Developing the Leader Within You

by John C. Maxwell

Expand Your Influence
LEARN THE SKILLS AND HABITS THAT WILL MAKE YOU A MORE EFFECTIVE LEADER

QUICK OVERVIEW

One of the definitive works on becoming an effective leader, Developing the Leader Within You lays the foundation for developing the skills necessary for influencing others. Without skimping on details, leadership expert John C. Maxwell liberally uses anecdotes, lists, charts and graphics to make his message easily accessible.

Covering influence, priorities, integrity, creating positive change, and attitude, the book features specific steps to apply as you advance through the material. In addition, Developing the Leader Within You includes handy tools such as a priority list and evaluations for immediately determining clarity on relevant situations, making the ensuing direction simple to apply.

APPLY AND ACHIEVE

Developing the Leader Within You empowers readers to become more effective by offering practical advice and specific how-tos. The life skills Maxwell teaches help people to shape their own success journey so they can encourage others along the way. Consider the following lists and make note of which column you want your name to appear in.

LEADERS
Initiate
Lead; pick up phone and make contact
Spend time planning
Anticipate problems
Invest time with people
Fill the calendar by priorities

FOLLOWERS
React
Listen; wait for phone to ring
Spend time living day to day
React to problems
Spend time with people
Fill the calendar by requests

SUCCESS Points

In this book you’ll learn:

- Success can be defined as the progressive realization of a predetermined goal
- Realizing your potential as a leader is your responsibility
- You teach what you know; you reproduce what you are
Everything rises and falls on leadership. Whenever I make that statement, the listeners are tempted to change it to, “Almost everything rises and falls on leadership.” Most people have a desire to look for the exception instead of the desire to become exceptional.

Leadership is not an exclusive club for those who were “born with it.” The traits that are the raw materials of leadership can be acquired. Link them up with desire and nothing can keep you from becoming a leader.

This book will supply the leadership principles. You must supply the desire.

DEFINING LEADERSHIP

Leadership is influence.

That’s it. Nothing more; nothing less. My favorite leadership proverb is: He who thinketh he leadeth and hath no one following him is only taking a walk.

James C. Georges, of the ParTraining Corporation, said it quite effectively, “What is leadership? Remove for a moment the moral issues behind it, and there is only one definition: Leadership is the ability to obtain followers.”

Hitler was a leader, and so was Jim Jones. Jesus of Nazareth, Martin Luther King Jr., Winston Churchill and John F. Kennedy all were leaders. While their value systems and management abilities were very different, each had followers.

My goal is to help you accept leadership as influence (that is, the ability to get followers), and then work backward from that point to help you learn how to lead.

THE 5 LEVELS OF LEADERSHIP

Position

People will not follow a positional leader beyond his stated authority.

Permission

People follow a permissional leader because they are being cared for or developed by the leader. Followers love this leader.

Production

People follow a productional leader because they love to get together to accomplish something. Followers admire this leader.

People Development

People follow a developmental leader because this leader helps them grow. Followers are loyal to this leader.

Personhood

So few reach this that we won’t spend time here right now.

PRIORITIES

While attending a conference, I heard a speaker say, “There are two things that are most difficult to get people to do: to think and to do things in order of importance.”

Every leader needs to understand the Pareto Principle in the area of people oversight and leadership. For example, 20 percent of the people in an organization will be responsible for 80 percent of the company’s success.

The following strategy will enable a leader to increase the productivity of an organization.

1. Determine which people are the top 20 percent producers.
2. Spend 80 percent of your “people time” with the top 20 percent.
3. Spend 80 percent of your personal-developmental dollars on the top 20 percent.
4. Determine what 20 percent of the work gives 80 percent of the return, and train an assistant to do the 80 percent less-effective work. This “frees up” the producer to do what they do best.
5. Ask the top 20 percent to do on-the-job training for the next 20 percent.

I am often asked, “How do I identify the top 20 percent influencers/producers in my organization?”

I suggest that you make a list of everyone in your company or department. Then ask yourself this question about each individual: “If this person takes a negative action against me or withdraws their support from me, what will the impact likely be?” If you won’t be able to function, then put a check mark next to that name. If the person can help you or hurt you, but cannot make or break you in terms of your ability to get important things done, then don’t put a check mark next to that name. When you get through making the check marks, you will have marked between 15 and 20 percent of the names.
INTEGRITY

A person with integrity does not have divided loyalties (that’s duplicity), nor are they merely pretending (that’s hypocrisy). People with integrity are “whole” people; they can be identified by their single-mindedness.

When integrity is the referee, we will be consistent; our beliefs will be mirrored by our conduct. There will be no discrepancy between what we appear to be and what our family knows we are, whether in times of prosperity or adversity. Integrity allows us to predetermined what we will be, regardless of circumstances, persons involved or the places of our testing.

Too often, we attempt to motivate our followers with gimmicks that are short-lived and shallow. What people need is not a motto to say, but a model to see.

The more credible you are, the more confidence people place in you, thereby allowing you the privilege of influencing their lives. The less credible you are, the less confidence people place in you and the more quickly you lose your position of influence.

CREATING POSITIVE CHANGE

The first order of things to be changed is me, the leader. After I consider how hard it is to change myself, then I will understand the challenge of trying to change others. This is the ultimate test of leadership.

Once the leader has personally changed and discerned the difference between novel change and needed change, then that leader must become a change agent.

He must first understand the two important requisites to bringing about change: knowing the technical requirements of the change, and understanding the attitude and motivational demands for bringing it about. Both requisites are critically necessary.

More often than not, though, when results fail to change, it is because of inadequate or inappropriate motivation, not a lack of technical smarts.

Resistance to change is universal. Many well-educated people, after being confronted with truth, have been unwilling to change their minds. For example, for centuries, people believed that Aristotle was right when he said that the heavier an object, the faster it would fall to Earth.

Two thousand years after Aristotle’s death, in 1589, Galileo summoned learned professors to the base of the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Then he went to the top and pushed off two weights, one weighing 10 pounds and the other weighing 1 pound. Both landed at the same time. But the power of belief in the conventional wisdom was so strong that the professors denied what they had seen. They continued to say Aristotle was right.

Managing vs. Leading

There seems to be a great deal of confusion over the difference between “leadership” and “management.”

Management is the process of assuring that the program and objectives of the organization are implemented. Leadership, on the other hand, has to do with casting vision and motivating people.


They lead. They don’t manage. The carrot always wins over the stick. Ask your horse. You can lead your horse to water, but you can’t manage him to drink. If you want to manage somebody, manage yourself. Do that well, and you’ll be ready to stop managing and start leading.

PROBLEM SOLVING

A wise philosopher once commented that an eagle’s only obstacle to overcome for flying with greater speed and ease is the air. Yet, if the air were withdrawn and the proud bird were to fly in a vacuum, it would fall instantly to the ground, unable to fly at all. The very element that offers resistance to flying is at the same time the condition for flight.

The same law, that obstacles are conditions of success, holds true in human life. A life free of all obstacles and difficulties would reduce all possibilities and powers to zero.

Great leaders usually recognize a problem in the following sequence:

1. They sense it before they see it (intuition).
2. They begin looking for it and ask questions (curiosity).
3. They gather data (processing).
4. They share their feelings and findings with a few trusted colleagues (communicating).
5. They define the problem (writing).
6. They check their resources (evaluating).
7. They make a decision (leading).
**Remember two things for effective solutions:**

1. Make a time commitment to people. Those who never take time to develop people are forced to take time to solve their problems.
2. Never solve a problem for a person; solve it with that person. Take that individual through the sequence that has already been given for recognizing a problem.

**ATTITUDE**

When I speak at a leadership conference, I often ask everyone to do this exercise:

Write the name of a friend whom you greatly admire:

Write one thing that you admire most about that friend:

I’d like you to take a moment and complete this exercise before you continue reading. I think you’ll gain an interesting and important insight. The odds are high that the thing you most admire about your friend has to do with attitude.

Our attitude may not be the asset that makes us great leaders, but without good ones, we will never reach our full potential. Our attitudes are the “and then some” that allows us the little extra edge over those whose thinking is wrong. Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.”

Our expectations have a great deal to do with our attitudes. And these expectations may be totally false, but they will determine our attitudes.

Notice, I did not say our attitudes determine how we feel. There is a great difference between how we feel and how we handle our feelings. Everyone has times when they feel bad.

**DEVELOPING YOUR MOST APPRECIABLE ASSET**

My success in developing others will depend on how well I accomplish each of the following:

- Value of people. This is an issue of my attitude.
- Commitment to people. This is an issue of my time.
- Integrity with people. This is an issue of my character.
- Standard for people. This is an issue of my vision.
- Influence over people. This is an issue of my leadership.

I have discovered that there are three areas in which successful people developers are different from those who are not successful in developing others.

**Successful people developers:**

1. Make the right assumptions about people
2. Ask the right questions about people
3. Give the right assistance to people

In fact, a leader’s having the right assumptions about people is the key factor in their continual development.

An assumption is an opinion that something is true. My assumptions about people largely determine how I treat them. Why? What I assume about people is what I look for. What I look for is what I find. What I find influences my response. Therefore, negative assumptions about others will stimulate negative leadership of them. Positive assumptions about others will stimulate positive leadership of them.

**Valuable Assumptions About People**

- Everyone wants to feel worthwhile
- Everyone needs and responds to encouragement
- People “buy into” a leader before they “buy into” his leadership
- Most people do not know how to be successful
- Most people are naturally motivated

**What motivates people?**

- Significant contributions
- Goal participation
- Positive dissatisfaction
- Recognition
- Clear expectations

**What de-motivates people?**

- Don’t belittle anyone
- Don’t manipulate anyone
- Don’t be insensitive
- Don’t discourage personal growth

**VISION**

All effective leaders have a vision of what they must accomplish. That vision becomes the energy behind every effort and the force that pushes through all the problems. With vision, the leader is
on a mission and a contagious spirit is felt among the crowd until others begin to rise alongside the leader.

Unity is essential for the dream to be realized. Long hours of labor are given gladly to accomplish the goal. Individual rights are set aside because the whole is much more important than the part. Time flies, morale soars upward, heroic stories are told and commitment is the watchword. Why? Because the leader has a vision!

I have often asked myself, *Does the vision make the leader? Or does the leader make the vision?* I believe the vision comes first. I have known many leaders who lost the vision and, therefore, lost their power to lead.

Couple a vision with a leader willing to implement that dream, and a movement begins. People do not follow a dream in itself. They follow the leader who has that dream and the ability to communicate it effectively. Therefore, vision in the beginning will make a leader, but for that vision to grow and demand a following, the leader must take responsibility for it.

**SELF-DISCIPLINE**

In reading the lives of great men, I found the first victory they won was over themselves… Self-discipline came first.

The Greek word for *self-control* comes from a root word meaning “to grip” or “take hold of.” This word describes people who are willing to get a grip on their lives and take control of areas that will bring them success or failure.

In the beginning, discipline is the choice of achieving what you really want by doing things you don’t really want to do. After successfully doing this for some time, discipline becomes the choice of achieving what you really want by doing things you now want to do!

**A Small Plan That Will Make a Big Difference**

1. List five areas in your life that lack discipline.
2. Place them in order of your priority for conquering them.
3. Take them on, one at a time.
4. Secure resources, such as books and tapes, that will give you instruction and motivation to conquer each area.
5. Ask a person who models the trait you want to possess to hold you accountable for it.
6. Spend 15 minutes each morning getting focused in order to get control of this weak area in your life.
7. Do a five-minute checkup on yourself at midday.
8. Take five minutes in the evening to evaluate your progress.
9. Allow 60 days to work on one area before you go to the next.
10. Celebrate with the one who holds you accountable as you show continued success.

Remember, having it all doesn’t mean having it all at once. It takes time. Start small and concentrate on today. The slow accumulation of disciplines will, one day, make a big difference. Ben Franklin said, “It is easier to suppress the first desire than to satisfy all that follow it.”

**THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSON OF LEADERSHIP**

A great leader develops a team of people who increase production. The result? The leader’s influence and effectiveness begin to multiply (working through others) instead of adding (working by oneself). That no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself is, according to Ralph Waldo Emerson, one of the most beautiful compensations of this life.

Only as we develop a team do we continually succeed. The first objective of the leader is to develop people, not to dismiss them. Studies have shown that day-to-day coaching, rather than comprehensive annual appraisals, is most effective for improving performance.

This coaching process has two crucial components: setting specific objectives, holding frequent progress reviews.

Objectives should specify end results, the exact extent of achievement the manager expects, and should be tied to a timetable. How many objectives should the employee be given? In our experience, a few are better than too many. If the subordinate is overloaded, expecting all the objectives to be accomplished is unreasonable. Remember, the objectives are the primary measuring stick.

By *end results*, we mean what should be observably different as a result of the subordinate’s performance on the job. All too often, employees expect to be evaluated on the basis of how much effort they are putting into the job, rather than what they are accomplishing. This is especially true of weak performers. It is critical that the manager make clear that certain outcomes are expected and that the subordinate will be held accountable for them. The manager should make every effort to set mutually acceptable goals.
If there is disagreement, however, the manager must unhesitatingly insist upon setting the objectives. Remember: Performance, not just effort, is the yardstick for meeting objectives.

Frequent progress reviews accomplish three things. First, they serve as a continual reminder that reaching the objectives is important to the person’s career. Second, reviews give the manager a chance to recognize positive movement toward objectives. Third, if progress is not forthcoming, the manager can listen to the reasons for lack of performance and attempt to get the subordinate on track. The review becomes a problem-solving session.

Whether or not the employee makes progress, holding reviews permits the manager or boss to remain in control of the process.

**BECOME THE LEADER THE WORLD NEEDS**

The growth and development of people is the highest calling of leadership. This world needs leaders... who use their influence at the right times for the right reasons; who take a little greater share of the blame and a little smaller share of the credit; who lead themselves successfully before attempting to lead others; who inspire and motivate rather than intimidate and manipulate; who will be as honest in small things as in great things; and who follow a moral compass that points in the right direction regardless of the trends.

**Recommended Reading**

*If you enjoyed this summary of Developing the Leader Within You, we encourage you to visit your favorite bookseller to purchase a copy for your personal success library. You may also want to check out:*

- **Talent Is Never Enough** by John C. Maxwell
- **Leading at a Higher Level** by Ken Blanchard
- **21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership** by John C. Maxwell

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**About the Author**

John C. Maxwell is an internationally respected leadership expert, speaker and author who has sold more than 18 million books. Dr. Maxwell is the founder of EQUIP, a nonprofit that has trained more than 5 million leaders in 126 countries worldwide.

Each year he speaks to the leaders of diverse organizations, such as Fortune 500 companies, foreign governments, the National Football League, the United States Military Academy at West Point, and the United Nations. A *New York Times, Wall Street Journal,* and *BusinessWeek* best-selling author, Maxwell has written three books that have sold more than a million copies: The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership, Developing the Leader Within You, and The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader. His blog can be read at JohnMaxwellOnLeadership.com.