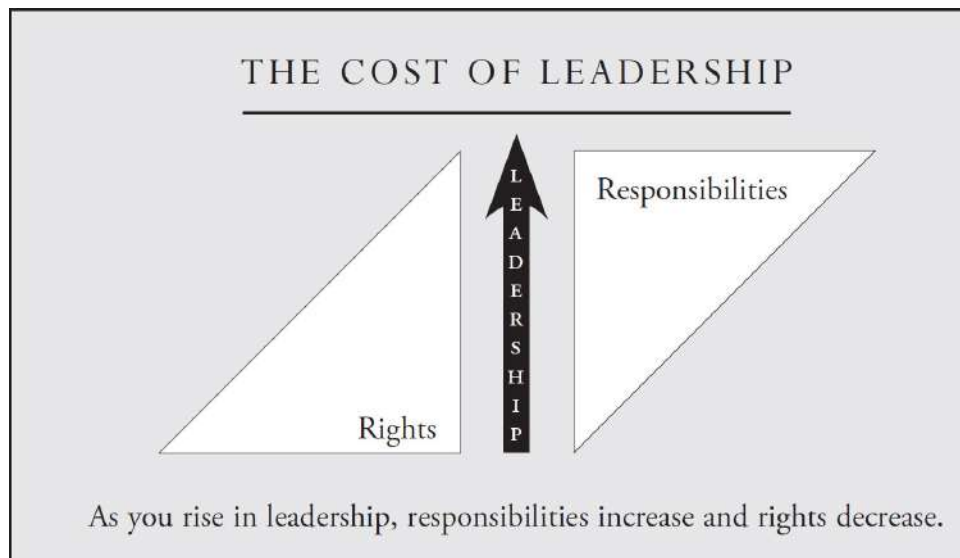
### **1. THERE IS NO SUCCESS WITHOUT SACRIFICE**

Every person who has achieved any success in life has made sacrifices to do so. Many working people dedicate four or more years of their lives and pay tens or even hundreds of thousands of dollars to attend college to get the tools they'll need before embarking on their career. Athletes sacrifice countless hours in the gym and on the practice field preparing themselves to perform at a high level. Parents give up much of their free time and sacrifice their resources to do a better job raising their children. Philosopher-poet Ralph Waldo Emerson observed, "For everything you have missed, you have gained something else; and for everything you gain, you lose something."

Life is a series of trades, one thing for another. Leaders must give up to go up. That's true of every leader regardless of profession. Effective leaders sacrifice much that is good in order to dedicate themselves to what is best. That's the way the Law of Sacrifice works.

### **2. LEADERS ARE OFTEN ASKED TO GIVE UP MORE THAN OTHERS**

The heart of leadership is putting others ahead of yourself. It's doing what is best for the team. For that reason, I believe that leaders have to give up their rights. As Gerald Brooks, leadership speaker and pastor, said, "When you become a leader, you lose the right to think about yourself." Visually, it looks like this.



When you have no responsibilities, you can do pretty much anything you want. Once you take on responsibility, you start to experience limitations in what you can do. The more responsibility you accept, the fewer options you have.

Digital Chairman and Chief Executive Robert Palmer said in an interview, "In my model of management, there's very little wiggle room. If you want a management job, then you have to accept the responsibility and accountability that goes with it."<sup>4</sup> He was really talking about the cost of leadership. Leaders must be willing to give up more than the people they lead.

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*"When you become a leader, you lose the right  
to think about yourself."*

—GERALD BROOKS

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For every person, the nature of the sacrifice may be different. Everyone who leads gives up other opportunities. Some people have to give up beloved hobbies. Many give up aspects of their personal lives. Some, like King, give their actual lives. The circumstances are different from person to person, but the principle doesn't change. Leadership means sacrifice.

### **3. YOU MUST KEEP GIVING UP TO STAY UP**

Most people are willing to acknowledge that sacrifices are necessary early in a leadership career to make progress. They'll take an undesirable territory to make a name for themselves.

They'll move their family to a less desirable city to accept a better position. They'll take a temporary cut in pay for greater opportunities for advancement. The problem for leaders comes when they think they have earned the right to stop making sacrifices. But in leadership, sacrifice is an ongoing process, not a one-time payment.

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*Sacrifice is an ongoing process, not a one-time payment.*

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If leaders have to give up to go up, then they have to give up even *more* to *stay* up. Have you ever considered how infrequently sports teams have back-to-back championship seasons? The reason is simple: if a leader can win one championship with his team, he often assumes he can duplicate the results the next year by doing the same things. He becomes reluctant to make additional sacrifices in the off-season to prepare for what often turns out to be an even greater challenge the next year. But today's success is the greatest threat to tomorrow's success. And what gets a team to the top isn't what keeps it there. The only way to stay up is to give up even more. Leadership success requires continual change, constant improvement, and ongoing sacrifice. I found that to be true in my career. Before I founded my own companies and worked for myself, I took a pay cut every time I took a new position. It was a price I was willing to pay to grow and increase my influence.

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*If leaders have to give up to go up, then they have to give up even more to stay up.*

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#### **4. THE HIGHER THE LEVEL OF LEADERSHIP, THE GREATER THE SACRIFICE**

Have you ever been part of an auction? It's an exciting experience. An item comes up for a bid, and everyone in the room gets excited. When the bidding opens, lots of people jump in and take part. But as the price goes higher and higher, what happens? There are fewer and fewer bidders. When the price is low, everybody wants to bid. In the end, only one person is willing to pay the high price that the item actually costs. It's the same in leadership: the higher you go, the more it's going to cost you. And it doesn't matter what kind of leadership career you pick. You will have to make sacrifices. You will have to give up if you want to go up.

One time when I was speaking at a conference, someone came up to me during a break and said, "I want to do what you do." He was attracted to the influence and the excitement of speaking to a large audience. I appreciated his aspiration, but I couldn't help wondering, *But would you like to do what I did to be able to do what I do?* There was no way for him to know about the early days of speaking to nearly empty rooms; holding my first leadership conference and having so few people show up that it *cost* me money to go through with it; years of packing boxes with volunteers and hauling them to conference sites; being away from home and stranded in airports; working a full-time job in order to have the opportunity



to build a career as a speaker; and all the rest that came with the territory. Maybe he did. I hope so, because a leader must give up to go up. That's the Law of Sacrifice.

## **STANDING ON OTHERS' SHOULDERS**

There can be no success without sacrifice. Anytime you see success, you can be sure someone made sacrifices to make it possible. And as a leader, if you sacrifice, even if you don't witness the success, you can be sure that someone in the future will benefit from what you've given.

That was certainly true for Martin Luther King Jr. He did not live to see most of the benefits of his sacrifices, but many others have. One such person was a Black girl born in segregated Birmingham, Alabama, in 1954. A precocious child, she followed the news of the day, including civil rights struggles. A neighbor recalls that she was "always interested in politics because as a little girl she used to call me and say things like, 'Did you see what Bull Connor [a racist city commissioner] did today?'" She was just a little girl and she did that all the time. I would have to read the newspaper thoroughly because I wouldn't know what she was going to talk about."<sup>5</sup>

Though she had an interest in current events, her passion was music. She began taking piano lessons from her grandmother at age three and was recognized as a prodigy. Music consumed her growing-up years. Even her first name was inspired by music. Her parents named her Condoleezza, from the musical notation *con dolcezza*, which means "with sweetness."

Condoleezza Rice is a product of generations of sacrifice. Her grandfather, John Wesley Rice Jr., the son of slaves, was determined to get an education and, according to Condoleezza Rice, "saved up his cotton for tuition" and attended Stillman College in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. After graduating, he became a Presbyterian minister, no small accomplishment for a Black man in the 1920s South. He set the course for the family who also pursued education.

Granddaddy Rice passed his love for education down to his son, also named John, who in turn passed it down to Condoleezza. Her mother's side of the family was equally industrious and focused on education. Coit Blacker, a Stanford professor and friend of Rice, commented, "I don't know too many American families, period, who can claim that not only are their parents college-educated, but their grandparents are college-educated and all their cousins and aunts and uncles are college-educated."<sup>6</sup>

## **SACRIFICING TO BE THE BEST**

As a child, Rice studied French. She took ballet classes. She learned about football and basketball from her father. She figure skated. To pursue her passions, she was willing to make sacrifices. While other children were out playing, she was studying and practicing piano. She kept a grueling schedule. Highly disciplined, she would get up at four thirty in the morning to

be able to do her schoolwork as well as compete in both figure skating and piano competitions. One of her teachers commented, “There was a core of her that revealed she knew what she wanted and was willing to make the sacrifices. I think in her mind they were not sacrifices, but things to do that were necessary to keep with her goals.”<sup>7</sup> Her parents were willing to make sacrifices for her success as well, such as taking out a \$13,000 loan (in 1969) to buy her a used Steinway grand piano.

Rice graduated early from high school at fifteen and went to the University of Denver as a music major, intending to become a professional concert pianist. But after her sophomore year when she realized she would never be good enough to make it to the top, she sacrificed music. “I met eleven-year-olds who could play from sight what had taken me all year to learn,” she recounted, “and I thought I’m maybe going to end up playing piano bar or playing at Nordstrom, but I’m not going to end up playing Carnegie Hall.”<sup>8</sup> She began studying Russian culture and the Soviet government. She got her bachelor’s degree, then a master’s degree at Notre Dame, and a PhD at the University of Denver. When she received an offer for a fellowship at Stanford, she jumped on it. The next year she became a full faculty member.

Rice thrived at Stanford. She was quickly made an associate professor. Rice biographer Antonia Felix wrote,

Condi found her passions in Soviet studies and teaching, and her life at Stanford was rich on many levels. She juggled classes, advising, research, writing, playing the piano, weight training, exercising, dating, and gluing herself to the television for twelve-hour football-watching marathons.<sup>9</sup>

She spent a year at the Pentagon working as an advisor, and returned to Stanford. Rice was living an ideal life. In 1987, she became a tenured professor.<sup>10</sup>

Most academics would settle in and enjoy their perfect life. Not Rice. In 1989 when the White House called, she took a position on the National Security Council as the director of Soviet and East European affairs, becoming President George H. W. Bush’s primary advisor on the Soviet Union as that government disintegrated. She helped create the policy for the unification of Germany and became one of the world’s experts on the subject.

She returned to Stanford in 1991, knowing it’s difficult to maintain an academic career if “you don’t come back in about two years,” she said.<sup>11</sup> She became a full professor two years later at age thirty-eight. And a month later, she was asked to become provost, a position that had never been held by a woman, a person of color, or anyone younger than their fifties. In that position, she oversaw a \$1.5 billion budget and turned a \$20 million deficit into a \$14.5 million reserve.

She gave it all up again when she was asked to tutor then Texas governor George W. Bush on foreign policy. She was so effective that when he became president, Bush asked her to become his national security advisor. After serving in that role for four years, she served as US secretary of state.

Today, Rice is back at Stanford. She currently serves as the Tad and Dianne Taube Director of the Hoover Institution and the Thomas and Barbara Stephenson Senior Fellow on Public Policy. She is also the founding partner of the international strategic consulting firm Rice, Hadley, Gates & Manuel, as well as serving on several influential boards. And under the right circumstances, I believe she would sacrifice all that again to serve the country or take on

a world-changing leadership role. That's what happens when a leader understands and lives by the Law of Sacrifice.

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*Applying*  
THE LAW OF SACRIFICE

## *to Your Life*

1. To become a more influential leader, are you willing to make sacrifices? Are you willing to give up your rights for the sake of the people you lead? Give it some thought. Then create two lists: (1) the things you are willing to give up in order to go up, and (2) the things you are *not* willing to sacrifice. Be sure to consider which list will contain items such as your health, marriage, relationships with children, finances, and so on.
2. Living by the Law of Sacrifice usually means being willing to trade something of value that you possess to gain something more valuable that you don't. King gave up many personal freedoms to gain freedoms for others. Rice gave up prestige and influence at Stanford to gain influence and impact around the world. What are you currently willing to trade in order to gain greater influence and lead positive change?
3. One of the most harmful mind-sets of leaders is "destination disease"—the idea that they can sacrifice for a season and then "arrive." Leaders who think this way stop sacrificing and stop gaining greater influence in their leadership.

In what areas might you be in danger of having destination disease? Write them down. Then for each, create a statement of ongoing growth that will be an antidote to such thinking. For example, if you have the mind-set that you have finished learning once you graduate from school, you may need to write, "I will make it my practice to learn and grow in one significant area every year."

## THE LAW OF TIMING

### *When to Lead Is As Important As What to Do and Where to Go*

Leaders at every level dropped the ball: the mayor, the governor, the cabinet secretary, and the president. Not one of them understood the potential devastation that can come when a leader violates the Law of Timing.

**A** stark example of the importance of timing to leadership came to New Orleans in late August and early September of 2005. New Orleans is an unusual city. Like Venice, Italy, it is surrounded by water. To the north lies Lake Pontchartrain. To the south flows the mighty Mississippi River. To the east and west are low-lying swamplands. Canals crisscross the city. You cannot drive into or out of New Orleans without crossing a major bridge. That may not seem like a big deal—until you consider that most of the city lies below sea level. New Orleans is shaped like a bowl. On average, the city is six feet below sea level. In the lowest areas, it's nine feet below sea level. And the land in New Orleans sinks a little more every year. For

decades citizens have worried about the potential damage that a direct hit from a powerful hurricane could do to the city.

## **DISASTER ON THE HORIZON**

On Wednesday, August 24, 2005, nobody in New Orleans could have known that the newly formed tropical storm, named Katrina, would be the big one—the hurricane the city had feared would someday come. It wasn't until Friday that the National Hurricane Center predicted that the storm would reach landfall on Monday somewhere near Buras, Louisiana, about sixty miles southeast of New Orleans. The hurricane was already looking like a bad one. The next morning, Saturday, August 27, the leaders of many of Louisiana's parishes around New Orleans ordered mandatory evacuations: St. Charles, Plaquemines, parts of Jefferson, and even St. Tammany, which is situated on higher ground north of New Orleans.

But what about New Orleans? Why didn't Mayor Ray Nagin, the leader of the city, order a mandatory evacuation at the same time? Many people say New Orleanians are fatalistic, and they can't be made to move any faster than they want to go. Others say that Nagin, a businessman before he was elected, was worried about the legal and financial implications of an evacuation. I say he and others in government didn't understand the Law of Timing: when to lead is as important as what to do and where to go.

The right time to move people out of New Orleans was when the other parish leaders announced their mandatory evacuations. Nagin waited. On Saturday evening, he finally announced a *voluntary* evacuation of New Orleans. Only after Max Mayfield, the director of the National Hurricane Center, called Nagin on Saturday night did the mayor become concerned enough to act. "Max scared the crap out of me," Nagin is reported to have said after the call.<sup>1</sup>

## **TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE**

The next morning at nine o'clock, Nagin finally ordered a mandatory evacuation—fewer than twenty-four hours before the hurricane would make landfall. It was much too late for many citizens of New Orleans. And how did he plan to help those people who couldn't make it out of town on such short notice? He advised them to make their way however they could to the Superdome, the city's shelter of last resort. But he made no real provisions for them. In a press conference Nagin advised,

If you can't leave the city and you have to come to the Superdome, come with enough food, [non]perishable items to last for three to five days. Come with blankets, with pillows. No weapons, no alcohol, no drugs. You know, this is like the governor said, you're going on a camping trip. If you don't know what that's like, just bring enough stuff for you to be able to sleep and be comfortable. It's not going to be the best environment, but at least you will be safe.<sup>2</sup>

The results of Nagin's leadership played out in the national coverage of Katrina and its aftermath. Water was flowing into parts of the city by nine o'clock Monday morning. Conditions for the people at the Superdome were dreadful. Other people who couldn't get out of town flocked to the Convention Center. Many citizens were stranded on rooftops. How did Nagin respond? He complained to the media at press conferences.

## **ANOTHER CHANCE**

If someone was going to step in and lead, it would have to occur somewhere other than the local level. Most people began looking to the federal government for leadership, but its leaders violated the Law of Timing too. Not until Wednesday, August 31, did Director of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff release a memo declaring Katrina an "Incident of National Significance"—a key designation needed to trigger swift federal coordination.<sup>3</sup> President Bush didn't meet with his cabinet until the next day to determine how to launch the White House Task Force on Hurricane Katrina Response. Meanwhile, the people stranded in New Orleans waited for help. On Thursday, September 1, the Red Cross requested permission to take water, food, and supplies to the people who were stranded in the city,



but their request was denied by the Louisiana office of Homeland Security. They were asked to wait another day.<sup>4</sup> Finally, on Sunday, September 4—six days after New Orleans had flooded—the evacuation of the Superdome was finally completed.

The way Katrina was handled shows leadership timing at its worst. It was botched at every level. Even the local animal shelter did better than the mayor. Two days prior to Katrina's arrival, it evacuated hundreds of animals to Houston, Texas.<sup>5</sup> In the end, 1,577 people from Louisiana died because of the hurricane.<sup>6</sup> Eighty percent of the deaths in Louisiana occurred in Orleans and St. Bernard parishes, with the overwhelming majority occurring in New Orleans.<sup>7</sup> If the leaders had paid greater attention not only to *what* needed to be done but also to *when* it needed to be done, many more lives would have been saved.

## **TIMING IS EVERYTHING**

Good leaders recognize that *when* to lead is as important as what to do and where to go. Timing is often the difference between success and failure in an endeavor.

Every time a leader makes a move, there are really only four outcomes:

### **1. THE WRONG ACTION AT THE WRONG TIME LEADS TO DISASTER**

A leader who takes the wrong action at the wrong time is sure to suffer negative repercussions. That was certainly the case in New Orleans as Katrina approached. Nagin's poor leadership set in motion a series of wrong actions at the wrong time. He waited until it was too late to call for a mandatory evacuation. He sent faxes to local churches, hoping they would help with evacuating people, but by the time he did, the people who would have received the faxes were already long gone. He picked a poor location for the shelter of last resort, neglected to supply it properly, and failed to

provide adequate transportation for people to get there. One wrong action after another led to disaster.

Obviously, the stakes for every leadership decision are not as high as they were for Mayor Nagin. But every leadership situation requires that leaders heed the Law of Timing. If you lead a department or a small team and you take the wrong action at the wrong time, your people will suffer. If you repeatedly show poor judgment, even in little things, people start to think that having you as their leader is the real mistake.

And so will your leadership.

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*If you repeatedly show poor judgment, even in little things, people start to think that having you as their leader is the real mistake.*

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## **2. THE RIGHT ACTION AT THE WRONG TIME BRINGS RESISTANCE**

When it comes to good leadership, having a vision for the direction of the organization or team and knowing how to get there aren't enough. If you take the right action but do it at the wrong time, you may still be unsuccessful because the people you lead will resist you.

Good leadership timing requires many things:

- **UNDERSTANDING**—leaders must have a firm grasp on the situation.
- **MATURITY**—if leaders' motives aren't right, they'll pick timing that's best for themselves instead of the team.
- **CONFIDENCE**—people follow leaders who *know* what must be done.
- **DECISIVENESS**—wishy-washy leaders create wishy-washy followers.
- **EXPERIENCE**—people trust experience, and if leaders don't possess it, they need to gain wisdom from others who do.
- **INTUITION**—timing often depends on intangibles, such as momentum and morale.

- **PREPARATION**—if the conditions aren't right, leaders must create those conditions.

Having a handle on these factors improves a leader's timing.

### **3. THE WRONG ACTION AT THE RIGHT TIME IS A MISTAKE**

People who are naturally entrepreneurial often possess a strong sense of timing. They intuitively know when it's time to make a move—to seize an opportunity. They sometimes make mistakes in their actions at those key moments. My brother Larry, who is an excellent businessman, has coached me in this area. Larry says that the greatest mistake made by entrepreneurs and other people in business is knowing when to cut their losses or when to increase their investment to maximize their gains. Their mistakes come from taking the wrong action at the right time.

Once again, I have experience in this area. Because I'm known primarily as a communicator, for years people tried to talk me into doing a radio program. For a long time I resisted the idea. In the mid-1990s, however, I could see there was a need for a growth-oriented program for people of faith. So we decided to create a program called *Growing Today*. But it had a problem: the format. Most programs of that type are supported by donations, but I believe in free-market economics. I wanted the program to support itself by selling products, the way any other commercial program would. What a mistake. The show never broke even. It was the right time, but the wrong idea. The Law of Timing had spoken again.

### **4. THE RIGHT ACTION AT THE RIGHT TIME RESULTS IN SUCCESS**

When the right leader and the right timing come together, incredible things happen. An organization achieves its goals, reaps incredible rewards, and gains momentum. Success almost becomes inevitable. If you look at the history of nearly any organization, you will find a pivotal moment when the right leader took the right action at the right time, and it transformed the organization. Winston Churchill, whose greatness in leadership depended on the Law of Timing, described the impact that leaders can make—and the

satisfaction they can experience—when they take the right action at the right time. He said, “There comes a special moment in everyone’s life, a moment for which that person was born. That special opportunity, when he seizes it, will fulfill his mission—a mission for which he is uniquely qualified. In that moment, he finds greatness. It is his finest hour.” Every leader desires to experience that moment.

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*When the right leader and the right  
timing come together, incredible  
things happen.*

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## **THE CRUCIBLE OF WAR DISPLAYS THE LAW OF TIMING**

When the stakes are high, the consequences of the Law of Timing are dramatic and immediate. That is certainly true in war. In any major battle, the critical importance of timing becomes evident. The Battle of Gettysburg during the American Civil War is a prime example.

When Confederate General Robert E. Lee took the Army of Northern Virginia into Pennsylvania in late June 1863, he had three goals: (1) draw the Union army out of Virginia, (2) resupply his troops using Pennsylvania’s resources, and (3) bring the fighting to the heart of Union territory, thereby prodding the North’s army into hasty and unwanted action. It was the third year of the war, and both the Union and the Confederacy were growing weary of the conflict. Lee hoped his actions would bring an end to the conflict. Several days prior to the battle, Lee told General Trimble,

Our army is in good spirits, not overfatigued, and can be concentrated on any one point in twenty-four hours or less. . . . When they [the Union army] hear where we are, they will make forced marches . . . They will come up . . . broken down from hunger and hard marching, strung out on a long line and much demoralized, when they come into Pennsylvania. I shall throw an overwhelming force on their advance, crush it, follow up the

success, drive one corps back on another, and by successive repulses and surprises, before they can concentrate, create a panic and virtually destroy the army.<sup>8</sup>

Lee was trying to seize the opportunity for overwhelming victory. He didn't know until the morning of July 1 that the Union army had already moved north. By then some of its forces were already engaging Confederate troops on the Chambersburg Road west of Gettysburg. That development disrupted Lee's strategy and ruined his timing. Lee's first instinct was to hold back and wait for his army's full strength to assemble before forcing a major engagement. But always conscious of the importance of timing, he recognized when his troops had a sudden advantage. As Lee watched from a nearby ridge, he saw that Federal troops were being routed and retreating. There was still a chance to take action that could lead to victory.

Confederate forces could attack and seize the high ground of Cemetery Hill, defended only by a few Union infantry reserves and artillery. If they could capture and control that position, Lee reasoned, they would control the whole area. It would be the key to a Confederate victory and possibly bring an end to the war.

In position to take that hill was Confederate General R. S. Ewell. It was still early in the day and if Ewell moved forward, he could take it. But instead of pressing his advantage when the time was ripe, Ewell declined to engage the enemy. Instead, he simply watched, letting the opportunity slip away. The Confederates failed to take Cemetery Hill. By the next morning, Union troops had reinforced their previous positions, and the South's chance was gone. The Northern and Southern armies fought for two more days, but in the end, Lee's forces suffered defeat, having lost about 33,000 of his 76,300 men to injury or death.<sup>9</sup> Their only choice was to retreat and make their way back to Virginia.

## **ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY LOST**

After the South's defeat at Gettysburg, Lee expected the Union forces under General Meade to immediately pursue and utterly destroy his reeling army.

That was also the expectation of Abraham Lincoln after he received the news of the Union's victory at Gettysburg. Anxious to make the most of the Law of Timing, Lincoln sent a communication from Washington, D.C., to Meade via General Halleck on July 7, 1863. In it, Halleck said,

I have received from the President the following note, which I respectfully communicate.

"We have certain information that Vicksburg surrendered to General Grant on the 4th of July. Now, if General Meade can complete his work so gloriously prosecuted thus far by the literal or substantial destruction of Lee's army, the rebellion will be over."<sup>10</sup>

Lincoln recognized that the timing was right. The Union army could crush what was left of the Confederate forces and end the war. But just as the Southern forces did not seize the moment for victory when it was available to them, neither did their Northern counterpart. Meade took his time, and he didn't pursue Lee aggressively. He was content to let the Confederates run, stating that his goal was to "drive from our soil every vestige of the presence of the invader." When Lincoln heard that, his response was, "My God, is that all?" Lincoln knew he was seeing the Union's chance slip away. And he was right. What remained of the Army of Northern Virginia crossed over the Potomac, escaping destruction, and the war continued for almost two more years. And hundreds of thousands more troops died. Lincoln later said that Meade's efforts had reminded him of "an old woman trying to shoo her geese across a creek."<sup>11</sup> Leaders from both sides had known what to do to achieve victory, but they failed to follow through at the critical moment.

Reading a situation and knowing what to do are not enough to make you succeed in leadership. If you want your organization, department, or team to win, you must pay attention to timing. Only the right action *at the right time* will bring success. Anything else exacts a high price. No leader can escape the Law of Timing.

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*Applying*  
THE LAW OF TIMING

## *to Your Life*

1. It has been said that managers do things right while leaders do the right things. The Law of Timing says that successful leaders do the right things at the right time.

How much do you take timing into account as you lead? Do you think about the appropriateness of the timing as much as you do the rightness of the action? Review the major actions you've initiated in the past, and discern whether you heeded the Law of Timing.

2. Spend some time analyzing a recent initiative that wasn't successful, and characterize the actions and timing as wrong or right. To help you, answer the following questions:

- What was the goal of the initiative?
- Who was the individual responsible for leading it?
- What factors were taken into account while the strategy was planned?
- Whose experience did the strategy draw upon?
- What was the condition or temperature of the organization at the time of the launch?
- What were the market or industry conditions?
- What "leverage" was available and being used to aid in the initiative?
- What factors were clearly working against it?
- Might the initiative have been more successful had it been launched either earlier or later?
- Why did the initiative ultimately fail?

3. As you prepare to engage in future plans, use the list of factors from the chapter to prepare for the timing of your actions:

- **UNDERSTANDING:** Do you have a firm grasp on the situation?
- **MATURITY:** Are your motives right?
- **CONFIDENCE:** Do you believe in what you are doing?



- **DECISIVENESS:** Can you initiate action with confidence and win people's trust?
- **EXPERIENCE:** Have you drawn upon wisdom from others to inform your strategy?
- **INTUITION:** Have you taken into account intangibles such as momentum and morale?
- **PREPARATION:** Have you done everything you must to set up your team for success?

Remember, only the right action at the right time will bring success to your team, department, or organization.

## THE LAW OF EXPLOSIVE GROWTH

### *To Add Growth, Lead Followers—To Multiply, Lead Leaders*

Is it possible to train more than a million people around the globe? It is if you use leader's math. That's the secret of the Law of Explosive Growth.

I haven't always felt the way I do now about leadership. My belief in the power of leadership and my passion for training leaders have developed over the course of my professional life. When I started in my career, I thought personal growth was the key to being able to make an impact. My father had been strategic in my development as I was growing up. He actually paid me to read books that he knew would help me, and he sent me to conferences when I was a teenager. Those experiences provided a great foundation for me. And after I began working, I discovered the Law of Process. That prompted me to take proactive ownership of my personal growth.

As a result, when people asked me to help them be more successful, I focused on teaching personal growth. It wasn't until I was forty years old

that I began to understand the Law of the Inner Circle and the importance of developing a team. That's when my ability to grow an organization and reach greater goals began to increase. The greater the challenge you face as a leader, the greater the need for a good team. But my thinking went to a whole new level when I began to focus on adding and developing leaders to my team. When you recruit good, talented, capable followers to your team, you add to the team's ability. That has great value. But it doesn't compare to the impact of adding *leaders* to the team. That's why I say to add growth, lead followers—to multiply, lead leaders. That's the Law of Explosive Growth.

## HELPING OTHERS TO LEAD

The difference between teams of followers and teams of leaders became crystal clear to me in 1990 when I traveled to South America with my wife, Margaret, to teach leadership in a national conference. One of the great joys of my life is teaching leadership to people of influence. I love to add value to leaders who multiply value to others. I was really looking forward to this conference because it was an opportunity to add value to people outside my regular sphere of influence. But the experience didn't turn out the way I expected.

Everything started well at the conference. The people were gracious, and I was able to connect with them despite the language and cultural differences. But it wasn't long before I could tell that the attendees and I were not on the same page. When I started to teach about leadership, I could tell my comments were not connecting with them. They didn't engage, and what I was trying to communicate wasn't making an impact.

My evaluation of the situation was confirmed after my first session with them. As I spoke with individuals, they didn't want to talk about leadership issues. They didn't ask questions about growing their organizations or fulfilling a vision. They sought advice about personal issues, problems, and conflicts with other people. I felt that I was back doing personal counseling, similar to what I had done early in my career. For the next three days, I

grew more and more frustrated. The people I spoke to didn't understand leadership, and they had no desire to learn about it. For someone like me who believes that everything rises and falls on leadership, I can't describe how much it frustrated me.

This wasn't the first time I had experienced this. When I had traveled to developing countries, I faced similar situations. In cultures where leaders are corrupt, honest people didn't want to become leaders. In nations without infrastructure, thriving businesses, or governments that support freedom, it is difficult for leaders to develop.

On the flight home after the conference, I expressed my frustrations to Margaret. I finally said, "I traveled thousands of miles just to counsel people on petty conflicts. If they would just turn their attention to becoming leaders, it would change their lives! I don't want to do this anymore."

After listening patiently, Margaret replied, "Maybe you're the one who's *supposed* to do something about this."

## THE NEXT STEP

Margaret's exhortation to take action stirred something within me. In 1996, I brought together a group of leaders to help me create a not-for-profit organization to develop leaders in government, education, and the religious community, both in the United States and abroad. I named it EQUIP, which stood for Encouraging Qualities Undeveloped In People. EQUIP made modest progress in its goals, but in the months after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, we went through a difficult period. We laid off half the staff and took the opportunity to reexamine our priorities.

We narrowed our focus. Moving forward, we would do one thing: train leaders internationally. And we developed a goal—one so large and daunting it looked almost impossible. We would try to develop *one million leaders* around the globe by 2008. How could a small nonprofit organization with a handful of employees hope to accomplish such a feat? By using the Law of Explosive Growth.

## THE STRATEGY

EQUIP's strategy, which came to be called the Million Leader Mandate (MLM), was to develop forty thousand leaders in countries around the world. We recruited leaders as volunteer trainers who would travel to countries at their own expense twice a year for three years to train leaders. With their help, EQUIP would provide all the training materials needed. In response, we asked those trained leaders to return to their own city, town, or village with training materials and personally train and develop twenty-five other leaders.

In 2002, EQUIP launched the MLM initiative, starting in India, Indonesia, and the Philippines. The response was overwhelming. Hundreds of hungry leaders traveled to each site to engage in the two-day training. Some attendees spent as many as five days *walking* to get to the events! And at the end of the training when we asked attendees to commit to developing twenty-five leaders over the next three years using the materials we would give them, more than 90 percent of the attendees signed on.

With the first success under our belt, we moved forward. The next year we began training leaders in other parts of Asia and the Middle East. In 2004, we started training in Africa; in 2005, Europe; and in 2006, South America. To our great surprise and delight, we reached our goal of training a million leaders two years ahead of schedule. Feeling we still were not done, we set a new goal, an even more audacious one: to develop five million leaders, and to train leaders from every one of the countries in the world that the United Nations recognized. In 2011, we accomplished that feat.

## MOVING FORWARD WITH LEADERS' MATH

All good leaders have vision. They can assess where their team or organization is, will project where it needs to go, and possess strong ideas about how their vision should be accomplished. They value action. They

delight in progress. They want to move fast and see their vision fulfilled. And they continually feel a tension between where their organization *is* and where it *ought to be*.

I have experienced this tension my entire life. In every organization I've ever been a part of, I had a strong sense of where it should go. I even felt that way as a kid. (I wasn't always *right* about where we should go, but I always thought I *knew*!) How do you relieve the tension between where the organization is and where you want it to be? The answer can be found in the Law of Explosive Growth:

If you develop yourself, you can experience personal success.

If you develop a team, your organization can experience growth.

If you develop leaders, your organization can achieve explosive growth.

It is possible to grow an organization and accomplish goals by leading followers. Many leaders do that. But if you want to maximize your leadership, help your organization reach its potential, and do that as quickly as possible, you must develop leaders. There is no other way to experience explosive growth. Adding other good leaders to a team is what I call leader's math. For every *follower* you add, you gain the talent and effort of one person. For every *leader* you add, you gain not only that individual's talent and effort, but also the talent and effort of all the other people he or she influences. That's multiplication!

## A DIFFERENT FOCUS

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*Becoming a leader who develops leaders requires an entirely different focus and attitude from simply attracting and leading followers. It takes a different mind-set.*

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Becoming a leader who develops leaders requires an entirely different focus and attitude from simply attracting and leading followers. It takes a different mind-set. Consider some of the differences between leaders who attract followers and leaders who attract and develop leaders:

**Leaders Who Attract Followers . . . Need to Be Needed**

**Leaders Who Lead Leaders . . . Want to Be Succeeded**

Becoming a leader can be exciting. When you speak, people listen. When you want to get something done, you can enlist other people to help you. Having people follow you can make you feel needed and important. However, that is a pretty shallow reason to pursue leadership. Good leaders don't lead for only themselves. They lead for the sake of others. They want to help their team members and they hope to create something greater than themselves, something that will last after their time of leadership has been completed.

**Leaders Who Attract Followers . . . Develop the Bottom 20 Percent**

**Leaders Who Lead Leaders . . . Develop the Top 20 Percent**

When you're leading a group of people, who typically asks for the most time and attention? The weakest members of the group who need the most help. If you allow them to, they will consume 80 percent or more of your time. However, proactive leaders who practice the Law of Explosive Growth don't invest most of their time in that bottom 20 percent. Instead, they seek out the top 20 percent in the group—the people with the greatest leadership potential—and they invest their time developing them. They know that if they develop the best, the best will help with the rest.

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*Leaders know that if they develop the best, the best will help with the rest.*

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**Leaders Who Attract Followers . . . Focus on Weaknesses**

**Leaders Who Lead Leaders . . . Focus on Strengths**

How do you help people reach their potential? You focus on developing their strengths. Nobody ever became their best by focusing on their worst.

That's why good leaders find their best people and help them develop what they're good at so that they can become even better. That can be hard to do when working with the bottom 20 percent. Most leaders who spend most of their time with people who don't perform well must focus on their weaknesses. Or they help them with the basics because problems in those areas keep them from achieving consistent performance on a regular basis. However, when you work with your best people, you can build on their strengths. And they can help those weaker than them to develop.

### **Leaders Who Attract Followers . . . Treat Everyone the Same** **Leaders Who Lead Leaders . . . Treat Individuals Differently**

There is a myth in some leadership circles that promotes the idea of treating everyone on the team the same because it is the “fair” way to lead. What a mistake. As author Mike Delaney said, “Any business or industry that pays equal rewards to its goof-offs and its eager beavers sooner or later will find itself with more goof-offs than eager beavers.” Leaders who develop leaders give rewards, resources, and responsibility based on results. The greater the impact and influence leaders have, the greater the opportunities and resources they should receive. Why? Because they will make the most of them and get results.

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*“Any business or industry that pays  
equal rewards to its goof-offs and its  
eager beavers sooner or later will  
find itself with more goof-offs than  
eager beavers.”*

—MIKE DELANEY

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### **Leaders Who Attract Followers . . . Spend Time with Others** **Leaders Who Lead Leaders . . . Invest Time in Others**

Leaders who attract only followers and never develop them to become leaders don't increase the value of those they lead. However, when leaders take time to develop the leaders they attract, they are making a valuable



investment in them. Every moment they spend helps to increase their ability and influence. And that pays dividends to them, to their families, to the organization, and to the leader who developed them.

### **Leaders Who Attract Followers . . . Grow by Addition**

### **Leaders Who Lead Leaders . . . Grow by Multiplication**

As I've already mentioned, leaders who attract followers grow their organization only one person at a time. When you attract one follower, you impact one person. And you receive the value and power of one person. However, leaders who attract, develop, and lead leaders multiply their organization's growth, because every leader on their team brings along the value of everyone they influence.

Add ten followers to your organization, and you have the power of ten people. Add ten leaders to your organization, and you have the power of ten leaders times all of the followers and leaders they influence. That's the difference between addition and multiplication. It's like growing your organization by teams instead of by individuals.

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*Any leader who practices the Law of  
Explosive Growth makes the shift  
from follower's math to leader's  
math.*

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### **Leaders Who Attract Followers . . . Impact Only People They Touch**

### **Leaders Who Lead Leaders . . . Impact People Beyond Their Reach**

Leaders who attract followers but never attract and develop leaders get tired. Why? Because they themselves must deal with every person under their authority. Being able to impact only the people you can touch personally is very limiting. In contrast, leaders who develop leaders impact people far beyond their personal reach. The better the leaders they develop, the greater the quality and quantity of followers and the greater the reach. Every time you attract and develop leaders, helping them increase their leadership ability, you make them capable of influencing an even greater number of people. By helping one person, you can reach many others.

# **THE CHALLENGE OF LEADING LEADERS**

If developing leaders has such a great impact, then why doesn't everyone do it? Because it's hard! Leadership development isn't an add-water-and-stir proposition. It takes a lot of time, energy, and resources. Here's why:

## **1. LEADERS ARE HARD TO FIND**

How many people do you know who are really good leaders? They have influence. They can make things happen. They are able to see and seize opportunities. And they can attract, enlist, and rally people to perform with excellence. Not everyone is capable of doing that on a consistent basis. Most people are content to follow. Some are producers. Fewer are leaders. Leaders are like eagles—they don't flock. That's why they are so hard to find.

## **2. LEADERS ARE HARD TO GATHER**

Once you find leaders, drawing them in can be very difficult. They are entrepreneurial and want to go their own way. If you try to recruit them, they want to know where you're going, how you plan to get there, who else you're planning to take with you—and whether they can drive! What you're doing has to be more compelling than what they're already doing without you.

On top of that, your organization needs to create an environment that is attractive to them. Most organizations desire stability, but leaders want excitement. Most organizations desire structure, but leaders want flexibility. Most organizations place a high value on following rules, but leaders often want to think and work outside the box. If you want to gather leaders, you must create a place where they can thrive.

## **3. LEADERS ARE HARD TO KEEP**

As hard as it is to find and gather good leaders, it's even more difficult to keep them. The only way to lead leaders is to become a better leader yourself. If you keep growing and stay ahead of the people you lead, then

you will be able to keep adding value to them. Your goal must be to keep developing them so that they can realize their potential. Only a leader can do that for another leader because it takes a leader to raise up another leader.

One year in my leadership conferences, I took an informal poll to find out what prompted the attendees to become leaders. The results were as follows:

Natural gifting	10 percent
Result of crisis	5 percent
Influence of another leader	85 percent

Only one leader in ten is able to blossom without the help of another leader. The rest need the help of other leaders who are ahead of them in the journey. If you keep adding value to the leaders you lead, then they will be willing to stay with you. Do that long enough, and they may never want to leave.

## **A NEW LESSON IN EXPLOSIVE GROWTH**

At the beginning of this chapter, I wrote about my journey with EQUIP after my conversation with Margaret, and I said it sent me on a thirty-five-year journey. If you were doing the math, you may have realized that from that 1990 conversation to the 2011 completion of the goal to train five million leaders covers only twenty-one years. Here's the rest of the story.

In 2014, after we reached our goal of training millions of leaders from all 198 countries recognized by the United Nations, we received letters from the presidents of two countries in Latin America, asking us to come and help their countries. One of those countries was Guatemala. Because EQUIP had trained leaders in that country for nine years, I began to wonder how we could help the people there. So we decided to go to Guatemala to explore the possibilities of being part of a transformation movement there.

As part of that trip, we sent out word that we wanted to invite a large group of leaders we had trained over the years to gather together to be mobilized to help the nation. We had trained more than ten thousand leaders, so we expected an army of leaders ready to make a difference. Instead, 275 people showed up. And they didn't come ready to lead. They came to receive more training.

I was stunned. Where were the leaders? I started asking more questions and trying to figure out where the breakdown had occurred. Where were the stories of transformation from the leaders we'd already trained? Where were the stories of leaders making a difference, not only in Guatemala, but in the other cities and countries around the world where we had trained leaders?

The more I thought about it, the more uneasy I became. And I came to a realization. Just because you've trained people in leadership, it doesn't mean they have become good leaders. Just because people are trained, it doesn't mean they are transformed. If you want to transform a nation, transformed leaders must lead the way. This realization was as eye-opening as my conversation with Margaret in 1990.

As I sought a solution, I had a realization. I had access to a group of transformed leaders who could help me: members of the John Maxwell Team. They were trained and certified in leadership. They possessed my values. And they had experience speaking and coaching. All I had to do was invite them to join me.

To make an already-long story shorter, that's what we did. Hundreds of my JMT coaches volunteered to travel to Guatemala, and they trained thousands of leaders to lead transformational roundtables as facilitators. Every new Guatemalan leader was asked to begin leading their roundtables immediately. Before, when we were training leaders, we set the leadership bar high and hoped the people we trained would rise up and follow through training others. Now, we created more modest expectations for leadership, and we stayed with them and helped them to follow through, actively leading and assisting them in their development. And the growth has been truly explosive. Hundreds of thousands of people have been transformed by the transformation tables in Guatemala, and we have the stories that prove it. And since then we've begun training and transforming leaders in Paraguay, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, and Papua New Guinea. We

hope to reach more countries soon. As long as we keep leading leaders, the movement toward transformation will continue.

I don't know where you are in your journey of leadership development. You may already be a highly skilled and experienced leader. Or you may just be getting started. No matter where you are, I know one thing. The best way for you to reach your potential, improve your team, help your organization, and make a difference is to attract, develop, and lead leaders rather than just followers. Leaders who develop leaders experience an incredible multiplication effect that can be achieved in no other way—not by increasing resources, reducing costs, increasing profit margins, improving systems, implementing quality procedures, or doing anything else. The only way to experience an explosive level of growth is to do the math—leader's math. That's the incredible power of the Law of Explosive Growth.

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*Applying*  
THE LAW OF EXPLOSIVE GROWTH

## *to Your Life*

1. What gives you greater personal satisfaction? Working with members of your team, solving problems with and for them, and enjoying the relationships? Or setting up team members to be independent, giving them room to fail and succeed, and setting them up to be successful without you? If you want to harness the Law of Explosive Growth, you will need to lean into the latter. Prepare yourself emotionally to shift from being needed by team members to being succeeded by team members.
2. What are you currently doing to find and gather leaders? Are there places you go, events you attend, and networks you plug into to look for potential leaders? If not, get started. If so, what actions do you take to connect with leaders and recruit them for your organization, department, or team? How can you improve?
3. The way to hold on to leaders is to develop them and then set them up for success. Make sure you're doing the following to develop your leaders:
  - Keep growing as a leader yourself so that you always have something to give to others.
  - Create an environment where leaders can take chances, fail safely, succeed, and thrive.
  - Invest most of your time in the top 20 percent of your leaders.
  - Focus on developing your leaders' strengths.
  - Treat every leader as an individual, matching investment, resources, and opportunities to their skills and abilities.
  - Ask your best leaders to invest in other team members who are behind them in leadership.
  - Celebrate your leaders' successes and encourage them to rise up to the next level.

## THE LAW OF LEGACY

### *A Leader's Lasting Value Is Measured by Succession*

What will people say at your funeral?  
The things they say tomorrow depend  
on how you live today using the Law  
of Legacy.

**I**n the fall of 1997, I was in India with some colleagues, and we decided to visit the headquarters of a great leader of the twentieth century: Mother Teresa. Her headquarters, which the local people call the Mother House, is a plain concrete block building located in Kolkata. As I stood outside the doors, I thought that no one could tell by looking at it that this modest place had been the home base of such an effective leader.

We walked through a foyer and into a central patio that was open to the sky. Our intention was to visit Mother Teresa's tomb, which is located in the facility's dining room. But when we got there, we found out that the room was in use and we would not be allowed to go in until the ceremony was over.

We could see a group of about forty to fifty nuns seated, all dressed in the familiar habit that Mother Teresa had worn.

"What's going on in there?" I asked a nun passing by.



She smiled. “Today we are taking forty-five new members into our order,” she said and then hurried away into another part of the building.

Since we were already running late and soon had to catch a plane, we couldn’t stay. We looked around briefly and then left. As I walked out of the compound, through an alley, and among the throngs of people, I thought, *Mother Teresa would have been proud*. She was gone, but her legacy was continuing in others. She had made an impact on the world, and she had developed leaders who were carrying on her vision. And all appearances indicate that they will continue influencing people for generations to come. Mother Teresa’s life is a vivid example of the Law of Legacy.

## A LASTING LEGACY

What do you want people to say at your funeral? What do you want to see happen after you’re gone? What do you want your legacy to be? These may seem like odd questions. But they may be the most important things you can ask yourself as a leader. Most people never consider it. And that’s not good, because if they don’t, their lives and leadership can take a direction different from that of their greatest potential and impact. If you want your leadership to really have meaning, you need to take into account the Law of Legacy. Why? Because a leader’s lasting value is measured by succession.

Eleanor Roosevelt is reputed to have said, “Life is like a parachute jump; you’ve got to get it right the first time.” I’ve always been conscious of the fact that our time here on earth is finite and we need to make the most of it. Life is not a dress rehearsal. My father impressed that upon me when I was a teenager. As a result, I’ve always possessed drive and the desire to be the best I could be at whatever I did. But I must admit, my goals and desires have changed quite a bit over the years, and that has affected the direction of my leadership.

Clare Boothe Luce, the writer, politician, and ambassador, popularized the idea of the “life sentence”—a statement summarizing the goal and purpose of one’s life. When I started in my career in the late 1960s, my life sentence could have been expressed as, “I want to be a great pastor.”

Several years later as I worked and realized my shortcomings as a speaker, my sentence changed to be, “I want to be a great communicator.” For more than a decade, improving my speaking skills became a major focus. However, when I reached my early thirties, I realized that if all I ever did was speak, my impact would always be limited. There are only so many days in a year and so many people who will come to an event to hear you. I wanted to reach more people than that. That’s when I decided, “I want to be a great writer.”

It took me three years to write my first book; it’s a small volume of only 128 pages. Each chapter is only three or four pages long. Someone at a conference once complimented me, saying how smart she thought it was to create a book with such short chapters. Smart had nothing to do with it. I simply didn’t have very much to say! I’ve written many books since then, and I’m grateful that my writing has afforded me the opportunity to communicate with more people. But when I reached my forties, my focus changed again. That’s when I decided, “I want to become a great leader.” I wanted to build and lead organizations that could make a difference.

## **CHANGE IN PERSPECTIVE**

Looking back, I can see that the changes in my “life sentence” over the years have come as a result of growth in each stage of my life. When I was in my late fifties, I began to reflect on all the previous statements I had embraced, and I realized that they all had a common denominator. My motivation was to add value to others. I wanted to be an effective pastor, communicator, writer, and leader so that I could help people. When I turned sixty, I finally settled on the life sentence that I believe will serve me the rest of my days. My sentence is, “I want to add value to leaders who will multiply value to others.” Someday when people attend my funeral, I don’t want them to have to guess why I was here. I hope I will have lived my life in such a way that they know and say, “John added value to us so that we were able to add value to others.”

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*My life sentence is, “I want to add  
value to leaders who will multiply  
value to others.”*

—JOHN C. MAXWELL

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Why is it so important to pay attention to your “life sentence”? Because it sets the direction for your life. But it also determines the legacy you will leave after your life is done. Legacy is not leaving something *for* people. Legacy is leaving something *in* people. It took me a long time to figure that out. My hope is that you can learn the lesson more quickly than I did. Success doesn’t count for much if you leave nothing behind in others. The best way to do that is through a leadership legacy.

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*Legacy is leaving something in  
people.*

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## GET THE PICTURE OF LEGACY

As I’ve become older, the value of legacy has become clearer to me. From my perspective as a seventy-five-year-old, I want to give you three pictures of legacy that I believe will help you.

### **A CLOCK—WHAT ARE YOU DOING?**

Most leaders use a clock to help them know whether they’re on track during their day. It helps them to produce in the present. It makes them aware that that they need to lead like it matters. When the day is done, you don’t get it back. If you know what you want your legacy to be, you are better able to focus and get done what you need to do in the time you have.

I want to instill good values in the next generation. That’s what I want my legacy to be. Every day I do what I can to make myself ready to live,

write, and communicate those values. That means I spend time each day reading, thinking, filing away ideas, asking questions, and writing. As long as I keep doing that, I will keep growing and having something to say and value to contribute to others.

### **A COMPASS—WHERE ARE YOU GOING?**

A compass is a universal symbol for direction. What direction am I going? I'm aiming to add value to leaders who multiply value to others. Why? Because I want to equip others to change their world. More specifically, my organizations and I are working to train leaders to transform their countries. We're doing this by training them to facilitate transformation tables where people learn values.

People ask me all the time whether they think our efforts will work. They ask if I believe I will see a country transformed in my lifetime. I may not live that long, but I certainly hope so. And it truly doesn't matter anyway. There is no finish line. I embrace the idea of the infinite game articulated by Simon Sinek. With country transformation, we're fighting for a just cause. We're for something good. We're inclusive in how we're approaching it. We're service oriented in our motivation. We value resilience as conditions change. And we're idealistic in our goals. I will contribute as long as I can, and my organizations will continue on after me.

### **COMPANIONS—WHO IS GOING WITH YOU?**

This last picture may be the most important one for a *lasting* legacy because no legacy exists without people who carry it. I learned this idea from Jack Welch when I heard him say, "You need legs to have a legacy." I've always enjoyed the journey of leadership, and for a long time I've been intentional about who I invite to go along with me. And in recent years, I've become even more intentional because I'm aware that I need to equip leaders to carry on without me. I'll tell you more about that in a moment.

## **DEVELOPING YOUR LEADERSHIP LEGACY**

If you desire to make a leadership impact on a future generation, then I suggest that you become highly intentional about your legacy. I believe that every person leaves some kind of legacy. For some it's positive. For others it's negative. But here's what I know: we have a choice about what legacy we will leave, and we must work and be intentional to leave the legacy we want. Here's how:

## 1. KNOW THE LEGACY YOU WANT TO LEAVE

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*Most people simply accept their lives  
—they don't lead them.*

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Most people simply accept their lives—they don't lead them. I believe that people need to be proactive about how they live, and I believe that is especially true for leaders. Grenville Kleiser, in his classic personal development book, *Training for Power and Leadership*, wrote,

Your life is like a book. The title page is your name, the preface your introduction to the world. The pages are a daily record of your efforts, trials, pleasures, discouragements, and achievements. Day by day your thoughts and acts are being inscribed in your book of life. Hour by hour, the record is being made that must stand for all time. Once the word "finis" must be written, let it then be said of your book that it is a record of noble purpose, generous service, and work well-done.<sup>1</sup>

Someday people will summarize your life in a single sentence. My advice: pick it now!

## 2. LIVE THE LEGACY YOU WANT TO LEAVE

I believe that to have any credibility as a leader, you must live what you say you believe. (I've touched on that in the Law of Solid Ground and the Law of the Picture.) Because my legacy involves adding value by influencing leaders, I have focused most of my attention on leaders, and I have become highly intentional in my efforts to lead them.

I believe there are eight major areas of influence in society: government, education, business, religion, media, arts, sports, and health care. In the early years of my career, I had influence in just one of those eight areas. I am constantly striving to reach and gain credibility in more of the others. I try to do that by building bridges, relating to people on a heart-to-heart level, and seeking to give more than I receive.

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*Someday people will summarize your  
life in a single sentence. My advice:  
pick it now!*

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If you want to create a legacy, you need to live it first. You must become what you desire to give and see in others.

### **3. CHOOSE WHO WILL CARRY ON YOUR LEGACY**

I've already mentioned this, but I want to reiterate it: a legacy lives on in people, not things. Max De Pree, author of *Leadership Is an Art*, declared, "Succession is one of the key responsibilities of leadership." Yet the Law of Legacy is something that few leaders seem to practice. Too often leaders put their energy into organizations, buildings, systems, or other lifeless objects. But only people live on after we are gone. Everything else is temporary.

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*A legacy is created only when a  
person puts his organization into the  
position to do great things without  
him.*

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There is often a natural progression to how leaders develop in the area of legacy, starting with the desire to achieve:

*Achievement comes when they do big things themselves.*

*Success* comes when they empower followers to do big things for them.

*Significance* comes when they develop leaders to do great things with them.

*Legacy* comes when they put leaders in position to do great things without them.

It's like my friend Chris Musgrove says, "Success is not measured by what you're leaving to, but by what you are leaving behind."

In 2011 when I cofounded the John Maxwell Team, I sensed that it was an opportunity to choose who would carry much of my legacy. By training and certifying speakers and coaches, I hoped that we would be creating "legs" for my legacy. And it has turned out even greater than I hoped. Today the JMT coaches are an army of more than forty thousand carriers of my DNA. They embrace my values, carry my principles, and add value to people in more than 150 countries around the world. And that army continues to grow! They are making a difference, and I believe 100 percent that they will continue doing so after I'm gone.

#### **4. MAKE SURE YOU PASS THE BATON**

Tom Mullins, an excellent leader and former coach who sits on EQUIP's board, tells me that the most important part of a relay race is the place that's called the exchange zone. That's where the runners must pass the baton to their teammates. You can have the fastest runners in the world—each one a record setter—but if they blow the exchange, they lose the race. The same is true when it comes to the Law of Legacy. No matter how well you lead or how good your successor is, if you don't make sure you pass the baton well, you will not leave the legacy you desire.

Tom knew this so well that for years he worked on his succession plan. He began early by grooming his son Todd, who is also an excellent leader, to take the baton and lead in his place. As time went on, Todd took on more and more responsibility until the baton was handed off completely to him. Tom tells me that his greatest joy now comes from seeing Todd and other leaders step up and do an even better job of leading than he did.

Just about anybody can make an organization look good for a moment—by launching a flashy new program or product, drawing crowds to a big event, or slashing the budget to boost the bottom line. But leaders who leave a legacy take a different approach. They take the long view. Author,

educator, and theologian Elton Trueblood wrote, “We have made at least a start in discovering the meaning in human life when we plant shade trees under which we know full well we will never sit.”

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*“We have made at least a start in  
discovering the meaning in human  
life when we plant shade trees under  
which we know full well we will never  
sit.”*

—ELTON TRUEBLOOD

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The best leaders lead today with tomorrow in mind by making sure they invest in leaders who will carry their legacy forward. Why? Because a leader’s lasting value is measured by succession. That is the Law of Legacy.

## RECEIVING MY BATON

When I wrote the original edition of *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, I believed in the Law of Legacy and was practicing it, but I was doing so in a general way. For decades throughout my career, I had made it my goal to work myself out of a job by training leaders to replace me. Then when I transitioned into a full-time career of writing and speaking, my focus was almost entirely on investing in leaders. As I’ve already explained, my goal has been to add value to leaders who multiply value to others. In those ways, I had already been working on my legacy. When I turned seventy, I became highly intentional about handing off my personal baton of leadership so that my organizations and the people in them will be able to carry on after I die.

When I started to examine who my successor would be, the natural person was obvious: Mark Cole. For the last twenty years, no one has been more dedicated to me or my legacy than Mark. I have invested more time



mentoring him than any other person in my life, and I love him like a son. But as strong as my feelings are toward him, he still needed to prove that he was the right person to take on the role. So he and I began discussing what would be required of someone who succeeded me and led all of my organizations after I'm done. I said my successor must

1. **LEAD WELL:** My successor has to be capable of leading my organizations effectively when I won't be there to give advice.
2. **POSSESS VISION:** I have always been the vision creator for my organizations, which is as it should be. But what about when I'm gone? I want my successor to have a vision greater than mine has been for my organizations.
3. **COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY:** Whoever follows after me has to be able to communicate. I don't expect that person to step into my shoes as a professional communicator, but he would need to replace me as the primary vision communicator and carrier.
4. **SEE AND SEIZE OPPORTUNITIES:** One of my greatest gifts is my nose for opportunities. I sense them even when I can't explain them. I desire for my successor to possess this quality to carry the organizations forward.
5. **DEVELOP HIGH-LEVEL RELATIONSHIPS:** Whoever succeeds me must be able to develop and maintain relationships with high-level leaders and thinkers. One of the things I tell people in my organization is that I can *get* them into the room, but they must be capable of *staying* in the room on their own.

I'm delighted to say that Mark has proven himself in these five areas and continues to grow and improve in them. I'm not planning to quit anytime soon, but when my time is done, I know that everything I've spent my lifetime building will be in good hands.

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*“A life isn't significant except for its impact on other lives.”*

—JACKIE ROBINSON

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In the end, our ability as leaders will not be measured by the buildings we built, the institutions we established, or the achievements of our team during our tenure. You and I will be judged by how well the people we invested in carried on after we are gone. As baseball great Jackie Robinson observed, “A life isn’t significant except for its impact on other lives.” In the end, we will be judged according to the Law of Legacy. A leader’s lasting value is measured by succession. May you and I live and lead according to that standard.

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*Applying*  
THE LAW OF LEGACY

## *to Your Life*

1. What do you want your legacy to be? If you are early in your leadership journey, I wouldn't expect you to have the definitive answer to that question yet. However, I still think there is value in your considering what you want your life to stand for. Take some time to think about your legacy. It will be closely related to your sense of purpose in life. It will use your gifts and skills. It will make use of your unique opportunities and personal circumstances. Who might you be able to impact, and how might you help others after your lifetime?
2. Based on your ideas about legacy, what must you change in the way you conduct yourself today so that you *live* that legacy? Write a list. It may include behavioral changes, character development, education, working methods, relationship building, and so on. The way you live will impact your ability to create the legacy you want to leave.
3. In whom will you invest to carry on your legacy? Ideally, you should pick people with greater potential than your own who will be able to "stand on your shoulders" and do more than you did. Begin investing in them today.

## CONCLUSION

### *Everything Rises and Falls on Leadership*

**W**ell, there you have them—the 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership. Learn them, take them to heart, and apply them to your life. If you follow them, people will follow you. I've been teaching leadership for more than fifty years now, and during those years I've told the people I've trained something that I'm now going to say to you: everything rises and falls on leadership. The more you try to do in life, the more you will find that good leadership makes the difference. Any endeavor you can undertake that involves other people will live or die depending on the leadership. As you work to build your organization, remember this:

- Personnel determine the potential of the organization.
- Relationships determine the morale of the organization.
- Structure determines the size of the organization.
- Vision determines the direction of the organization.
- Leadership determines the success of the organization.

Now that you know the laws and understand them, share them with your team. And take time to evaluate yourself regarding each of the laws using the evaluation tool on the next pages. As I mentioned at the beginning of this book, nobody does all the laws well. That's why you need to build a team.

I wish you great leadership success. Pursue your dreams. Strive for excellence. Become the person you were created to be. Make a difference.

And accomplish all that you were put on this earth to do. Leadership will help you to do that. Learn to lead—not just for yourself, but for the people who follow you. And as you reach the highest levels, don't forget to take others with you to be the leaders of tomorrow.

## 21 LAWS LEADERSHIP EVALUATION

Read each statement below and score yourself for each, using the following scale:

- 0      Never
- 1      Rarely
- 2      Occasionally
- 3      Always

### 1. THE LAW OF THE LID

How Well You Lead Determines How Well You Succeed

- \_\_\_\_\_ a) When faced with a challenge, my first thought is, *Who can I enlist to help?* not *What can I do?*
- \_\_\_\_\_ b) When my team, department, or organization fails to achieve an objective, my first assumption is that it's because of a leadership issue.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c) I believe that developing my leadership skills will increase my effectiveness dramatically.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Total + 1 = \_\_\_\_\_ Your Score

### 2. THE LAW OF INFLUENCE

## The True Measure of Leadership Is Influence—Nothing More, Nothing Less

- \_\_\_\_\_ a) I rely on influence rather than on my position or title to get others to follow me or do what I want them to do.
- \_\_\_\_\_ b) During discussions or brainstorming settings, people often ask for my advice.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c) I rely on my relationships with others rather than organizational systems and procedures to get things done.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Total + 1 = \_\_\_\_\_ Your Score

### 3. THE LAW OF PROCESS

Leadership Develops Daily, Not in a Day

- \_\_\_\_\_ a) I have a concrete, specific plan for personal growth that I engage in weekly.
- \_\_\_\_\_ b) I have found experts and mentors for key areas of my life with whom I engage on a regular basis.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c) To promote my professional growth, I have read at least six books (*or* taken at least one worthwhile class *or* listened to twelve or more audio lessons) per year for the last three years.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Total + 1 = \_\_\_\_\_ Your Score

### 4. THE LAW OF NAVIGATION

Anyone Can Steer the Ship, but It Takes a Leader to Chart the Course

- \_\_\_\_\_ a) I spot problems, obstacles, and trends that will impact the outcome of initiatives the organization puts into place.
- \_\_\_\_\_ b) I can clearly see a pathway for the implementation of a vision, including not only the process but also the people and resources needed.



\_\_\_\_\_ c) I am asked to plan initiatives for my team, department, or organization.

\_\_\_\_\_ Total + 1 = \_\_\_\_\_ Your Score

## **5. THE LAW OF ADDITION**

Leaders Add Value by Serving Others

\_\_\_\_\_ a) Rather than being annoyed when team members have issues preventing them from doing their jobs effectively, I see the issues as an opportunity to serve and mentor those people.

\_\_\_\_\_ b) I clear away obstacles and look for ways to make things better for the people I lead.

\_\_\_\_\_ c) I find great personal satisfaction in making other people become more successful.

\_\_\_\_\_ Total + 1 = \_\_\_\_\_ Your Score

## **6. THE LAW OF SOLID GROUND**

Trust Is the Foundation of Leadership

\_\_\_\_\_ a) The people I work with confide in me regarding sensitive issues and future plans.

\_\_\_\_\_ b) When I tell people in the organization that I will do something, they can count on me to follow through.

\_\_\_\_\_ c) I avoid undermining others or talking behind their backs.

\_\_\_\_\_ Total + 1 = \_\_\_\_\_ Your Score

## **7. THE LAW OF RESPECT**

People Naturally Follow Better Leaders Than Themselves

\_\_\_\_\_ a) People are naturally drawn to me and often want to work with me just to spend time with me.

- \_\_\_\_\_ b) People I work with gladly take my suggestions and follow my direction.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c) I make courageous decisions and take personal risks to benefit my team members even if there is no benefit to me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Total + 1 = \_\_\_\_\_ Your Score

## **8. THE LAW OF INTUITION**

Leaders Evaluate Everything with a Leadership Bias

- \_\_\_\_\_ a) I can easily gauge morale, whether in a room full of people, on a team, or in the greater organization.
- \_\_\_\_\_ b) I often take the right action as a leader even if I cannot explain why.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c) I can read situations and sense trends without having to gather a lot of hard evidence.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Total + 1 = \_\_\_\_\_ Your Score

## **9. THE LAW OF MAGNETISM**

Who You Are Is Who You Attract

- \_\_\_\_\_ a) I am satisfied with the caliber of people who report to me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ b) I expect the people I attract to be similar to me in values, skills, and leadership ability.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c) I recognize that no personnel process can improve the quality of people I recruit compared to improving myself.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Total + 1 = \_\_\_\_\_ Your Score

## **10. THE LAW OF CONNECTION**

Leaders Touch a Heart Before They Ask for a Hand

- \_\_\_\_\_ a) When I am new to a team, one of the first things I try to do is to develop a personal connection with everyone.
- \_\_\_\_\_ b) I know the stories, hopes, and dreams of the people I lead.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c) I avoid asking people to help accomplish the vision until we have built a relationship that goes beyond the nuts and bolts of our work together.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Total + 1 = \_\_\_\_\_ Your Score

## **11. THE LAW OF THE INNER CIRCLE**

Those Closest to You Determine the Level of Your Success

- \_\_\_\_\_ a) I am strategic and highly selective about which people are closest to me personally and professionally.
- \_\_\_\_\_ b) I regularly rely on key people in my life to help accomplish my goals.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c) I believe that 50 percent or more of the credit for my accomplishments goes to the people on my team.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Total + 1 = \_\_\_\_\_ Your Score

## **12. THE LAW OF EMPOWERMENT**

Only Secure Leaders Give Power to Others

- \_\_\_\_\_ a) No matter how talented the people who work for me, I don't feel threatened by them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ b) It is my regular practice to give people I lead the authority to make decisions and take risks.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c) I genuinely celebrate when someone from my team is recognized by others or promoted to a higher position.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Total + 1 = \_\_\_\_\_ Your Score

## **13. THE LAW OF THE PICTURE**

People Do What People See

- \_\_\_\_\_ a) If I observe an undesirable action or quality in team members, I check to make sure I'm not guilty of it myself before addressing it with them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ b) I am continually working to make sure my values, words, and actions are consistent with one another.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c) I do what I should rather than what I want because I am conscious that I am setting an example for others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Total + 1 = \_\_\_\_\_ Your Score

## **14. THE LAW OF BUY-IN**

People Buy into the Leader, Then the Vision

- \_\_\_\_\_ a) I recognize that a lack of credibility *in* leaders can be as harmful to an organization as a lack of vision *from* leaders.
- \_\_\_\_\_ b) When members of my team don't follow my direction, I examine whether I have a credibility problem before assuming they have a compliance problem.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c) Even when my ideas are not great, my people tend to give me the benefit of the doubt and work with me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Total + 1 = \_\_\_\_\_ Your Score

## **15. THE LAW OF VICTORY**

Leaders Find Ways for the Team to Win

- \_\_\_\_\_ a) When I lead a team, I feel ultimate responsibility for whether it achieves its goals.
- \_\_\_\_\_ b) I am continually looking for ways to help members of the team achieve victory.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c) I make personal sacrifices to help ensure victory for my team, department, or organization.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Total + 1 = \_\_\_\_\_ Your Score

## **16. THE LAW OF THE BIG MO**

## Momentum Is a Leader's Best Friend

- \_\_\_\_\_ a) I am aware of the morale of my team and take responsibility for trying to keep it high.
- \_\_\_\_\_ b) Whenever I make a major leadership decision, I consider how that decision will impact momentum in my team, department, or organization.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c) I initiate specific actions with the purpose of generating momentum when introducing something new or controversial.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Total + 1 = \_\_\_\_\_ Your Score

## 17. THE LAW OF PRIORITIES

Leaders Understand That Activity Is Not Necessarily Accomplishment

- \_\_\_\_\_ a) I avoid tasks that do not require my personal leadership, don't have a tangible return, or don't reward me personally.
- \_\_\_\_\_ b) I set aside time daily, monthly, and yearly to plan my upcoming schedule and activities based on my priorities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c) I delegate any task for which a team member can be at least 80 percent as effective as I could be doing it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Total + 1 = \_\_\_\_\_ Your Score

## 18. THE LAW OF SACRIFICE

A Leader Must Give Up to Go Up

- \_\_\_\_\_ a) I know making trade-offs is a natural part of leadership growth, and I make sacrifices to become a better leader as long as they don't violate my values.
- \_\_\_\_\_ b) I expect to give more than my followers do in order to accomplish the vision.

- \_\_\_\_\_ c) I will focus on responsibilities and give up my rights to reach my potential as a leader.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Total + 1 = \_\_\_\_\_ Your Score

## **19. THE LAW OF TIMING**

When to Lead Is As Important As What to Do and Where to Go

- \_\_\_\_\_ a) I expend as much effort figuring out the timing for an initiative as I do the strategy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ b) When I know the timing is right for an initiative, I will launch it rather than waiting while trying to develop the ideal strategy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c) I can sense whether people are ready for an idea.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Total + 1 = \_\_\_\_\_ Your Score

## **20. THE LAW OF EXPLOSIVE GROWTH**

To Add Growth, Lead Followers—To Multiply, Lead Leaders

- \_\_\_\_\_ a) I believe that I can grow my organization more rapidly by developing leaders than by any other method.
- \_\_\_\_\_ b) I spend a significant amount of time every week investing in the development of the top 20 percent of my leaders.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c) I would rather see leaders I develop succeed on their own than keep them with me so that I can keep mentoring them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Total + 1 = \_\_\_\_\_ Your Score

## **21. THE LAW OF LEGACY**

A Leader's Lasting Value Is Measured by Succession

- \_\_\_\_\_ a) I possess a strong sense of why I am in my job and why I am leading.

- \_\_\_\_\_ b) In each position I've held, I have identified people who can carry on after me, and I have invested in them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c) One of my strongest motivations is to leave any team I lead better than I found it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Total + 1 = \_\_\_\_\_ Your Score

Now that you have completed the evaluation, examine each law, and note your strengths and weaknesses. Use the following guidelines to help you proceed.

- 8–10 This law is in your strength zone. Make the most of this skill, and mentor others in this area.
- 6–7 Target this law for growth. You have potential to make it a strength.
- 1–5 This is a weakness. Hire staff or partner with others in this area to lead successfully.

After you have examined the score for each law to determine your strength in that area, total all 21 scores in the left blank and divide by 21 to find your average leadership score. If you desire to determine your score on a scale from 1 to 10, then add all 21 scores in the right blank and divide by 21. Record your overall score below.

\_\_\_\_\_ Overall Average

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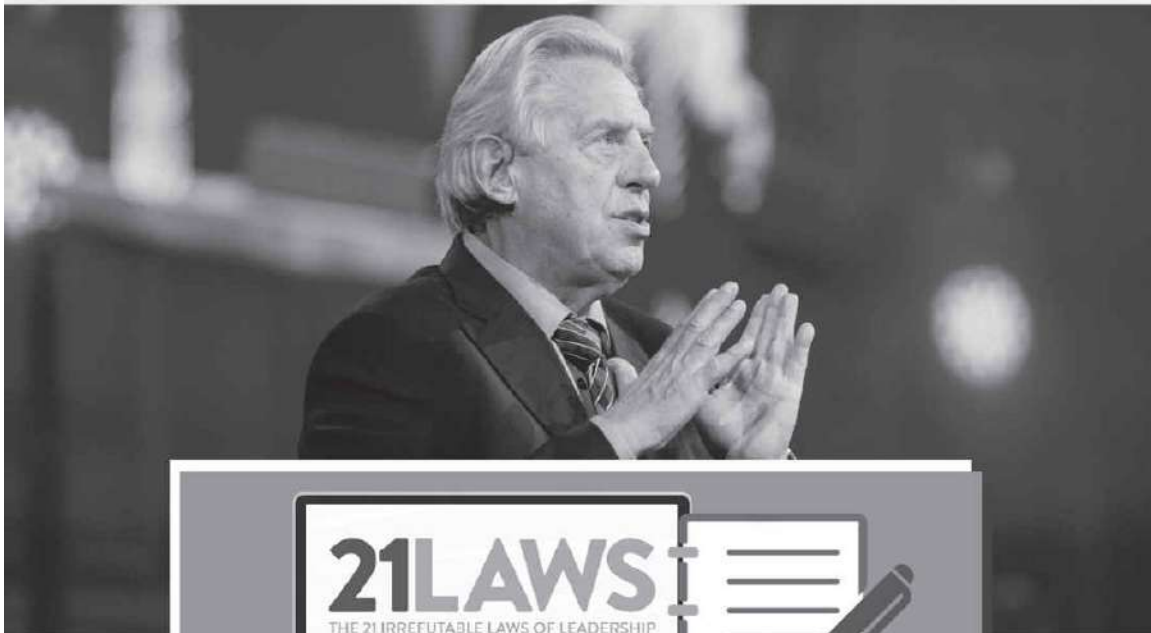
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