



## Developing the Leader Within You

### About the Author

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### Introduction

Everything rises and falls on leadership. Whenever I make that statement, listeners are tempted to change it to "*Almost everything...*" This is what I know: The effectiveness of your work will never rise above your ability to lead and influence others.

Leadership is not reserved for “born leaders.” Leadership is developed, not discovered. Born leaders will always emerge, but to stay on top, natural leadership characteristics must be developed.

My desire is that you be able to accomplish the work of a leader. This book is dedicated to that goal.

## Chapter One: The Definition of Leadership: Influence

Ask ten people to define leadership and you'll probably get ten different answers. After fifty years of observing leadership, I have come to this conclusion: *Leadership is Influence*. That's it; nothing more, nothing less.

James C. Georges said it this way: “Leadership is the ability to obtain followers. Both Hitler and Churchill were leaders. While their values were very different, each had followers.”

Therein lies the problem. Most people define leadership as the ability to achieve a position, not to get followers. Therefore, they go after a position and when they get it think they have become a leader. My goal with this book is to help you accept leadership as influence (that is, the ability to get followers) and from that point help you learn how to lead.

Scientists tell us that even the most introverted person will influence ten thousand other people during his or her lifetime. Each of us is influencing others and being influenced by others throughout our life. And we never know who or how much we influence. The real issue, then, is not whether you will influence someone; it is what kind of influencer you will be.

We can increase our influence and our leadership potential. Understanding the levels of leadership will assist you in increasing your level. Here are the five levels of leadership:

**Level 1: Position.** This is the basic entry of leadership. The only influence you have is that which comes with a title. But having a title only gives you authority; real leadership is being the person others will gladly and confidently follow. Being the boss is not the same as being the leader!

**Level 2: Permission.** Fred Smith says, “Leadership is getting people to work for you when they are not obligated.” That only happens when you climb to the second level. Influence at this level comes through relationships, and putting time, energy, and focus on the individual's needs and desires.

**Level 3: Production.** On this level, good things begin to happen: profits increase, morale is high, goals are being met. On this level people get together not just to get together, but to accomplish a purpose. They are results-oriented. People follow you because they see good things happening in the organization.

**Level 4: People Development.** Loyalty to a leader reaches its highest peak when the follower has personally grown through the mentorship of the leader. Note the progression: At level 2, the follower loves the leader; at level 3, the follower admires the leader; at level 4, the follower is loyal to the leader. Why? You win people's hearts by helping them grow personally.

**Level 5: Personhood.** People follow you because of who you are; this happens after a lifetime of proven leadership.

## Chapter Two: The Key to Leadership: Priorities

Recently 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." He went on to say that these two things are the difference between a professional and an amateur. I also believe that they mark the major differences between a leader and a follower.

Success can be defined as *the progressive realization of a predetermined goal*. This definition tells us that the discipline to prioritize and the ability to work toward a stated goal are essential to a leader's success. They are the key to leadership.

Years ago I learned about the Pareto Principle, also known as the 80/20 principle. Simply put, it means that 20% of your priorities will give you 80% of your results if you focus on them. Identifying those 20% is a key to being effective; it's also the key to working smarter, not harder.

Some basic truths about priorities:

1. Priorities never "stay put." They continually shift and demand attention, and need to be re-evaluated regularly.
2. You cannot overestimate the importance of practically everything. The mundane steals much of our time. A group of older people were asked "If you could live your life over again, what would you do differently?" The top answers:
  - a. I would reflect more
  - b. I would risk more
  - c. I would do more things that would live on after I am dead.
3. The good is the enemy of the best. Too many priorities paralyze us, so we must learn to identify what is really important. All true leaders have learned to say no to the good in order to say yes to the best.

## Chapter 3: The Most Important Ingredient of Leadership: Integrity

The dictionary defines *integrity* as “the state of being complete, unified.” When I have integrity, my words and my deeds match up. I am who I am, no matter where I am or who I am with. Sadly, integrity is a vanishing commodity today.

Integrity is not what we “do” so much as who we “are” (which, in turn, determines what we do). Our system of values is so much a part of us we cannot separate it from ourselves. It becomes the navigating system that guides us. We are all faced with conflicting desires; integrity is the factor that determines which of those desires will prevail.

Your influence will grow as people place their confidence in you. The more integrity you demonstrate, the more credible you will be, and the more people will allow you the privilege of influencing their lives. Integrity is important for several reasons:

1. *Integrity builds trust.* Dwight Eisenhower said, “In order to be a leader, a man must have followers. And to have followers, a man must have their confidence. Therefore, the supreme quality for a leader is integrity.”
2. *Integrity has high influence value.* According to a survey of 1,300 senior executives, integrity is the human quality most necessary to business success.
3. *Integrity facilitates high standards.* Leaders must live by higher standards than their followers. People often focus on the perks of leadership, but the truth is, the rights decrease, and responsibilities increase, as you climb in an organization. Too many people are ready to assert their rights but not assume their responsibilities.
4. *Integrity results in a solid reputation, not just an image.* Image is what people think we are. Integrity is what we really are. All of us have known people who were not the same on the outside as they were inside. Thomas Macauley said, “The measure of a man’s real character is what he would do if he would never be found out.”
5. *Integrity means “living it” myself before leading others.* We can’t lead anyone else farther than we have been ourselves. Too many times we are so concerned about the product that we try to shortcut the process, but there are no shortcuts when integrity is involved.
6. *Integrity helps a leader be credible, not just clever.* Leaders who are sincere don’t have to advertise the fact. It’s visible in everything they do and soon becomes common knowledge to everyone.
7. *Integrity is a hard-won achievement.* Integrity isn’t a given in someone’s life. It’s a result of self-discipline, inner trust, and a decision to be relentlessly honest in all situations.

If you want to grow in integrity, you need to pursue feedback from those who know you. Ask them what areas of your life they see as consistent (you do what you say) and what areas they see as inconsistent (you say but don’t always live).

#### **Chapter 4: The Ultimate Test of Leadership: Creating Positive Change**

Change the leader, change the organization. Everything rises and falls on leadership! 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.

One of a leader's primary roles is to be a change agent. In bringing about change, there are two requisites to bringing it about: knowing the technical requirements, and understanding the attitude and motivational demands for bringing it about. Both are necessary, but when change doesn't happen, it's more often a lack on the motivational side, not on the technical side.

People resist change for a lot of reasons. Effective leaders learn to recognize and address them. Some of those reasons are:

1. It wasn't their idea, so they lack ownership.
2. Fear of uncharted territory, which brings out people's insecurities.
3. Lack of clarity regarding the purpose behind the change.
4. Fear of failure
5. The rewards don't match the effort required
6. Followers lack respect for the leader
7. Change may mean personal loss
8. Change requires additional commitment

Effective leaders learn to create a climate for change. Human behavior studies show that people do not basically resist change; they resist "being changed." But unless people are changed, change won't happen in an organization. How do you create a climate where change can happen?

1. The leader must develop trust with the people.
2. The leader must make personal changes before asking others to change.
3. Check the "change" in your pocket. Every leader is given a certain amount of "change" (emotional support) at the beginning of a relationship. That amount will grow or shrink over time. Note: *It takes "change" to make change.*
4. Good leaders solicit the support of influencers *before* the change is made public.
5. Show the people how the change will benefit them.

Change will happen. The question is not "Will we change?" but "When and how much will we change?" Max Depree said, "In the end, it is important to remember that we cannot become what we need to be by remaining what we are." It's a fact that when you're through changing, you're through.

## **Chapter 5: The Quickest Way to Gain Leadership: Problem Solving**

According to F.F. Fournies, writing in *Coaching for Improved Work Performance*, there are four common reasons why people do not perform the way they should:

1. They do not know *what* they are supposed to do.
2. They do not know *how* to do it.
3. They do not know *why* they should.
4. There are obstacles beyond their control.

These four reasons are all responsibilities of leadership. The first three deal with starting a job correctly. Problems continually occur at work, home, and in life in general. People don't like them, get weary of them, and will do almost anything to get away from them. This means that someone who can solve problems will soon have the reins of leadership placed in their hands.

Problems are universal; everyone has them. But, how we think about them is critical. Many outstanding people have overcome problems in their lives: Most of the New Testament epistles were written from prison, as was Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*; Abraham Lincoln was raised in abject poverty; George Washington had to overcome the snows of Valley Forge; and Martin Luther King faced a society filled with racial discrimination.

Our problems actually give meaning to life. It's overcoming those obstacles that open up possibilities for success. There is a story about a youth questioning a lonely old man. "What is life's heaviest burden?" he asked. The old man answered sadly, "Having nothing to carry."

Our problems, then, are not really our problems. How we think about and approach them is the problem. Achievers refuse to hold on to the common excuses for failure that others use. They realize they cannot foresee all their circumstances, but they can determine their choice of attitude toward every circumstance.

My friend Fred Smith taught me a truth about problems. **If I can't do something about a problem, it's not my problem; it's a fact of life.**

To effectively solve problems, two things are needed: the right attitude, and the right action plan. The next chapter will focus on attitude; we'll focus now on the right action plan. Effective leaders follow a process in their problem solving:

1. Identify the problem- Don't attack the symptoms, but the cause. The key is to identify the real issues that lie beneath the symptoms.
2. Prioritize the problem- You can't solve all the problems at once; line them up one by one and attack them in order.
3. Define the problem- In a single sentence, answer the question, "What is the problem?" This helps achieve clarity and enables focus.
4. Select people to help you in the problem-solving process- They will see things and think of things you wouldn't by yourself.
5. Collect problem causes- List all the *possible* causes there could be.

6. Collect problem-solving solutions- List as many solutions as possible. Seldom is there only one way to solve a problem! Options are essential because problems often change over time.
7. Select the best solution- Weigh all the options before deciding
8. Implement the solution.
9. Evaluate the solution- Otherwise you won't know if the problem is actually solved or not.

## Chapter 6: The Extra Plus in Leadership: Attitude

Leadership has less to do with position than it does with disposition. The disposition of a leader is important because it will influence the way the followers think and feel. Great leaders understand that the right attitude will set the right atmosphere, which enables the right response from others.

The Carnegie Institute, not long ago, analyzed the records of ten thousand people and concluded that 15% of success is due to technical training. The other 85% is due to personality, and the primary personality trait identified by the research is attitude. Our attitudes determine what we see and how we handle our feelings.

We see what we are prepared to see. A well-known experiment from years ago illustrates that: The principal of a school called three professors together and told them they were the best teachers they had, and they were going to give them the highest IQ students to do a special class with and see how well they could do.

By the end of the experiment the students had achieved 20-30% more than other students. It turned out that the professors, and the students, had all been selected by random—there was nothing “special” about them. The difference in performance was all about the expectations the teachers had. Our expectations may be totally false, but they will determine our attitudes.

Our attitudes will also determine how we handle our feelings. Note: I didn't say our attitudes determine our feelings. There is a great difference between how we feel and how we handle our feelings. Everyone has times when they feel bad. Our attitudes cannot stop our feelings, but they can keep our feelings from stopping us.

Because we can *choose* our attitudes, we are *responsible* for our attitudes. Many times people who have suffered adverse situations in their lives become bitter and angry. The tendency is to point back at the difficulty and say, “That incident ruined my life.” What they don't realize is that the incident called for an attitude decision—a response. Their wrong attitude choice, not the condition, ruined their lives. And it is improbable that a person with a bad attitude can continuously be a success.

It *is* possible to change your attitude. Denis Waitley says that winners in life think constantly in terms of I can, I will, and I am. Losers, on the other hand, concentrate their waking thoughts on what they should have done or what they didn't do. As you begin changing your thinking, start immediately to change your behavior as well. Too many people want to feel first, and then take action. That never works! Take action on the behavior you admire by making it your behavior.

Fortunately, over a period of time, a positive attitude can replace a negative one. Let me emphasize—the battle is never over, but it is well worth the effort.

## Chapter 7: Developing Your Most Appreciable Asset: People

The one who influences people to follow is a leader with certain limitations. The one who influences people to lead others is a leader without limitations. As Andrew Carnegie said, “no man will make a great leader who wants to do it all himself or to get all the credit for doing it.” The more people you develop, the greater the extent of your influence.

From my own experience and through observing other leaders who excel in this vital area, I've 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; and
3. Give the right assistance to people.

I often have other people ask me how I motivate people. I tell them to, “stay enthusiastic” and “believe in people,” then watch people only be successful for a short time. Eventually I realized I was giving them the *fruit* of my motivational gifts, but not the root. The root is my assumptions about others that allow me to continually motivate and develop them.

I assume that everyone wants to feel worthwhile, to feel like they are important. I also assume that everyone needs and responds to encouragement. My assumptions shape how I treat people; they are what allow me to continually motivate and develop them. People tend to become what the most important people in their lives think they will become.

I also assume people “buy into” the leader before they “buy into” his leadership. Too often we expect people to be loyal to the position of a leader instead of the person who occupies that position. People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.

Successful people developers also ask the right questions about people:

1. Am I building my people, or am I building my dream and using people to do it?
2. Do I care enough to confront people when it will make a difference?
3. Am I listening to people with more than my ears?

#### 4. What are this person's major strengths?

Finally, *successful* people developers give the right assistance to people. This means, first, I must give them *myself*. You can impress people at a distance; you can only impact them up close. Giving myself means spending quality time with them, opening up my life, and intentionally helping them grow. This includes giving them every chance for success.

In developing people, there are some key principles to keep in mind. First, people development takes time; it doesn't happen overnight. Second, realize that people will follow your example. They will do what you do, in the way you do it. *People do what people see*. Finally, leaders must care for people before they can develop them. Too often I see leaders who request commitment from people without showing them proper care. Effective leaders look for opportunities to build people up, affirm them, and give them credit whenever they can.

### Chapter 8: The Indispensable Quality of leadership: Vision

My observation over the last twenty years has been that 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.

Given that, the most common question I get is, "How do I get a vision for my organization?" This question is crucial. Until it is answered, a person will be a leader in name only. While I can't give you a vision, I can share the process of receiving one for you and those around you.

1. Look within you: What do you feel? What burns inside you? Keeps you up at night? What do you feel passionately about?
2. Look behind you: What have you learned? A person without experience sees a vision idealistically, and thinks that vision is enough by itself. A person with experience knows there is more to it; people buy into the leader before they buy into the vision.
3. Look ahead: What is the big picture? This question often separates leaders from managers. Leaders are concerned with the organization's basic purpose—why it exists and what it should achieve. They aren't preoccupied with the "how to" or nuts-and-bolts aspects of the organization.
4. Look above you: What does God expect of you? Great leaders often sense a "higher calling" that lifts them above themselves.
5. Look beside you: what resources are available to you? A vision must be greater than the person who has it. The experienced leader is always looking for others to make the dream come true. The leader continually passes on the vision to those who come around, knowing that dreams, if presented right, are contagious.

Once a vision is developed, the next step is to communicate it. According to a survey reported by *Leadership* magazine, communicating a vision is one of the most frustrating areas of leading an organization. But leaders who effectively communicate vision to their followers achieve far more than those who don't.

Some keys to communicating a vision:

1. Come alongside the people you are leading and let them see your heart. Cultivate trust; be transparent and patient.
2. Paint the picture for them. Don't just give out information; help them "see" the vision with vivid descriptions, stories, and practical steps they can take to make it happen.
3. Put the things they love in the picture. If what is important to people is part of the vision, they will buy into it.

Vision is empowering to the leader who has it. The leader with vision believes not only that what he envisions *can* be done, but that it *must* be done. And, conviction is contagious, bringing other people along who together can make it happen.

## **Chapter 9: The Price Tag of Leadership: Self-Discipline**

Harry Truman said, "In reading the lives of great men, I found that the first victory they won was over themselves....self-discipline with all of them 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.

Once, while conducting a leadership seminar, I defined discipline in the beginning of life as 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.

All great leaders understand that their number one responsibility is for their own discipline and personal growth. If they couldn't lead themselves, they could not lead others. Leaders can never take others farther than they have gone themselves.

Personal discipline can be developed. The earlier you start, the better. What you are going to be tomorrow, you are becoming today. It is essential to begin developing self-discipline in a small way today in order to be disciplined in a big way tomorrow. Pick an area to start on, and work on it for 60 days before you go on to another area. Get books and tapes to motivate and instruct you; ask someone who has the trait to hold you accountable for it. Celebrate your successes. Remember, having it all doesn't mean having it all at once. Start small and concentrate on today. The slow accumulation of discipline will one day make a big difference.

## Chapter 10: The Most Important Lesson of Leadership: Staff Development

The growth and development of people is the highest calling of leadership. Those closest to the leader will determine the level of success for that leader. Developing a winning team is the most effective way to impact the world, and a team will always have a greater impact than an individual.

Winning teams have great leaders, who create the right environment for success. They intentionally boost the self-esteem of their personnel. They know and attend to people's basic human needs.

Effective leaders keep control of the "Big 3." Any leader who wants to play an active role in all areas of the organization may be tempted to take on too many responsibilities. However, three areas are crucial to the leader's authority and success:

1. Finance: because the finance staff is a prime means of exercising executive control in any organization.
2. Personnel: because the selection of people will determine the organization.
3. Planning: because the plan determines the future of the organization.

Excellent leaders avoid the "seven deadly sins."

1. Trying to be liked rather than respected
2. Not asking team members for advice and help
3. Thwarting personal talent by emphasizing rules rather than skills
4. Not keeping criticism constructive
5. Not developing a sense of responsibility in team members
6. Treating everyone the same way
7. Failing to keep people informed

Winning teams pick good people. To do this you need to know what kind of person you need (what kind of qualities should they have in their life), what the job requires, and what the potential staff member wants. When these things line up, the stage is set for a winning team to emerge.



## From the Pastor's Perspective

I have a love-hate relationship with books by John Maxwell. He packs an incredible amount of great information into every book; every chapter could probably be expanded into its own book. I love the amount of information, and I hate it at the same time. There is so much it is almost unhelpful!

When I read a Maxwell book, including *Developing the Leader Within You*, I now take the same approach I do to conferences I attend. I don't try to keep track of everything; I simply try to find one or two good ideas or insights that I can grab hold of and apply, and I let the rest of them go for another time.

This round, I have been particularly struck by two things. First is the importance of attitude. We all hit really difficult times and it is *so easy* to sink under them, or play the victim card, rather than rise above them. But, it's our choice. We can't control what happens to us, but we can control how we respond. This makes all the difference in our ability to rise above any circumstance and continue moving forward.

The second thing that struck me is Maxwell's emphasis on people development. It is so easy in the church to become short-sighted on getting tasks done. As a leader, I need to intentionally develop my people. This requires extra effort—I need to think about whom to develop, and what their strengths and weaknesses are. This development needs to happen in light of the key qualities that I want to develop throughout the church.

And, this is just the beginning. I need to work with each of these people to develop a plan—really a personalized growth plan—and coach them through it.

That's a lot of work! But, the payoff for the people and for God's kingdom is worth it. This *is* what Jesus did with the twelve, and it seemed to work pretty well for him!