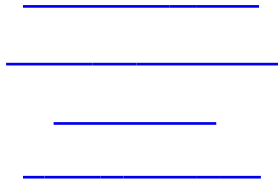


Los 5 Niveles de Liderazgo

Pasos comprobados para maximizar su potencial



Este libro está dedicado a EQUIP y a todos aquellos que parte del liderazgo esta organización. Las cinco de EQUIP. Todos los días..

1. Pensar globalmente
2. Evaluar nuestra estrategia de liderazgo
3. Crear recursos
4. Desarrollar formadores asociados, socios y donantes
5. Formar líderes para formar líderes

Millones de líderes están siendo capacitados gracias a sus esfuerzos. ¡Gracias!

Gracias a:

Charlie Wetzel, mi escritor;

Stephanie Wetzel, mi administradora de redes sociales;

Linda Eggers, mi asistente ejecutiva.

Puede tener un plan de liderazgo para su Vida

El liderazgo es una de mis pasiones. También lo es enseñarlo. He dedicado más de treinta años de mi vida a ayudar a otros a aprender lo que sé sobre liderazgo. De hecho, dedico unos ochenta días al año a enseñar liderazgo. En los últimos años, he enseñado sobre esto en seis continentes. El tema es inagotable. ¿Por qué? Porque todo sube y baja en el liderazgo. Si quieres tener un impacto positivo en el mundo, aprender a liderar mejor te ayudará a lograrlo.

En todos los años que he enseñado sobre liderazgo, ha habido una conferencia que me han pedido que dé con más frecuencia que cualquier otra, desde West Point hasta Microsoft y en países de todo el mundo. Esa conferencia explica cómo funciona el liderazgo y proporciona un plan de acción para aprender a convertirse en líder. Se trata de "Los 5 niveles de liderazgo".

Mi creencia de que todo sube y baja en el liderazgo se solidificó en 1976 y me inició en un viaje de liderazgo que todavía sigo recorriendo hasta el día de hoy. Comencé el viaje haciendo muchas preguntas. *¿Cómo se define el liderazgo? ¿Qué es un líder? ¿Cómo funciona el liderazgo?* Lamentablemente, las respuestas habituales de la gente a esas preguntas no son de mucha ayuda. Algunas personas identifican el liderazgo con la obtención de una posición de liderazgo. Pero he conocido malos líderes que tenían buenas posiciones y buenos líderes que no tenían ninguna posición. ¿No es así? Otras personas dicen del liderazgo: "No puedo describirlo, pero lo reconozco cuando lo veo". Si bien eso puede ser cierto, no ayuda a nadie a aprender a liderar.

La conclusión a la que llegué desde el principio es que el liderazgo es influencia. Si las personas pueden aumentar su influencia sobre los demás, podrán liderar de manera más efectiva. Mientras reflexionaba sobre eso, un concepto de cómo funciona el liderazgo comenzó a cristalizar en mi mente. Ese concepto fueron los 5 Niveles de Liderazgo, que me llevó unos cinco años desarrollar. Lo he estado enseñando desde entonces. Y cada vez que lo presento, una de las preguntas que la gente siempre hace es:

"¿Cuándo vas a escribir un libro sobre esto?" Como puedes ver, finalmente estoy respondiendo esa pregunta.

Puede aprender herramientas prácticas de liderazgo

Hay muchos libros sobre liderazgo en las estanterías de la gente. ¿Por qué deberías leer este? Porque funciona. Los 5 niveles se han utilizado para capacitar a líderes en empresas de todos los tamaños y configuraciones, desde pequeñas empresas hasta empresas Fortune 100. Se ha utilizado para ayudar a las organizaciones sin fines de lucro a comprender cómo liderar a los voluntarios. Y se ha enseñado en más de 120 países de todo el mundo. Cada vez que hablo de ello, la gente hace preguntas y hace observaciones. Esas cosas han ayudado a que los 5 Niveles de Liderazgo se fortalezcan y desarrollen una mayor profundidad. El concepto está probado y demostrado. Además, ofrece varios otros beneficios:

Los 5 niveles de liderazgo proporcionan una imagen clara de Liderazgo

¿Cómo logran las personas dominar el liderazgo? Para aquellos que no tienen el don natural para ello, el liderazgo puede ser un misterio. Para ellos, liderar personas es como caminar por un pasillo oscuro. Tienen una idea de hacia dónde quieren ir, pero no pueden ver hacia adelante y no saben dónde estarán los problemas y las trampas. Para muchas personas en el mundo académico, el liderazgo es un ejercicio teórico, una ecuación cuyas variables son dignas de investigación, estudio y debate riguroso. Por el contrario, los 5 niveles de liderazgo son visualmente sencillos, por lo que cualquiera puede aprenderlos.

Los 5 niveles de liderazgo definen *Principal* como verbo, no como

Sustantivo

El liderazgo es un proceso, no una posición. Hubo un tiempo en que la gente usaba los términos *liderazgo* y *gestión* indistintamente. Creo que la mayoría de la gente reconoce ahora que existe una diferencia significativa entre los dos. La gestión es mejor cuando las cosas siguen igual.

**El liderazgo es un proceso,
no es una posición.**

El liderazgo se ocupa de las personas y sus dinámicas, que cambian continuamente. Nunca son estáticos. El desafío del liderazgo es generar cambios y facilitar el crecimiento. Esto requiere movimiento que, como pronto verán, es inherente al ascenso de un nivel de liderazgo al siguiente.

Los 5 niveles de liderazgo se descomponen y conducen a Pasos comprensibles

El tema del liderazgo puede resultar abrumador y confuso. ¿Dónde comienza el liderazgo? ¿Que deberíamos hacer primero? ¿Qué procesos debemos utilizar? ¿Cómo podemos ganar influencia con los demás? ¿Cómo podemos desarrollar un equipo productivo? ¿Cómo ayudamos a los seguidores a convertirse en líderes por derecho propio? Los 5 niveles de liderazgo brindan respuestas a estas preguntas mediante pasos comprensibles.

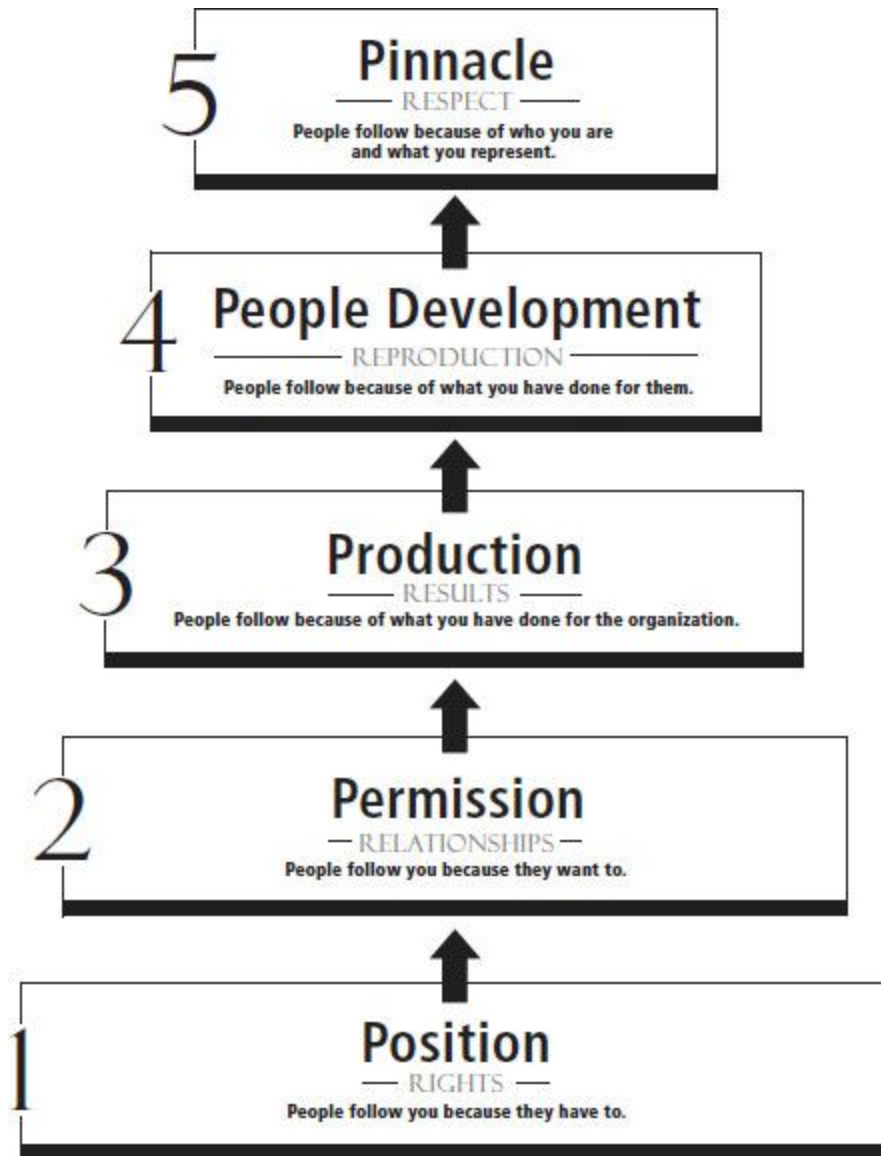
Los 5 niveles de liderazgo proporcionan un plan de juego claro para Desarrollo de liderazgo

Con demasiada frecuencia, cuando las personas piensan en su viaje hacia el liderazgo, imaginan una trayectoria profesional. ¡En lo que deberían pensar es en su propio desarrollo de liderazgo! El buen liderazgo no se trata de avanzar uno mismo. Se trata de hacer avanzar a tu equipo. Los 5 niveles de liderazgo proporcionan pasos claros para el crecimiento del liderazgo. Dirige bien a las personas y ayuda a los miembros de tu equipo a convertirse en líderes eficaces, y una carrera profesional exitosa estará casi garantizada.

Los 5 niveles de liderazgo alinean las prácticas de liderazgo, Principios y valores

Cuando desarrollé los 5 niveles, concebí cada nivel como una práctica que podría usarse para liderar de manera más efectiva. A medida que pasó el tiempo y usé y enseñé los niveles, me di cuenta de que en realidad eran principios. Aquí está la diferencia: una práctica es una acción que puede funcionar en una situación pero no necesariamente en otra. Un principio es una verdad externa que es tan confiable como una ley física. Por ejemplo, cuando Salomón dijo: “La respuesta amable quita toda ira, pero la palabra dura hace subir la ira”, afirmó un principio que es universal y eterno. Los principios son importantes porque funcionan como un mapa y nos permiten tomar decisiones acertadas. Si adoptamos un principio y lo interiorizamos, se convierte en parte de nuestros valores. Los 5 Niveles influyen en mi vida de liderazgo todos los días.

Descripción general de los 5 niveles de liderazgo



Cada una de las secciones siguientes de este libro está dedicada a uno de los 5 niveles. En ellos aprenderá las ventajas y desventajas del nivel, los mejores comportamientos para ese nivel, las creencias que ayudan a un líder a pasar al siguiente nivel y cómo el nivel se relaciona con las Leyes del Liderazgo. Si ya está familiarizado con las Leyes del Liderazgo, su comprensión mejorará al ver cómo encajan en los 5 Niveles. Pero incluso si es nuevo en las leyes, comprenderá el concepto básico detrás de cada una y cómo se aplica. También hay una guía de crecimiento para cada nivel. Sin embargo, antes de sumergirnos en los niveles, quiero brindarles una descripción general de ellos y cómo encajan, así como compartir algunas ideas sobre los niveles.

Nivel 1—Posición

La posición es el nivel más bajo de liderazgo: el nivel de entrada. La única influencia que tiene un líder posicional es la que viene con el puesto de trabajo. La gente sigue porque tiene que hacerlo. El liderazgo posicional se basa en la *derechos* otorgado por el cargo y título. No hay nada malo en tener una posición de liderazgo. No hay nada de malo en utilizar la posición para que la gente te siga. La posición es un mal sustituto de la influencia.

Las personas que llegan sólo al Nivel 1 pueden ser jefes, pero nunca líderes. Tienen subordinados, no miembros del equipo. Se basan en reglas, regulaciones, políticas y organigramas para controlar a su gente. Su pueblo sólo los seguirá dentro de los límites establecidos de su autoridad. Y su gente normalmente hará sólo lo que se les pida. Cuando los líderes posicionales piden esfuerzo o tiempo extra, rara vez lo obtienen.

Los líderes posicionales suelen tener dificultades para trabajar con voluntarios, gente más joven y personas con un alto nivel educativo. ¿Por qué? Porque los líderes posicionales no tienen influencia y este tipo de personas tienden a ser más independientes.

La posición es el único nivel que no requiere habilidad ni esfuerzo para alcanzarlo. Cualquiera puede ser designado para un puesto.

Nivel 2: permiso

El nivel 2 se basa enteramente en *relaciones*. En el nivel de Permiso, la gente sigue porque quiere. Cuando te gustan las personas y las tratas como individuos que tienen valor, comienzas a desarrollar influencia sobre ellas. Desarrollas confianza. El ambiente se vuelve mucho más positivo, ya sea en casa, en el trabajo, en el juego o mientras se trabaja como voluntario.

La agenda de los líderes del Nivel 2 no es preservar su posición. Se trata de conocer a su gente y descubrir cómo llevarse bien con ellos. Los líderes descubren quiénes son sus personas. Los seguidores descubren quiénes son sus líderes. Las personas construyen relaciones sólidas y duraderas.

**Te puede gustar la gente sin
Dirigiéndolos, pero no se
puede liderar bien a la gente.
sin gustarles.**

Te pueden agradar las personas sin liderarlas, pero no puedes liderarlas bien sin agradarlas. De eso se trata el Nivel 2.

Nivel 3: producción

Uno de los peligros de llegar al nivel de Permiso es que un líder puede verse tentado a detenerse allí. Pero los buenos líderes no sólo crean un ambiente de trabajo agradable. ¡Hacen las cosas! Es por eso que deben pasar al Nivel 3, que se basa en *resultados*. En el nivel de producción, los líderes ganan influencia y credibilidad, y la gente comienza a seguirlos por lo que han hecho por la organización.

Muchas cosas positivas comienzan a suceder cuando los líderes llegan al Nivel 3. Se realiza el trabajo, mejora la moral, aumentan las ganancias, disminuye la rotación y se logran las metas. También es en el nivel 3 donde comienza el impulso.

Liderar e influir en los demás se vuelve divertido en este nivel. Se sabe que el éxito y la productividad resuelven muchos problemas. Como dijo el legendario ex mariscal de campo de la NFL Joe Namath: "Cuando estás ganando, nada duele".

En el Nivel 3, los líderes pueden convertirse en agentes de cambio. Pueden afrontar problemas difíciles y afrontar cuestiones espinosas. Pueden tomar decisiones difíciles que marcarán la diferencia. Pueden llevar a su gente a otro nivel de eficacia.

Nivel 4: Desarrollo de personas

Los líderes se vuelven grandes, no por su poder, sino por su capacidad de empoderar a otros. Eso es lo que hacen los líderes en el Nivel 4. Usan su posición, relaciones y productividad para invertir en sus seguidores y desarrollarlos hasta que esos seguidores se conviertan en líderes por derecho propio. El resultado es *reproducción*; Los líderes de nivel 4 se reproducen.

**Los líderes se vuelven grandes,
no por su poder, sino por
debido a su capacidad de
empoderar a otros.**

La producción puede ganar partidos, pero el Desarrollo de Personas gana campeonatos. En el nivel 4 siempre suceden dos cosas. Primero, el trabajo en equipo llega a un nivel muy alto. ¿Por qué? Porque una alta inversión en las personas profundiza las relaciones, ayuda a que las personas se conozcan mejor y fortalece la lealtad. En segundo lugar, aumenta el rendimiento. ¿Por qué? Porque hay más líderes en el equipo y ayudan a mejorar el desempeño de todos.

Los líderes de nivel 4 cambian la vida de las personas que dirigen. En consecuencia, su pueblo los sigue por lo que sus líderes han hecho personalmente por ellos. Y sus relaciones suelen durar toda la vida.

Nivel 5: pináculo

El nivel de liderazgo más alto y más difícil es el Pinnacle. Si bien la mayoría de las personas pueden aprender a ascender de los niveles 1 al 4, el nivel 5 requiere no sólo esfuerzo, habilidad e intencionalidad, sino también un alto nivel de talento. Sólo los líderes con talento natural llegan a este nivel más alto. ¿Qué hacen los líderes en el nivel 5? Desarrollan personas para que se conviertan en líderes de Nivel 4.

Si las personas son respetuosas, agradables y productivas, pueden establecer cierto grado de influencia con los demás y ganar seguidores con relativa facilidad. Desarrollar seguidores para que lideren por sí solos es difícil. La mayoría de los líderes no lo hacen porque requiere mucho más trabajo que simplemente liderar a sus seguidores. Sin embargo, desarrollar líderes hasta el punto en que sean capaces y estén dispuestos a desarrollar a otros líderes es la tarea de liderazgo más difícil de todas. Pero aquí están los beneficios: los líderes de Nivel 5 desarrollan organizaciones de Nivel 5. Crean oportunidades que otros líderes no crean. Crean un legado en lo que hacen. La gente los sigue por quiénes son y lo que representan. En otras palabras, su liderazgo obtiene un impacto positivo. *reputación*. Como resultado, los líderes de Nivel 5 a menudo trascienden su posición, su organización y, a veces, su industria.

[Información sobre los 5 niveles de liderazgo](#)

norteAhora que estás familiarizado con los niveles, quiero compartir algunas ideas que te ayudarán a comprender cómo se relacionan los niveles entre sí.

1. Puedes subir un nivel pero nunca abandonar el anterior uno detrás

Ahora que ha visto los niveles y ha aprendido los conceptos básicos sobre ellos, puede suponer que un líder los sube, dejando que uno llegue al siguiente, de forma similar a como se sube una escalera. Pero la verdad es que nunca dejas atrás un nivel una vez alcanzado. En cambio, simplemente construye sobre ello. Si lo piensas por un momento, estarás de acuerdo en que tiene sentido. Si comienza con una posición de liderazgo y construye relaciones con las personas que supervisa, ¿renuncia a su posición para hacerlo? No. No abandonas tu posición para avanzar, pero si ganas el Nivel 2 correctamente, nunca más tendrás que depender de tu posición.

Una vez que ha establecido relaciones con las personas y ha alcanzado un mayor nivel de productividad, ¿abandona o descuida esas relaciones? ¡Será mejor que no! Si lo haces, te encontrarás nuevamente en el Nivel 1.

Los líderes no cambian un nivel por otro. Añaden un nuevo nivel al anterior. Es un proceso de construcción.

2. No estás al mismo nivel que todas las personas

El liderazgo es dinámico y cambia de una relación a otra. Lo mismo ocurre con los 5 niveles de liderazgo. Es posible que esté en uno de los 5 niveles diferentes con cada una de las cinco personas diferentes en mi trabajo. Alguien el primer día en el trabajo reconocerá sólo mi posición, mientras que alguien en quien he invertido y a quien he criado para liderar probablemente me pondrá en el Nivel 4. Si he sido un buen padre en casa, Puede que esté en el Nivel 4 con mis hijos. Si he sido un padre ausente, es posible que esté en el Nivel 1. Con mi vecino de al lado, tal vez esté en el Nivel 2.

¿Alguna vez ha presentado una visión con su equipo y ha tenido una variedad de respuestas a la misma comunicación? ¿A qué atribuyes eso? ¿Diferentes orígenes de los oyentes? ¿Diferentes niveles de inteligencia? ¿Diferentes niveles de formación o experiencia? ¿Diferentes personalidades? Creo que todos esos factores pueden entrar en juego, pero a menudo el factor que más impacta es el nivel de liderazgo que tienes con cada persona. La gente te responderá según el nivel de liderazgo que tengas con ellos. Y eso está sujeto a cambios.

**La gente te responderá
según el nivel de liderazgo
en el que se encuentre
a ellos.**

Alcanzar un nivel de liderazgo no es como obtener un título. Tampoco es como batir un récord como deportista. No lo logras y lo dejas. Es más como tener que correr una carrera todos los días para demostrar tu habilidad. La única excepción es el Pinnacle. A los líderes que alcanzan el nivel 5 a veces se les da crédito por estar en ese nivel por su reputación en lugar de solo por interacción personal. Pero es importante señalar que, en cualquier nivel, un líder no siempre permanece automáticamente en ese nivel. Debes ganarte tu nivel de liderazgo con cada persona, y ese nivel puede subir o bajar en cualquier momento.

3. Cuanto más alto llegues, más fácil será liderar

He aquí algunas buenas noticias. A medida que trabaje para ascender en los niveles de liderazgo, descubrirá que se vuelve más fácil liderar a las personas. Cada avance te permite ser más efectivo al liderar a otros porque tu influencia aumenta a medida que avanzas a un nivel superior. A medida que aumenta tu influencia, más personas te siguen con más facilidad. Influencia limitada, liderazgo limitado. A mayor influencia, mayor eficacia. Eso es sentido común. Sin embargo, también hay una mala noticia: ¡no es fácil ascender en los niveles de liderazgo! Si fuera fácil, todos serían líderes de Nivel 5.

4. Cuanto más alto llegues, más tiempo y compromiso tendrás

Requerido para ganar un nivel

¿Cuál es más difícil? ¿Recibir una posición de liderazgo (Nivel 1) o obtener el permiso de las personas para liderarlos (Nivel 2)? Eso es bastante obvio. Se necesita tiempo, esfuerzo y compromiso para desarrollar relaciones positivas con las personas. ¿Qué tal pasar del nivel 2 al nivel 3? Creo que es más difícil ser consistentemente productivo que hacer amigos. Es aún más difícil y requiere mucho más tiempo para llegar al Nivel 4, donde se desarrolla a las personas para que se conviertan en buenos líderes. Y puede llevar toda una vida convertirse en un líder de Nivel 5 que desarrolla líderes que a su vez desarrollan a otros líderes.

Hace años recuerdo haber visto un *ziggy* caricatura de Tom Wilson en la que el héroe de la tira iba camino del éxito y más adelante podía ver un cartel que decía: "Prepárate para parar para pagar los peajes". Ese sería un buen consejo para cualquiera que quiera ascender a los 5 niveles de liderazgo. No existe una manera fácil de llegar a la cima. Y cada vez que subes, pagas. Hay que comprometerse más, hay que dar más, hay que utilizar más energía, cada vez que quieras subir de nivel. Y tu gente también. Nadie consigue nada grande dando lo mínimo. Ningún equipo gana campeonatos sin hacer sacrificios y dar lo mejor de sí.

5. Subir niveles se produce lentamente, pero bajar puede ocurrir Sucedre rápidamente

Como he dicho, se necesita tiempo para ascender en los niveles de liderazgo. Algunas personas me han preguntado: "¿Cuánto tiempo me llevará convertirme en un líder de nivel 5?"

"Mucho más de lo que piensas" es mi respuesta. Construir siempre lleva mucho más tiempo que destruir. Muchas cosas tienen que estar bien para ascender a un nivel superior, pero a veces basta con que una cosa salga mal para que alguien caiga. Por ejemplo, piense en cuánto tiempo lleva construir una excelente relación con una persona. Pero si haces algo para perder la confianza en esa persona, la relación puede romperse permanentemente en un abrir y cerrar de ojos.

**Muchas cosas tienen que estar bien
para ascender a un nivel más alto.
nivel, pero a veces basta
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que alguien se equivoque.
caer.**

Si bien es inquietante pensar en lo rápido que uno puede caer desde un nivel de liderazgo, espero que pueda consolarse con esto: una vez que ha ascendido a niveles superiores, los que están debajo funcionan como una red de seguridad. Entonces, cuanto más hayas avanzado en los niveles, más seguro será tu liderazgo. Por ejemplo, si toma algunas malas decisiones en el Nivel 3 que arruinan su productividad o la del equipo, las relaciones que ha desarrollado pueden salvarlo de ser despedido. El único nivel sin red de seguridad es el más bajo: Posición. No tienes demasiadas oportunidades de cometer errores en ese nivel. Ésa es otra buena razón para ascender en los niveles de liderazgo.

6. Cuanto más alto llegues, mayor será el retorno

Puede que usted dé más para ascender a niveles más altos de liderazgo, pero también obtendrá más. Como líder, el retorno de su inversión aumenta con cada nivel. En el Nivel 2, usted gana confianza y el derecho a liderar. En el Nivel 3, aumenta la productividad de la organización. En el Nivel 4, multiplicas esa productividad porque cada vez que agregas otro líder a una organización, agregas todos los caballos de fuerza del equipo de ese líder. En el Nivel 5, el crecimiento y la productividad se vuelven exponenciales a medida que se agregan líderes a la organización que no solo lideran a otros sino que también crean generaciones de desarrollo de liderazgo que siguen produciendo.

Cuanto mejores son los líderes en una organización, mejores se vuelven todos en la organización. Cuando la productividad es alta, la química es buena, la moral es alta y el impulso es fuerte, entonces los beneficios aumentan.

7. Avanzar más siempre requiere un mayor crecimiento

Cada vez que un líder asciende a un nivel superior de liderazgo, se requiere una mayor habilidad. Por esa razón, cada paso de crecimiento requiere un mayor desarrollo por parte del líder. Pero aquí están las buenas noticias. Cada nivel de liderazgo alcanzado funciona como una plataforma desde la cual el líder puede crecer hasta el siguiente.

Así es como funciona. Para crecer a un nuevo nivel, los líderes toman riesgos. En los niveles inferiores, los riesgos son menores y más fáciles de ganar. Por ejemplo, para ascender del Nivel 1 al Nivel 2, los líderes se arriesgan a iniciar relaciones. Cuando los líderes llegan a niveles más altos, los riesgos aumentan. Por ejemplo, en el Nivel 3, los líderes pueden reunir al equipo para tratar de lograr una meta elevada pero fracasar; eso podría costarle credibilidad al líder, detener el impulso y desmotivar a los miembros del equipo. Pero aquí está la buena noticia: cada riesgo en un nivel superior es una extensión natural de las habilidades que los líderes ya han desarrollado. Los forasteros podrían mirar a un líder y decir: "Vaya, realmente salió y asumió un gran riesgo". Pero es posible que esos observadores no vean el crecimiento que se ha producido en el líder. Cuando debe asumir el siguiente riesgo, el líder ya se ha acostumbrado a él.

**Crecer como líder
requiere una combinación de
crecimiento intencional y
experiencia en liderazgo.**

Crecer como líder requiere una combinación de crecimiento intencional y experiencia de liderazgo. Si las personas dependen únicamente de la experiencia sin aprender ni prepararse intencionalmente para el siguiente nivel, no progresarán como líderes. Por otro lado, si sólo se preparan mentalmente pero no obtienen experiencia a través del riesgo y la recompensa, y del ensayo y error, entonces todavía no progresarán. Se necesitan ambas cosas, además de cierta cantidad de talento. Pero no tienes control sobre cuánto talento posees. Tú controlas sólo lo que haces con él.

Se ve esta dinámica cuando los atletas intentan ascender de las filas universitarias a las profesionales. Todos tienen cierto grado de talento. Lo que ayuda a quienes tienen éxito es el crecimiento intencional y experiencia. Los atletas que dependen únicamente de su experiencia universitaria a menudo no lo logran. Y aquellos que se preparan mental y físicamente pero nunca obtienen experiencia real en el juego a menudo tienen el mismo resultado negativo. Se necesitan ambos para tener éxito.

Si posee un don natural para el liderazgo, probablemente tenga pasión por el crecimiento. Te gusta ver las cosas construir. Es parte de tu cableado. Vaya con eso. Si tienes una cantidad de talento más modesta, no pierdas la esperanza. Puedes compensar mucho convirtiéndote en un estudiante de liderazgo altamente intencionado, aprovechando así al máximo cada oportunidad. De cualquier manera, recuerde que el éxito en cualquier nivel le ayuda a tener éxito en todos los niveles. Así que trabaja duro para ganar el nivel en el que te encuentras ahora. Te preparará para el futuro.

8. No subir de nivel te limita a ti y a tu gente

La ley de la tapa en *Las 21 leyes irrefutables del liderazgo* afirma: "La capacidad de liderazgo determina el nivel de eficacia de una persona". En resumen, su eficacia para hacer las cosas y su capacidad para trabajar a través de otros siempre está limitada por su liderazgo. Si su liderazgo es un 4 sobre 10, entonces su efectividad no será superior a un 4. Además, la Ley del Respeto dice: "La gente naturalmente sigue a líderes más fuertes que ellos mismos". ¡Eso significa que si sigues siendo un 4, nunca atraerás ni mantendrás a ningún líder mejor que un 3!

Una de las cargas del liderazgo es que a medida que avanzamos, así se irá la gente que lideramos. Alcanzar nuestro potencial crea un entorno para que otros alcancen el suyo. Cuando los líderes dejan de ascender, es necesario plantearse dos preguntas: "¿Pueden mejorar?" y "¿Mejorarán?" Algunas personas no pueden; han llegado a su límite. Otros no lo harán. La capacidad no es el problema: la elección y la actitud sí lo son. Si las personas están dispuestas a optar por mejorar y cambiar de actitud, el cielo es el límite.

Una de las cargas del liderazgo es que a medida que avanzamos, así se va la gente que lideramos. Alcanzar nuestro potencial crea un entorno para los demás. para alcanzar el suyo.

Tu capacidad de liderazgo hoy es la que sea. No puedes cambiar el pasado. Sin embargo, puedes cambiar el futuro. Tienes la opción de elegir tu capacidad de liderazgo a partir de este día. Si aprende a ascender en los Niveles de Liderazgo, su capacidad de liderazgo mejorará. Y eso tendrá un impacto positivo en su capacidad general de liderazgo. Sin embargo, si elige no crecer como líder, será mejor que se acostumbre a estar dondequiera que esté actualmente, porque es poco probable que su situación mejore.

9. Cuando cambia de puesto u organización, rara vez

Manténgase en el mismo nivel

¿Qué sucede cuando los líderes cambian de trabajo y comienzan a liderar un nuevo grupo de personas? Si asumiste que permanecen en el mismo Nivel de Liderazgo, estás equivocado. Cada vez que lideras a diferentes personas, comienzas el proceso de nuevo. La gente no te reconoce como Desarrollador de Personas de Nivel 4 si no has trabajado con ellos. Tienes que ganártelo. Lo mismo ocurre con los niveles 3 y 2. Empiezas de nuevo en el nivel 1. Sin embargo, hay buenas noticias. Si alcanzaste el Nivel 4 con algún otro grupo de personas, ya sabes cómo llegar allí. Y como ya lo has hecho antes, podrás subir de nivel mucho más rápido que la vez anterior.

Cada vez que pasas por el proceso con un nuevo grupo de personas, te vuelves aún más hábil en ello. Y después de haberlo hecho suficientes veces, no se desanimará ante la perspectiva de tener que repetirlo con otros. Por ejemplo, durante veinticinco años dirigí el mundo religioso. En ese tiempo trabajé en cuatro organizaciones diferentes, y en cada una tuve que escalar niveles de liderazgo con la gente de allí. Afortunadamente, en ese mundo pude alcanzar el Nivel 4 con muchas personas, incluso muchas que estaban fuera de esas organizaciones en particular. Sin embargo, cuando comencé a enseñar liderazgo en el mundo empresarial, todo cambió. Empecé de nuevo en el Nivel 1 con mucha gente. No dejé que eso me intimidara ni me desanimara. Estaba dispuesto a demostrar mi valía y ascender de nivel nuevamente. Y ahora, quince años después, disfruto de la credibilidad que me he ganado al desarrollar relaciones, ser productivo en ese mundo y desarrollar líderes.

Los líderes posicionales se muestran reacios a tener que empezar de nuevo. Porque piensan en el liderazgo como un destino en lugar de un proceso: un sustantivo en lugar de un verbo.

– quieren conservar lo que tienen. Su esperanza es hacerlo una vez y estar hecho. Los buenos líderes están dispuestos a volver a ganarse el camino hacia el liderazgo porque entienden que la vida de liderazgo casi siempre requerirá que comiencen de nuevo desde abajo más de una vez.

10. No puedes subir niveles solo

“El liderazgo es aceptar a las personas donde están y luego llevándolos a alguna parte”.
—CW Perry

Uno de mis dichos favoritos es: "Si crees que estás liderando pero nadie te sigue, entonces sólo estás dando un paseo". Ese pensamiento capta la verdadera naturaleza del liderazgo y también expresa la idea más importante sobre los 5 niveles de liderazgo. Para tener éxito como líder, debes ayudar a otros a seguirte en los niveles. Si las personas no te siguen, no estás ascendiendo del Nivel 1 a los Niveles 2 y 3. Si otras personas que te siguen en los niveles no se están convirtiendo en líderes, entonces no has alcanzado el Nivel 4. Y si la Si las personas que estás desarrollando no están en el Nivel 4 desarrollando generaciones de líderes, entonces no alcanzarás el Nivel 5. Todo el proceso incluye a otras personas y se enfoca en ayudarlas. Como dijo el líder cuáquero CW Perry: "El liderazgo es aceptar a las personas donde están y luego llevarlas a algún lugar". ¡De eso se tratan los 5 Niveles de Liderazgo!

Es hora de pasar al siguiente nivel

Confío en que ahora tenga una comprensión básica de los 5 niveles de liderazgo y cómo funcionan. Pero supongo que a estas alturas te estarás preguntando, *¿En qué nivel estoy con la mayoría de mi gente?* Hago esta afirmación porque cada vez que enseño los 5 niveles, la gente quiere que se responda esa pregunta.

Te ayudaré a hacer eso en un momento, pero primero déjame decirte esto: comprender los 5 niveles de liderazgo y saber en qué nivel te encuentras con cada persona determinará cómo los lideras. Los buenos líderes no dirigen a todos por igual. ¿Por qué? Porque cada persona es diferente y no estás en el mismo nivel de liderazgo que todas las personas. Los líderes eficaces interactúan con sus seguidores basándose en:

- Dónde se encuentran con ese seguidor específico, Dónde el seguidor
- percibe que está el líder y Dónde se encuentran los seguidores en su
- propio desarrollo de liderazgo.

Cada uno de estos factores entra en juego cuando evalúa su liderazgo y trabaja para desarrollarlo.

Creo que cada persona tiene la capacidad de mejorar en liderazgo. Convertirse en líder no es un tema místico. Se puede abordar de manera muy práctica y todos tienen el potencial de ascender a un nivel superior de liderazgo.

¿Cuál es tu potencial? ¿Tiene la capacidad y el deseo de convertirse en un líder de nivel 3, 4 o 5? Sólo hay una manera de saberlo. Acepta el desafío del liderazgo, haz tu mejor esfuerzo en el crecimiento y sumérgete en el liderazgo. Si está dispuesto a aceptar el desafío, nunca se arrepentirá, porque no hay mejor manera de aumentar su impacto positivo en el mundo y agregar valor a los demás que aumentar su capacidad de liderazgo.

Creo que este libro, con sus guías para el crecimiento en cada nivel, te ayudará a navegar el proceso y a escalar. Muy buena lectura, buen crecimiento y, como dice mi amigo Zig Ziglar: "Te veré en la cima".



Evaluación de liderazgo

Cómo medir su nivel actual de liderazgo

Éste es un cuestionario de cuatro partes para ayudarle a comprender dónde se encuentra en el viaje de liderazgo relacionado con los 5 niveles. Quiero animarte a que dejes de seguir adelante con el libro y dediques inmediatamente el tiempo necesario a evaluar tu nivel actual. Completar las partes 1 y 2 no debería requerir una gran inversión de su tiempo. La parte 3 puede llevar un poco más de tiempo, ya que involucra a otras personas, pero comience con ella también. Su objetivo principal es verificar si sus instintos y su autopercepción son correctos en la Parte 2. La Parte 4 le dará una idea de su posición general con su equipo y debe realizarla después de haber completado las partes 1, 2 y 3.

Si hace este trabajo preliminar, estará en una posición mucho mejor para crecer en su liderazgo a medida que lea y trabaje el resto del libro.

Parte 1—Características del nivel de liderazgo

tEsta primera sección se aplica a su liderazgo en general. Por favor lea las siguientes diez declaraciones. Coloque una marca de verificación junto a cada una que esté de acuerdo en que es cierta para usted. Responde usando tu primer instinto. Por favor, no omita ninguna pregunta y no regrese ni cambie ninguna de sus respuestas.

Nivel 1

- No tengo que recordarles a las personas que trabajan para mí que soy el líder.
- Pienso en cada persona que trabaja para mí como una persona individual, no sólo en términos de su función o rol.
- La mayoría de los días tengo ganas de ir a trabajar.
- Reconozco que el puesto que me han asignado es una oportunidad para aprender, no un territorio que proteger.
- Las personas que trabajan para mí están dispuestas a trabajar más allá de sus descripciones de trabajo.
- Sé que lidiar con los problemas de las personas es parte del liderazgo y lo he aceptado como parte del trabajo.
- Poseo el deseo de aprender más sobre liderazgo y convertirme en un mejor líder.
- Pienso en mi trabajo en términos de trabajo por realizar y le doy muy poca atención a la trayectoria profesional y a los puestos que deseo alcanzar a lo largo del camino.
- Uno de mis principales objetivos es ayudar a las personas que trabajan para mí.

- A la mayoría de la gente le resulta fácil trabajar conmigo.

Si marcó ocho o más de las afirmaciones anteriores como verdaderas para usted, entonces probablemente ya se haya establecido como líder en el Nivel 1 y haya comenzado a ascender a niveles superiores. Pase a la siguiente sección de la prueba. Sin embargo, si marcó menos de ocho, entonces probablemente aún no haya dominado el Nivel 1, y aquí es donde probablemente comenzará su trabajo en el desarrollo del liderazgo personal. ¿Por qué? Porque eres tan bueno como el nivel más bajo que hayas dominado.

Nivel 2

- Las personas fuera de mi departamento o área de responsabilidad respetan mis opiniones y con frecuencia me buscan para pedirme consejo.
- Conozco mis fortalezas y debilidades y rara vez me toman por sorpresa en mi trabajo.
- Realmente me gusta la mayoría de las personas y quiero ayudarlas.
- Soy muy consistente y ecuánime en mi interacción con las personas que trabajan para mí.
- Cuando le digo algo a la gente de mi equipo, siempre saben que pueden contar con ello porque soy digno de confianza.
- He desarrollado relaciones sólidas con todas las personas que trabajan para mí.
- Las personas que trabajan conmigo me encuentran simpático y agradable casi el 100 por ciento del tiempo.
- Cuando necesito tener una conversación sincera con los miembros del equipo para corregir errores o solucionar problemas, sigo adelante y no dejo pasar demasiado tiempo.
- Creo que los empleados desean algo más que un salario justo por un día de trabajo justo; La mayoría desea aliento y yo se lo doy.
- He desarrollado relaciones con todos los que trabajan para mí.

Si marcó ocho o más de las afirmaciones anteriores como verdaderas para usted, pase a la siguiente sección. De lo contrario, es posible que desees guardar el resto de la Parte 1 de la prueba para más adelante porque tus respuestas indican que aún no dominas el Nivel 2 y aún no piensas como un líder de Nivel 2. Si decide completar la Parte 1 en este momento, tenga en cuenta que incluso si marca ocho o más afirmaciones como verdaderas en las secciones siguientes, no podrá estar en los niveles más altos de liderazgo porque aún no ha ganado el Nivel 2. Esto también se aplica a medida que responde las preguntas en los niveles siguientes.

Nivel 3

- Constantemente alcanzo objetivos y metas en mi trabajo. La buena gente siempre
- quiere trabajar conmigo y mi equipo. La gente me ve como un experto en mi campo
- y me buscan para aprender de mí.

- Constantemente me fijo y logro metas más altas, incluso cuando mis superiores no me las fijan.
- Mi desempeño en mi trabajo a menudo lleva al equipo a un nivel superior. Doy lo
- mejor de mí en todo lo que hago.
- Me siento cómodo con la idea de que otros observan mi desempeño y siguen mi ejemplo.
- Soy conocido como solucionador de problemas y, a menudo, realizo tareas difíciles.
- Mi trabajo es muy consistente en el día a día.
- Tengo sistemas y rutinas que me ayudan a rendir a un nivel muy alto.

Si marcó ocho o más de las afirmaciones anteriores como verdaderas para usted, pase a la siguiente sección. Si no, tus respuestas indican que aún no dominas el Nivel 3 y que aún no piensas como un líder de Nivel 3.

Nivel 4

- Programo y sigo con la capacitación y el desarrollo de todos los miembros de mi equipo de manera regular y consistente.
- Cuando se acercan los plazos o el trabajo se vuelve urgente, nunca cancelamos nuestras sesiones de capacitación y desarrollo.
- Constantemente asumo riesgos al otorgar a las personas responsabilidades y autoridad que las exijan.
- Dedico una cantidad significativa de tiempo cada mes a asesorar a líderes prometedores.
- Conozco muy a fondo las fortalezas y debilidades de todas las personas que dirijo.
- Individualizo la forma en que entreno, desarrollo y asesoro a mi gente.
- Dedico el tiempo de tutoría más estratégico y significativo a las personas que tienen la mayor capacidad, talento y potencial.
- Tengo un historial de mover personas de un puesto a otro para ayudarlas a encontrar su ajuste.
- Continuamente doy retroalimentación a la gente, no solo durante las revisiones formales.
- Mi equipo o departamento es considerado por otros como el mejor capacitado (o uno de los mejores) de la organización.

Si marcó ocho o más de las afirmaciones anteriores como verdaderas para usted, pase a la siguiente sección. Si no, tus respuestas indican que aún no dominas el Nivel 4 y que aún no piensas como un líder de Nivel 4.

Nivel 5

- Puedo nombrar a varias personas específicas a quienes he alentado a que me digan verdades duras, y lo hacen con regularidad.
- Estoy utilizando mi influencia para inculcar valores en mi organización. El rumbo de mi organización lo marco yo o un equipo del que formo parte.

- He desarrollado muchos líderes que son desarrolladores de líderes.
- Disfruto de la interacción y la amistad de un pequeño círculo de líderes con quienes estoy emprendiendo el viaje del liderazgo.
- Todavía estoy en la cima de mi juego y el impacto positivo que estoy generando es fuerte.
- Puedo nombrar al menos a una persona que estaría lista para intervenir y ocupar mi lugar si decido dejar mi puesto actual.
- Tengo influencia fuera de mi organización.
- Personas ajenas a mi industria específica me buscan para recibir asesoramiento sobre liderazgo.
- Estoy usando mi influencia y recursos para causas mayores que yo o mi organización.

En liderazgo, eres tan bueno como el nivel más bajo que hayas dominado. Así que sólo quiero recordarles que incluso si obtuvieron una puntuación alta en uno de los niveles superiores, si obtuvieron una puntuación baja en un nivel inferior, su liderazgo en realidad está en ese nivel inferior. Ahí es donde deberá prestar atención cuando trabaje con personas para mejorar su capacidad de liderazgo.

**Parte 2—Evaluación individual de los miembros del equipo—Punto del líder
de vista**

Por cada persona que usted supervisa directamente (subordinados directos), responda sí o no a las preguntas de la siguiente hoja de trabajo. (Asegúrese de completar la Parte 2 antes de pasar a la Parte 3).

EVALUACIÓN INDIVIDUAL DE LOS MIEMBROS DEL EQUIPO

Nombre del miembro del equipo:

Fecha:

Nivel 1

sí NoEsta persona te reconoce como su líder.

sí NoEsta persona estaría de acuerdo en que usted es apto para el liderazgo.
la posición que mantienes.

sí NoEsta persona reconocería que usted ve su puesto como un
oportunidad de ganarse su lugar en la mesa de liderazgo, no como un
privilegio para ser utilizado para el avance personal.

Nivel 2

sí NoSabes cosas sobre la familia y el personal de esta persona.
vida fuera de su trabajo.

sí NoConoces las fortalezas y debilidades de esta persona. sí No
Conoces las esperanzas y los sueños de esta persona.

sí NoUsted está comprometido a ayudar a esta persona a tener éxito en su
o su trabajo.

sí NoEsta persona confía en ti y tú confías en él o ella.

Nivel 3

sí NoEsta persona respeta su capacidad profesional y
cualidades.

sí NoEsta persona solicita su consejo y experiencia.

sí NoEsta persona se ha vuelto más productiva gracias a tu
influencia.

sí NoEsta persona reconocería que el equipo es más productivo gracias a su liderazgo.

sí NoEsta persona estaría de acuerdo en que su equipo contribuya al visión y propósito de la organización.

Nivel 4

sí NoLe ha dado a esta persona una formación específica que le ayudó a desempeñarse mejor.

sí NoUsted ha sido mentor de esta persona o la ha puesto en un proceso de desarrollo que le ha ayudado a convertirse en un mejor líder.

sí NoEsta persona ahora está liderando a otros porque usted tiene oportunidades y capacitación para que él o ella lidere.

sí NoEsta persona es consistentemente leal y solidaria, y Siempre te da el beneficio de la duda.

sí NoEsta persona no sólo está liderando a otros sino que también ha entrenado aquellos a quienes él o ella dirige para desarrollar líderes gracias a sus aportes.

Nivel 5

sí NoEsta persona podría asumir su rol con una muy alta probabilidad de éxito si usted renunciara.

sí NoEsta persona es tu defensora y te defiende con otros líderes para ganarse el respeto de los demás incluso antes de conocerlos.

EVALUACIÓN

Puede aprender dos cosas de esta evaluación: Primero, puede comprender dónde se encuentra con cada persona en los 5 niveles de liderazgo según sus respuestas. Si respondiste *No* más veces que *Sí* en una sección, entonces no has llegado a ese nivel con esa persona. (En cambio, estarías en el nivel inferior a ese).

Lo segundo que puedes aprender es dónde necesitas trabajar para mejorar. A *No* La respuesta a cualquier afirmación indica dónde debe trabajar.

Parte 3—Evaluación del liderazgo—El punto de vista de los miembros del equipo

Pida a cada una de las personas que le reportan directamente que complete la siguiente hoja de trabajo. Podrán hacerlo de forma anónima si así lo desean. Utilice los mismos criterios para evaluar esta evaluación que utilizó para evaluar la evaluación de la Parte 2 que completó.

Tenga en cuenta que incluso si es un muy buen líder, es posible que tenga un empleado o voluntario que se niegue a ubicarlo en cualquier lugar que no sea el Nivel 1. Puede intentar ganarse a esa persona en el Nivel 2 y luego progresar, pero no hay garantías de que la persona se dejará conquistar.

EVALUACIÓN DE LIDERAZGO

Nombre del líder:

Fecha:

Lea cada declaración y responda sí o no en referencia al líder cuyo nombre aparece arriba. No hay respuestas correctas o incorrectas. Esta evaluación está diseñada únicamente para describir su interacción con la persona. (Si lo desea, puede responder esta evaluación de forma anónima).

Nivel 1

sí NoReconoces a esta persona como tu líder.

sí NoEsta persona es idónea para el puesto de liderazgo que ocupa.
sostiene.

sí NoEsta persona trata la posición de liderazgo como una oportunidad para ganarse un lugar en la mesa de liderazgo, no como un privilegio para ser utilizado para el avance personal.

Nivel 2

sí NoEste líder se preocupa por su vida familiar y personal fuera de trabajo y regularmente le hace preguntas sobre ellos.

sí NoEste líder conoce tus fortalezas y debilidades. sí NoEste líder conoce y respeta sus esperanzas y sueños. sí NoEste líder está comprometido a ayudarlo a tener éxito en su trabajo. sí NoConfías en este líder y él o ella confía en ti.

Nivel 3

sí NoRespetas la capacidad y las cualidades profesionales de este líder. sí NoConfías en sus consejos y experiencia.

SíNoTe has vuelto más productivo gracias a la actuación de este líder. influencia.

sí NoEl equipo del que formas parte es más productivo debido a su su liderazgo.

sí NoUsted y el equipo del que forma parte contribuyen a la visión y propósito de la organización.

Nivel 4

sí NoHas recibido formación específica de este líder que ha te ayudó a desempeñarte mejor.

sí NoEste líder lo ha asesorado o desarrollado para ayudarlo a convertirse un mejor líder.

sí NoActualmente estás liderando a otros como resultado de oportunidades y formación impartida por este líder.

sí NoCrees en este líder y automáticamente le das la beneficio de la duda.

Nivel 5

sí NoEstás formando y desarrollando a otros líderes gracias al aporte de e influencia de este líder.

sí NoPodrías asumir el papel de líder con una muy alta probabilidad de éxito porque él o ella le ha ayudado a prepararse para ello.

sí NoEste líder ha cambiado tu vida y tú eres un defensor que lo defiende junto con otros líderes.

Una vez que haya completado la evaluación, devuelva este documento al líder que figura en la parte superior de la página.

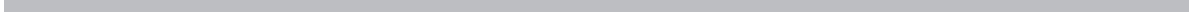
Parte 4—Evaluación del nivel de liderazgo actual

	Parte 1 # Verdadero	Parte 2 # En cada nivel	parte 3 # en cada nivel	Predominante Nivel
Nivel 1				
Nivel 2				
Nivel 3				
Nivel 4				
Nivel 5				

Puede obtener una "instantánea" de su liderazgo haciendo lo siguiente:

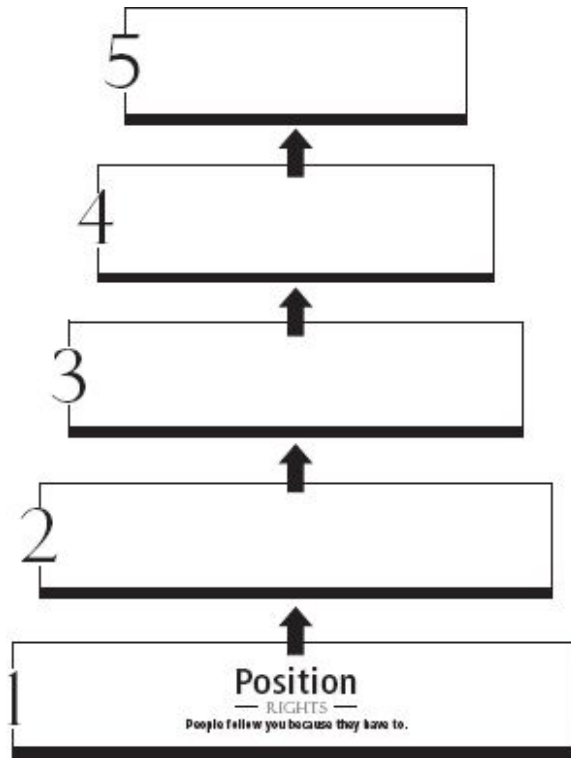
1. En la columna denominada Parte 1, registre la cantidad de afirmaciones que consideró verdaderas en cada sección de la evaluación.
2. En la columna denominada Parte 2, registre el número de miembros de su equipo que están con usted en cada nivel según su evaluación de ellos.
3. En la columna denominada Parte 3, registra la cantidad de personas que te ubicaron en cada nivel según sus respuestas a las afirmaciones.
4. Ahora agregue las líneas. ¿Qué nivel de liderazgo tiene el número más alto? Lo más probable es que el que tenga el número más alto indique su nivel actual de liderazgo con la mayoría de las personas de su equipo. (Esto no pretende ser científicamente válido. Es simplemente una herramienta para darle una idea de sí mismo).

Tenga en cuenta esta evaluación a medida que avance en el libro. La Guía para el crecimiento al final de cada sección del libro le ayudará a mejorar sus habilidades de liderazgo y ascender a niveles más altos de liderazgo con su gente.



Nivel 1: POSICIÓN

*Es un gran lugar para visitar, pero no querrás hacerlo
Vivir allí*



El liderazgo tradicionalmente comienza con la Posición. Alguien se une al ejército y se convierte en recluta y trabaja para obtener el rango de soldado raso. Una persona consigue un trabajo y, junto con él, suele venir un título o descripción del puesto: obrero, vendedor, camarero, empleado, contable, gerente. La posición es el punto de partida para todos los niveles de liderazgo. Es el piso inferior y la base sobre la que se debe construir el liderazgo. Se debe desarrollar una influencia real sobre esa base.

Hubo un tiempo en el que la gente dependía en gran medida de la posición para liderar, lo cual no sorprende si se tiene en cuenta que, en algún momento, los puestos de liderazgo hereditarios se transmitían de padres a hijos (y a veces a hijas) dentro de las familias. Los príncipes se convirtieron en reyes y sus decisiones eran ley, para bien o para mal. En la mayoría de los países industrializados, esos días ya pasaron. Es cierto que todavía hay naciones con reyes y reinas, pero incluso en la mayoría de esas naciones, como Inglaterra, los monarcas gobiernan con el permiso del pueblo, y los verdaderos líderes suelen ser elegidos. La posición te da una oportunidad, pero por lo general conlleva muy poco poder real, excepto en sistemas donde las penalizaciones por no seguirla son terribles.

No hay nada malo en tener un *posición* de liderazgo. Cuando una persona recibe un puesto de liderazgo, generalmente es porque alguien con autoridad vio talento y potencial en esa persona. Y con ese título y posición vienen algunos derechos y un grado de autoridad para liderar a otros.

La posición es un buen punto de partida. Y como todo nivel de liderazgo, tiene sus ventajas y desventajas. Comencemos mirando las cosas buenas del nivel de liderazgo de Posición.

La ventaja de la posición

Ha sido invitado a la mesa de liderazgo

¡Así como hay aspectos positivos y negativos en cada etapa de la vida, también hay aspectos positivos y negativos en cada nivel de liderazgo. Si eres nuevo en el liderazgo y recibes un puesto, entonces hay cosas que celebrar. Te voy a hablar de cuatro de ellos.

1. Generalmente se otorga una posición de liderazgo a las personas porque Tienen potencial de liderazgo

La mayoría de las veces, cuando las personas acceden a un puesto de liderazgo, lo hacen porque fue otorgado o designado por alguna otra persona con autoridad. Probablemente eso parezca obvio. Pero piense en las implicaciones: normalmente significa que la persona con autoridad cree que el nuevo líder tiene cierto grado de potencial para liderar. Esas son buenas noticias. Entonces, si eres nuevo en el liderazgo y te han invitado a liderar algo, entonces celebra el hecho de que alguien con autoridad cree en ti.

Recuerdo la primera vez que me dieron un puesto de liderazgo. El entrenador de baloncesto de mi escuela secundaria me nombró capitán de nuestro equipo. ¡Qué momento tan emocionante fue ese! Cuando cierro los ojos, todavía recuerdo lo que sentí al saber que el entrenador Neff tenía confianza en mí.

Después de hacer el anuncio, compartió con los demás jugadores que yo era un ejemplo de actitud positiva y trabajo duro. Pero luego me llevó a un lado y me explicó que el título de capitán simplemente me daría una plataforma para mostrar mis habilidades de liderazgo. No garantizaba que los jugadores me siguieran. Dijo que ganar eso sería mi responsabilidad.

Los mejores líderes promueven personas en liderazgo basado en el liderazgo potencial, no en política, antigüedad, credenciales o conveniencia.

Los mejores líderes promueven a las personas al liderazgo basándose en su potencial de liderazgo, no en la política, la antigüedad, las credenciales o la conveniencia. John Wooden, el legendario entrenador de baloncesto de UCLA que fue un líder fantástico, me dijo una vez que no designaba un capitán para su equipo hasta después de algunos juegos de la temporada. Esperó porque quería ver qué jugador daría un paso adelante y merecería el honor. A menudo se le ha citado diciendo que

su equipo, “¡No me digas lo que vas a hacer, muéstrame lo que vas a hacer!”

Si tiene una nueva posición de liderazgo, permítame darle la bienvenida al primer paso en su viaje de liderazgo. Usted tiene un asiento en la mesa y ha sido invitado a ser parte del “juego del liderazgo”. Tendrás oportunidades para expresar tu opinión y tomar decisiones. Su objetivo inicial debe ser mostrarle a su líder y a su equipo que se merece el puesto que ha recibido.

2. Una posición de liderazgo significa que se reconoce la autoridad

Cuando un individuo recibe un puesto y un título, generalmente lo acompaña cierto nivel de autoridad o poder. A menudo, al principio ese poder es muy limitado, pero eso está bien porque la mayoría de los líderes necesitan demostrar su valía con poco antes de recibir mucho.

Al volver a mi primer puesto oficial de liderazgo (capitán del equipo de baloncesto), recibí ciertos privilegios nuevos. Antes del inicio del partido, me reuní en la pista central con los árbitros y el capitán del otro equipo para discutir el partido que se iba a jugar. Podía pedir tiempo muerto durante el partido y el entrenador me pedía información cuando estábamos en la reunión. También hablé con el equipo en el vestuario antes y después de cada partido. Mi título me dio reconocimiento y autoridad. Sin embargo, también reconocí las limitaciones de ese reconocimiento y autoridad. como el *Diario del soldado de infantería*(1954) dice: "Ningún hombre es líder hasta que su nombramiento sea ratificado en las mentes y los corazones de sus hombres".

Como nuevo líder, debe utilizar sabiamente la autoridad que se le ha otorgado para hacer avanzar al equipo y ayudar a las personas que dirige. Hazlo y tu gente comenzará a darte una autoridad aún mayor. Cuando eso sucede, obtienes liderazgo, no sólo un puesto.

3. Una posición de liderazgo es una invitación a crecer como líder

Siempre debe existir una relación entre recibir un puesto de liderazgo y cumplir con los requisitos que exige el mismo. Uno de los principales requisitos es el crecimiento personal. Aprendí esto temprano en mi vida de mi padre, a quien le encantaba citar: "A quien se le da mucho, mucho se le exigirá". Creía que cada uno de nosotros había recibido mucho en la vida y que teníamos la responsabilidad de aprender y crecer para poder aprovecharlo al máximo.

El viaje a través de los 5 Niveles de Liderazgo sólo será exitoso si te dedicas al desarrollo continuo. Si cree que el puesto hace al líder, le resultará difícil convertirse en un buen líder. Te sentirás tentado a detenerte y "pasar", lo que significa que permanecerás donde estás y disfrutarás de los beneficios del puesto, en lugar de esforzarte por crecer y convertirte en el mejor líder posible.

Con frecuencia pregunto a un grupo: "¿Cuál es el uno? ¿Qué cambiarías para mejorar la eficacia de tu organización? Normalmente la gente nombra cosas que se pueden encontrar en esta lista de P: productos, promociones, políticas, procesos, procedimientos, precios y personas. Rara vez alguien dice la respuesta más importante e impactante de todas: "¡YO! Me cambiaría para mejorar nuestra organización". Sin embargo, esa respuesta rara vez escuchada es la clave del éxito. Si quieres liderar, necesitas crecer. La única manera de mejorar una organización es hacer crecer y mejorar a los líderes. Si quieres generar un impacto, comienza contigo mismo.

Los líderes que más daño hacen a una organización son los que creen que han llegado. Una vez que reciben el título o puesto que desean, dejan de crecer. Dejan de innovar. Dejan de mejorar. Se basan en sus derechos y lo obstruyen todo. Aproveche al máximo esta oportunidad de liderazgo haciendo del crecimiento su objetivo. Y esforzarse por seguir creciendo. Los buenos líderes siempre son buenos aprendices. Para ser un líder eficaz, debes creer que la posición de liderazgo que recibes es simplemente una invitación a crecer. Si hace eso y se convierte en un aprendiz de por vida, aumentará continuamente su influencia con el tiempo. Y aprovechará al máximo su potencial de liderazgo, sin importar cuán grande o pequeño sea.

4. Una posición de liderazgo permite a los líderes potenciales dar forma y Definir su liderazgo

El mayor potencial positivo para las personas invitadas a asumir una posición de liderazgo es que les brinda la oportunidad de decidir qué tipo de líder quieren ser. La posición que reciben puede estar definida, pero no lo están.

Cuando te conviertes en líder por primera vez, tu página de liderazgo está en blanco y puedes completarla como quieras. ¿Qué tipo de líder quieres ser? No se limite a volverse reactivo y desarrollar un estilo predeterminado. Piénsalo de verdad. ¿Quieres ser un tirano o un formador de equipos? ¿Quieres humillar a la gente o levantarla? ¿Quieres dar órdenes o hacer preguntas? Puedes desarrollar el estilo que quieras siempre que sea coherente con quién eres.

**“El liderazgo es mucho menos
sobre lo que tu *hacery*
mucho más sobre quién eres
son.”**
—Frances Hesselbein

Frances Hesselbein, presidenta fundadora y presidenta de la junta directiva del Leader to Leader Institute, observó: “El liderazgo tiene mucho menos que ver con lo que uno *hacery* mucho más sobre quién eres *son*. Si ve el liderazgo como una bolsa de trucos manipuladores o comportamientos carismáticos para promover sus intereses personales, entonces la gente tiene todo el derecho a ser cínica. Pero si su liderazgo surge ante todo del carácter interno y de la integridad de la ambición, entonces puede pedir con justicia a las personas que se presten a su organización y su misión”.

Si es nuevo en el liderazgo o nuevo en un puesto de liderazgo en particular — es el momento perfecto para pensar en el estilo de liderazgo que deseas desarrollar. (Si es un líder experimentado, por supuesto puede reevaluar su manera de liderar y hacer cambios. Sin embargo, estará trabajando en contra de usted.

las experiencias pasadas de tu gente y tienes que superar sus expectativas). A medida que avanzas, ¿qué deberías considerar? Tres cosas:

¿Quién soy?

El buen liderazgo comienza cuando los líderes saben quiénes son. en su libro *Es tu barco*, afirma el capitán Mike Abrashoff,

En pocas palabras, la dura experiencia me ha enseñado que el verdadero liderazgo consiste en comprenderse a uno mismo primero y luego utilizarlo para crear una organización excelente. Los líderes deben liberar a sus subordinados para que desarrollen al máximo sus talentos. Sin embargo, la mayoría de los obstáculos que limitan el potencial de las personas los pone en marcha el líder y tienen su origen en sus propios miedos, necesidades del ego y hábitos improductivos. Cuando los líderes exploran profundamente sus pensamientos y sentimientos para comprenderse a sí mismos, puede tomar forma una transformación.¹

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Los líderes exitosos trabajan duro para conocerse a sí mismos. Conocen sus propias fortalezas y debilidades. Entienden su temperamento. Saben qué experiencia personal les resulta útil. Conocen sus hábitos de trabajo, sus ritmos diarios, mensuales y estacionales. Saben con qué tipo de personas trabajan bien y con cuáles tienen que esforzarse más para apreciarlos. Tienen una idea de hacia dónde van y cómo quieren llegar allí. Como resultado, saben de lo que son capaces y su liderazgo es firme.

Conocerse a sí mismo en un nivel bastante profundo no es rápido ni fácil. Es un proceso largo y complicado. Algunas cosas no son particularmente divertidas. Pero es necesario si quieres convertirte en un mejor líder. El autoconocimiento es fundamental para un liderazgo eficaz.

¿Cuáles son mis valores?

En un discurso sobre el valor de la honestidad, Mark Twain contó una vez esta historia: “Cuando era niño, estaba caminando por una calle y vi un carrito lleno de sandías. Me gustaba la sandía, así que me subí silenciosamente al carrito y delaté una. Luego corrí hacia un callejón cercano y hundí los dientes en el melón. Sin embargo, apenas lo hube hecho, me invadió una extraña sensación. Sin dudarle un momento, tomé mi decisión. Regresé al carrito, reemplacé el melón y tomé uno maduro”.

Sus valores son el alma de su liderazgo y impulsa tu comportamiento.

Con todos los problemas que hemos presenciado en la industria bancaria, la implosión de Enron y los fracasos de los líderes políticos, creo que entendemos lo que puede suceder cuando la gente trata sus valores como sandías en la parte trasera de un carro, intercambiando unos por otros. . Cuando los líderes no tienen ni mantienen valores fundamentales sólidos, sus acciones impactan a muchas más personas además de a ellos mismos.

Sus valores son el alma de su liderazgo e impulsan su comportamiento. Antes de que pueda crecer y madurar como líder, debe tener una comprensión clara de sus valores y comprometerse a vivir de manera coherente con ellos, ya que moldearán su comportamiento e influirán en su forma de liderar.

Al reflexionar sobre sus valores, creo que debe establecer lo que cree en tres áreas clave:

- **Valores éticos**—¿Qué significa hacer lo correcto por la razón correcta?
- **Valores relacionales**—¿Cómo se construye un ambiente de confianza y respeto con los demás?
- **Valores de éxito**—¿En qué objetivos vale la pena dedicar la vida?

Si responde estas preguntas y se compromete a vivir sus valores en estas tres áreas, estará bien encaminado para desarrollar la integridad que lo haga atractivo para los miembros del equipo y les haga querer seguir su liderazgo.

No hace mucho me encontré con una encuesta realizada por Opinion Research Corporation para Ajilon Finance que lo confirma. Se pidió a los trabajadores estadounidenses que seleccionaran el rasgo que para ellos era más importante en un líder. Si bien es importante para algunos, la mayoría de los encuestados no identificaron la experiencia, la competencia o incluso la equidad como lo más importante. Aquí están los resultados de la encuesta:

<u>RANGO</u>	<u>CARACTERÍSTICA</u>	<u>PORCENTAJE</u>
1	Predicar con el ejemplo	26%
2	Fuerte ética o moral	19%
3	Conocimiento de la equidad	17%
4	empresarial	14%
5	Reconocimiento General de Inteligencia y	13%
6	Competencia de los Empleados	10% ²

Claramente, si los líderes tienen un sólido conjunto de valores éticos y los viven, entonces la gente los respetará, no sólo su posición.

Los líderes inmaduros intentan utilizar su posición para impulsar un alto desempeño. Los líderes maduros con autoconocimiento se dan cuenta de que el alto desempeño constante de su gente no está motivado por la posición, el poder o las reglas. Está alentado por valores que son reales y genuinos.

¿Qué prácticas de liderazgo quiero implementar?

Herb Kelleher, ex presidente y director ejecutivo de Southwest Airlines, comenzó su carrera como abogado. En esos primeros años, aprendió algunas lecciones importantes sobre liderazgo. Él dice:

Mi mejor lección sobre liderazgo la recibí durante mis primeros días como abogado litigante. Queriendo aprender de los mejores, fui a ver a dos de los litigantes más reconocidos de San Antonio litigando casos. Uno se sentó allí y nunca objetó nada, pero fue muy amable con los testigos y estableció una buena relación con el jurado. El otro era un alborotador agresivo y atronador. Y ambos parecieron ganar todos los casos. Fue entonces cuando me di cuenta de que hay muchos caminos diferentes, no un camino correcto. Esto también se aplica al liderazgo. Las personas con diferentes personalidades, diferentes enfoques y diferentes valores tienen éxito no porque un conjunto de valores o prácticas sea superior, sino porque sus valores y prácticas son superiores. *genuino*.

Si quieres convertirte en un mejor líder, no sólo debes conocerte a ti mismo y definir tus valores. También debes vivirlos.

Mientras piensas en la forma en que definirás su liderazgo, tenga en cuenta qué tipos de hábitos y sistemas practicarás constantemente. ¿Qué harás para organizarte? ¿Qué harás todos los días cuando llegues al trabajo? ¿Qué prácticas espirituales mantendrás para mantenerte encaminado? ¿Cómo tratarás a la gente? ¿Cuál será tu ética de trabajo? ¿Qué tipo de ejemplo darás? Todo está en juego. Depende de usted definirlo. Y cuanto antes esté en el camino del liderazgo, mayor será su potencial de ganancia si comienza a desarrollar buenos hábitos ahora.³ —

La conclusión es que una invitación a liderar a la gente es una invitación a marcar la diferencia. Un buen liderazgo cambia la vida de las personas. Forma equipos. Construye organizaciones. Impacta a las comunidades. Tiene el potencial de impactar al mundo. Pero nunca olvides que la posición es sólo el punto de partida.

La desventaja de la posición

El verdadero liderazgo no se trata de posición

Como todo lo demás en la vida, el nivel de posición de liderazgo tiene aspectos negativos y positivos. Cada uno de los niveles de liderazgo posee tanto ventajas como desventajas. Descubrirá que a medida que avanza en los niveles, las ventajas aumentan y las desventajas disminuyen. Dado que la Posición es el nivel más bajo de liderazgo, tiene una gran cantidad de aspectos negativos. En el Nivel 1, veo ocho desventajas importantes:

1. Tener una posición de liderazgo suele ser engañoso

La forma más sencilla de definir el liderazgo es por puesto. Una vez que tengas un puesto o título, la gente te identificará con él. Sin embargo, las posiciones y los títulos son muy engañosos. Un puesto siempre promete más de lo que puede ofrecer.

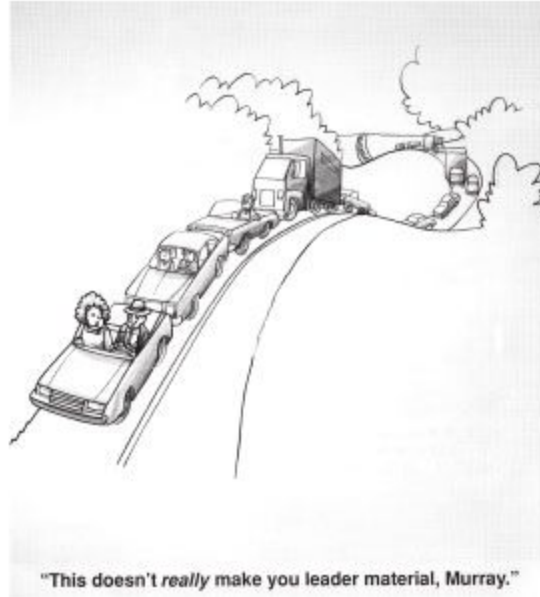
Aprendí esta lección sobre el Nivel 1 cuando recibí mi primer puesto de liderazgo en mi primera iglesia. Pensé erróneamente que ser nombrado pastor significaba que yo era el líder. No podría haber estado más equivocado, como descubrí en mi primera reunión de la junta directiva. Poco después de que comencé oficialmente la reunión como líder designado, *el real* El líder asumió el mando. Su nombre era Claudio. Había vivido toda su vida en el valle rural donde estaba ubicada la iglesia y todos lo amaban. Su influencia era obvia ya que los demás miembros de la junta acudían a él en busca de dirección y le hacían preguntas sobre cada tema. Podría haber abandonado la reunión y a nadie le habría importado. De hecho, ¡podría haber abandonado la reunión y nadie se habría dado cuenta!

Me quedé impactado. En ese primer encuentro y en todos los posteriores, todas las miradas y atenciones se centraron en Claude, *el real* líder. Los miembros de la junta no me seguían, a pesar de que tenía el puesto de trabajo, la vocación, el título universitario apropiado, el cargo, el salario: todas las “cosas” posicionales. Claude no tenía ninguna de esas cosas y, sin embargo, escuchaban todo lo que decía.

Mi error fue pensar que me había convertido en líder por mi puesto, en lugar de reconocerlo como una oportunidad para convertirme en líder. No entendía que el liderazgo me fue dado pero que aún no lo he ganado. Me parecía demasiado al conductor de este cómic.⁴ —

LAUGH PARADE®

BY BUNNY HOEST AND JOHN REINER



En aquel entonces definí *principal* como sustantivo, como quién era yo, no como verbo, como lo que estaba haciendo. El liderazgo es una acción, no una posición. Cuando llegué a esa primera iglesia, Claude se había ganado su influencia de liderazgo a través de muchas acciones positivas durante muchos años. Y como resultado la gente lo siguió. Claude, que era un granjero con los pies en la tierra, me lo explicó más tarde diciendo: "John, todas las letras antes o después de un nombre son como la cola de un cerdo. No tiene nada que ver con la calidad del tocino".

El liderazgo es acción, no posición.

He llegado a abrazar el liderazgo como acción y me esfuerzo por enseñar ese concepto a los líderes en conferencias y seminarios en el país y en el extranjero. Una de las formas en que lo hago es a través de mi organización internacional de liderazgo sin fines de lucro, EQUIP, que ha capacitado a más de 5 millones de líderes en 160 países. Los formadores de la organización y yo hemos descubierto que el desafío número uno en los países en desarrollo es introducir la idea de liderazgo como

acción en lugar de posición. Los líderes de estos países suelen tener una mentalidad de “ya llegué”. Queremos que comprendan una de las características más importantes del liderazgo: los líderes siempre llevan a las personas a alguna parte. No son estáticos. Si no hay camino, no hay liderazgo.

Los líderes siempre están llevando a la gente a alguna parte. Ellos no son estáticos. Si no hay viaje, no hay liderazgo.

2. Los líderes que dependen de la posición para liderar a menudo devalúan a las personas

Las personas que dependen de su posición para su liderazgo casi siempre valoran mucho mantener su posición, a menudo por encima de cualquier otra cosa que hagan. Su posición es más importante para ellos que el trabajo que realizan, el valor que agregan a sus subordinados o su contribución a la organización. Este tipo de actitud no contribuye en nada a promover buenas relaciones con las personas. De hecho, los líderes posicionales a menudo ven a los subordinados como una molestia, como engranajes intercambiables en la máquina organizacional, o incluso como obstáculos problemáticos para su objetivo de conseguir un ascenso al siguiente puesto. Como resultado, los departamentos, equipos u organizaciones que tienen líderes posicionales sufren una moral terrible.

A menudo, para verse mejor o evitar que la gente se alce y los amenace, los líderes posicionales hacen que otras personas se sientan pequeñas. ¿Cómo?

Al no tener una creencia genuina en ellos.

Al asumir que las personas *no pueden* lugar de asumir que *pueden*. Al asumir que las personas *no tienen* lugar de creer que *tienen voluntad*. Al ver sus *problemas* más fácilmente que sus *potencial*. Al verlos como *pasivos* en lugar de *activos*.

Los líderes que dependen de su título o posición para influir en los demás simplemente no parecen trabajar bien con la gente. Algunos ni siquiera *comunican* con la gente! ¿Por qué? En realidad, es una cuestión del huevo o la gallina. ¿No trabajan bien con la gente y como resultado dependen de su posición? ¿O es que debido a que dependen de su puesto, nunca se toman el tiempo y el esfuerzo para trabajar bien con la gente? No sé. Quizás existan ambos tipos de líderes posicionales. Pero esto es lo que sí sé: descuidan muchos de los aspectos humanos del liderazgo de otros. Ignoran el hecho de que todas las personas tienen esperanzas, sueños, deseos y metas propias. No reconocen que, como líderes, deben aunar su visión y las aspiraciones de su pueblo de una manera que beneficie a todos. En resumen, no lideran bien porque no reconocen ni tienen en cuenta que el liderazgo (de cualquier tipo, en cualquier lugar y con cualquier propósito) consiste en trabajar con personas.

3. Los líderes posicionales se alimentan de la política

Cuando los líderes valoran la posición por encima de la capacidad de influir en los demás, el entorno de la organización suele volverse muy político. Hay muchas maniobras. Los líderes posicionales se centran en el control en lugar de en la contribución. Trabajan para ganar títulos. Hacen lo que pueden para conseguir el mayor personal y el mayor presupuesto posible, no por el bien de la misión de la organización, sino por el bien de expandir y defender su territorio. Y cuando un líder posicional es capaz de hacer esto, a menudo incita a otros a hacer lo mismo porque les preocupa que las ganancias de otros sean su pérdida. No sólo crea un círculo vicioso de astucia, posturas y maniobras, sino que también crea rivalidades y silos departamentales.

Los líderes posicionales se centran en controlar en lugar de contribución.

Durante muy poco tiempo, como joven líder, trabajé en un ambiente altamente político como el que describí. Era como trabajar en un campo minado. Había muchas reglas no escritas y protocolos ocultos para concertar citas con los superiores o seleccionar con quién comer en el almuerzo. Se puso gran énfasis en el uso de títulos adecuados para dirigirse a las personas. Y mucho de cómo te trataban dependía de tus antecedentes. No hace falta decir que no me fue bien en ese ambiente. Inmediatamente busqué un mejor lugar para desarrollar mis habilidades de liderazgo. Cuando lo encontré y me fui, me sentí muy feliz. ¡Y ellos también!

Todavía tengo que encontrar una organización altamente política que funcione con la máxima eficiencia y posea una moral alta. Basta mirar la mayoría de nuestras instituciones gubernamentales y pensar en los líderes y trabajadores que hay en ellas. A la mayoría de las personas ciertamente les vendría bien mejorar, y alejarse del liderazgo posicional les ayudaría mucho.

4. Los líderes posicionales anteponen los derechos a las responsabilidades

Uno de mis personajes televisivos favoritos de todos los tiempos es Barney Fife, el diputado del pequeño pueblo de Mayberry en *El show de Andy Griffith*. Don Knotts interpretó a Barney y, junto con Andy Griffith, quien interpretó al sheriff Andy Taylor, le dio a Estados Unidos una de sus series de televisión más exitosas. He visto todos los episodios, algunos muchas veces.

Barney Fife era el típico líder posicional. Su deseo de sentirse importante y tener autoridad creó muchas historias humorísticas. Armado con una bala y una placa, aprovechó cada oportunidad para que la gente supiera que estaba a cargo. Tenía derechos como representante de la ley y quería que la gente los reconociera. Desafortunadamente para él (pero afortunadamente para nosotros, el público), nadie más lo tomó en serio. El resultado fue un caos cómico, que parecía seguirlo a todas partes.

Por el contrario, el sheriff Andy, que parecía dedicar todo su tiempo a ejercer una influencia tranquilizadora sobre su descarriado ayudante, tenía la verdadera autoridad y poder. Pero rara vez utilizó su puesto para hacer las cosas. Tampoco portaba un arma. Todos sabían que él era el verdadero líder y que podía manejar cualquier situación. El enfoque de Andy estaba en su responsabilidad hacia las personas a las que servía, no en exigir respeto o recibir los derechos que le correspondían debido a su posición. *El show de Andy Griffith* Fue divertido y alegre, pero también fue un estudio sobre liderazgo.

El poeta TS Eliot afirmó: “La mitad del daño que se hace en este mundo se debe a personas que quieren sentirse importantes.... No pretenden hacer daño.... Están absortos en la lucha interminable por pensar bien de sí mismos”. Eso es lo que hacen los líderes posicionales: hacen cosas para verse y sentirse importantes.

“La mitad del daño que se hace en este mundo se debe a personas que quieren sentirse importantes.... No pretenden hacer daño.... Están absortos en el infinito.

**lucha por pensar bien en
ellos mismos."**

—TS Eliot

Inevitablemente, los líderes posicionales que confían en sus derechos desarrollan un sentido de derecho. Esperan que su gente les sirva, en lugar de buscar formas de servir a su gente. La descripción de su puesto es más importante para ellos que el desarrollo laboral. Valoran el territorio por encima del trabajo en equipo. Como resultado, generalmente enfatizan las reglas y regulaciones que les benefician e ignoran las relaciones. Esto no contribuye en nada a promover el trabajo en equipo y crear un ambiente de trabajo positivo.

El hecho de que usted tenga derecho a hacer algo como líder no significa que sea lo correcto. Cambiar el enfoque de los derechos a las responsabilidades suele ser una señal de madurez en un líder. Muchos de nosotros estábamos entusiasmados en los primeros años de liderazgo por la autoridad que teníamos y lo que podíamos hacer con ella. Ese poder puede ser estimulante, si no absolutamente embriagador. Es la razón por la que el presidente Abraham Lincoln dijo: "Casi todos los hombres pueden soportar la adversidad, pero si quieres poner a prueba el carácter de un hombre, dale poder". Cada uno de nosotros, como líderes, debemos esforzarnos por crecer y asumir un papel de liderazgo sin depender de nuestros derechos. Si podemos madurar de esa manera, comenzaremos a cambiar nuestro enfoque de disfrutar la autoridad por sí misma a usarla para servir a los demás.

**El hecho de que tengas
derecho a hacer algo como
líder no significa que
es lo correcto.**

5. El liderazgo posicional suele ser solitario

La frase “es muy solitario estar en la cima” debe haber sido pronunciada por un líder posicional, ¡o por alguien con un trastorno de personalidad! El liderazgo no tiene por qué ser solitario. La gente lo hace así.

Los líderes posicionales pueden volverse solitarios si no comprenden las funciones y el propósito del liderazgo. Ser un buen líder no significa tratar de ser el rey de la colina y estar por encima (y diferenciarse de) los demás. Un buen liderazgo consiste en caminar junto a las personas y ayudarlas a subir la colina contigo. Si estás solo en la cima de la colina, es posible que te sientas solo. Si tienes a otros a tu lado, es difícil ser así.

**Si tienes a otros a tu
lado, es difícil
Estar solo.**

Los líderes “reyes de la colina” crean un ambiente de trabajo negativo porque son inseguros y fácilmente amenazados. Siempre que ven gente con potencial empezando a escalar, les preocupa. Temen que su lugar en la cima esté amenazado. Como resultado, socavan a las personas que muestran talento, tratando de proteger su posición y mantenerse claramente por encima y por delante de los demás. ¿Cuál es el resultado habitual? Las mejores personas, sintiéndose socavadas y menospreciadas, abandonan el departamento u organización y buscan otra colina que escalar. Sólo se quedan personas promedio o desmotivadas. Y saben que su lugar está abajo. Eso desarrolla una cultura de nosotros contra ellos, en la que el líder posicional está solo en la cima. El liderazgo no tiene por qué ser solitario. Las personas que se sienten solas han creado una situación que las hace sentir así.

6. Los líderes que permanecen posicionales quedan marcados y abandonados

Cuando comencé a liderar personas al principio de mi carrera, aprendí una lección valiosa. Siempre traté de preparar nuevos líderes para el éxito y, a menudo, les di todo lo que pude para ayudarlos a convertirse en líderes establecidos. Una posición de liderazgo. Mi tiempo. Mi influencia. Modelado. Recursos. Oportunidades de liderazgo. Y esto es lo que descubrí: si les daba poco o nada a los buenos líderes potenciales, aun así tuvieron éxito y se convirtieron en buenos líderes. Por el contrario, cuando les di a los líderes mediocres todo lo que tenía, todavía no tuvieron éxito y no pudieron establecerse como buenos líderes. La posición no hace al líder: el líder hace la posición.

Siempre que las personas utilizan su posición para liderar a otros durante mucho tiempo y no logran desarrollar una influencia genuina, se las tilda de líderes posicionales y rara vez obtienen más oportunidades de avance en esa organización. Pueden moverse lateralmente, pero rara vez suben.

Si ha sido un líder posicional, puede cambiar y este libro le ayudará. Sin embargo, debe reconocer que cuanto más haya confiado en su puesto, más difícil le resultará cambiar la percepción de los demás sobre su estilo de liderazgo. Es posible que incluso necesites cambiar de posición para reiniciar el proceso de desarrollar influencia con los demás.

7. La rotación es alta para los líderes posicionales

Cuando las personas confían en sus puestos para el liderazgo, el resultado casi siempre es una alta rotación. Uno de los capítulos de mi libro *Liderazgo Orose* titula "La gente renuncia a la gente, no a las empresas". En él explico cómo las personas muchas veces aceptan un trabajo porque quieren ser parte de una empresa en particular, pero cuando lo dejan es casi siempre porque quieren alejarse de una persona en particular. Los buenos líderes abandonan una organización cuando tienen que seguir a malos líderes. Los buenos trabajadores abandonan una organización cuando el ambiente laboral es deficiente. Entreviste a una persona que se ha ido y hay muchas probabilidades de que no haya dejado su trabajo. Dejaron a la gente con la que tenían que trabajar.⁵

**La gente deja a la gente, no
compañías.**

Toda empresa tiene facturación. Es inevitable. La pregunta que todo líder debe hacerse es: "¿Quién se va?" ¿Se van los 8, 9 y 10? ¿O los 1, 2 y 3? Si salen 8 y entran 3, hay problemas por delante. Las organizaciones con liderazgo de Nivel 1 tienden a perder a sus mejores personas y atraer a personas promedio o por debajo del promedio. Cuantos más líderes de Nivel 1 tenga una organización, más se abrirá la puerta para entrar y salir con personas de alto nivel y con personas de bajo nivel.

Hace aproximadamente un año, mi amiga Linda Sasser me escribió una nota en la que hablaba sobre la dinámica que ocurre cuando los empleados de nivel superior se encuentran trabajando para un líder posicional. Ella dice que estas personas a menudo se convierten en líderes perdidos. Esto es lo que Linda escribió:

Parece que a un líder de Nivel I también le resulta difícil tener empleados de Nivel 3. ¡Los buenos líderes de nivel medio incomodan a los líderes incompetentes! Entonces, si bien es cierto que los empleados dejarán a un líder de Nivel 1 débil, también es cierto que los líderes de Nivel 1 eliminarán a los líderes de Nivel 1.

3 seguidores. Ver esto suceder ante mis ojos me ha fascinado y por supuesto me ha entristecido.

Entonces, ¿por qué los llamo líderes perdidos? Son grandes y prometedores que han sido llamados a liderar debido a su talento, pero son reprimidos o expulsados por los jefes de Nivel 1, dejándolos así desempleados y perdidos entre todos los trabajadores desplazados.

Qué pérdida de tiempo y talento. Cada vez que un líder posicional aleja a un trabajador productivo o a un líder potencial, la organización sufre. Es un hecho que una organización no funcionará a un nivel superior al de su líder. Simplemente no sucede. Si un líder de Nivel 1 está a cargo, la organización eventualmente será una organización de Nivel 1. Si el líder está en el Nivel 4, entonces la organización nunca llegará al Nivel 5, a menos que el líder crezca hasta ese nivel.

8. Los líderes posicionales reciben lo mínimo de la gente, no lo mejor

¿Puede nombrar una organización que obtenga menos de su gente y que sea la mejor en lo que hace? ¿Puedes nombrar un entrenador que obtenga menos de los miembros del equipo y que haya ganado un campeonato? ¿Puedes nombrar a un profesor que obtenga menos de los estudiantes y, sin embargo, ocupe el puesto más alto entre sus compañeros? ¿Puedes nombrar un país que reciba lo mínimo de sus ciudadanos y que sea respetado por el mundo? ¿Puedes nombrar un matrimonio que obtenga lo mínimo de cada cónyuge y que produzca una excelente relación a largo plazo? No, apuesto a que no puedes. ¿Por qué? Porque es imposible tener éxito con la gente que da lo mínimo.

Las personas que confían en sus posiciones y títulos son los más débiles de todos los líderes. Dan lo mínimo. Esperan que su puesto haga el trabajo duro por ellos en el liderazgo. Como resultado, su gente también da lo mínimo. Algunas personas que trabajan para un líder posicional pueden comenzar siendo fuertes, ambiciosas, innovadoras y motivadas, pero rara vez permanecen así. Normalmente se convierten en uno de tres tipos de personas:

Vigilantes del reloj

A los seguidores que prosperan en entornos de liderazgo de Nivel 1 les encantan los relojes y quieren que estén visibles en todo momento en todo el edificio. ¿Por qué? Porque cada momento en el trabajo se evalúa según el reloj. Antes del mediodía, cada vez que miran la hora, piensan en términos de cuánto tiempo llevan allí. "He estado aquí dos horas". Después del almuerzo, se trata de cuánto tiempo les queda. "Sólo dos horas más hasta que llegue a casa". El reloj también les avisa de los momentos más importantes del día: la hora del descanso y la hora del almuerzo.

En entornos de liderazgo de Nivel 1, la moral de los empleados comienza a mejorar después del descanso de la tarde porque comienza la cuenta regresiva para el momento más destacado de su día: la hora de irse. Alrededor de las 4:30, la energía en el lugar realmente comienza a aumentar. La gente se mueve por la oficina guardando cosas. Limpian sus escritorios para que nada les impida salir del trabajo exactamente a las 5:00 p.m.

A las 4:45 están paseando visitando y despidiéndose de sus compañeros de trabajo. Después de todo, no querrían parecer groseros al no despedirse cuando salen volando por la puerta.

A las 4:50 van al baño por última vez, sin importar cuánto tiempo del día hayan pasado allí. No querrían perder tiempo personal valioso en el baño cuando pueden hacerlo en horario de trabajo.

A las 4:55 reemplazan sus zapatos de trabajo por zapatos de atletismo. Esto asegura una escapada rápida.

A las 4:58 se ponen en posición de salida y esperan a que suene el cronómetro. A las 5:00 pm todos se han ido. Sus salidas han sido coordinadas, practicadas y sincronizadas a la perfección.

A las 5:02, no queda ni un solo automóvil en el estacionamiento, ya que cada uno de ellos ha sido cuidadosamente colocado en marcha atrás esa mañana, listo para un escape rápido.

Bien, tal vez estoy exagerando un poco. Pero esa descripción no está tan lejos de la verdad. Los que vigilan el reloj siempre saben cuánto tiempo queda antes de volver a casa y nunca quieren trabajar ni un momento después de la hora de salida. Pero piénselo: cuando las personas que trabajan con usted están ansiosas por dejar de trabajar con usted, ¿algo no está funcionando!

Cuando las personas que trabajan
con usted no pueden esperar para
**Dejo de trabajar contigo,
algo no funciona.**

Empleados suficientes

Debido a que los líderes posicionales en el Nivel 1 dependen de sus derechos de liderar y usan su posición de liderazgo como influencia, las personas que trabajan para ellos a menudo confían en sus derechos como empleados y usan los límites de las descripciones de sus puestos como influencia para hacer sólo lo que se les exige. . Si lo hacen con frecuencia y durante suficiente tiempo, pueden convertirse en personas suficientes. Hacen lo suficiente para sobrevivir, recibir un salario y conservar su trabajo. Para ellos, la gran pregunta no es: "¿Qué puedo hacer para ser un empleado valioso?" En cambio, preguntan: "¿Cuánto debo hacer para ser empleado?" No preguntan: "¿Cómo puedo avanzar y conseguir un ascenso?". Sólo preguntan: "¿Cómo puedo evitar que me despidan?"

Cuando las personas siguen a un líder porque tienen que hacerlo, harán sólo lo que tengan que hacer. La gente no da lo mejor de sí a los líderes que menos le agradan. Ofrecen cumplimiento reactivo, no compromiso. Pueden dar sus manos pero ciertamente no sus cabezas ni sus corazones. Son como el personaje de la caricatura de Randy Glasbergen.⁶

**La gente no da lo mejor de sí.
a los líderes que menos les agradan.**

A bastantes personas les resulta difícil presentarse. El único compromiso que muestran es el de descontar el máximo de días permitidos por cualquier motivo. Algunos gastan mucha energía mental buscando formas creativas de eliminar el trabajo. ¡Si tan solo usaran ese compromiso de manera positiva!



**"I always give 110% to my job.
40% on Monday, 30% on Tuesday, 20% on
Wednesday, 15% on Thursday, and 5% on Friday."**

Los mentalmente ausentes

En un entorno de Nivel 1, siempre hay personas que pueden estar físicamente presentes pero mentalmente ausentes. No se involucran mentalmente y aparecen simplemente para cobrar un cheque de pago. Esta actitud es muy perjudicial para una organización porque parece extenderse. Cuando una persona se aleja mentalmente y no recibe ninguna consecuencia por ello, los demás suelen seguirla. El cambio mental y el descuido son contagiosos.

Evidentemente, estar mentalmente desconectado también es bastante común. La organización Gallup lo ha seguido durante años y lo ha visto rebotar entre un 15 y un 20 por ciento en Estados Unidos en los últimos años. En 2006, Gallup publicó una encuesta en el *Diario de gestión de Gallup* mostrando estadísticas hasta el segundo trimestre de 2006. En ese momento descubrieron que entre los trabajadores de dieciocho años o más en los Estados Unidos, el 15 por ciento (alrededor de 20,6 millones de personas) estaban activamente desconectados. Gallup estimó que les costó a los empleadores 328 mil millones de dólares.⁷ Y en una encuesta más reciente, Gallup descubrió que más de la mitad de todos los empleados alemanes no estaban comprometidos con su trabajo.⁸

Clarence Francis, ex presidente de General Foods, dijo: "Se puede comprar el tiempo de un hombre; puedes comprar su presencia física en un lugar determinado; Incluso puedes comprar una cantidad medida de sus hábiles movimientos musculares por hora. Pero no se puede comprar el entusiasmo... no se puede comprar la lealtad... no se puede comprar la devoción de los corazones, las mentes o las almas. Debes ganártelos". Las personas que dependen de su posición en el Nivel 1 rara vez ganan más que "lo suficiente" de su gente. Y eso significa que no pueden alcanzar ningún gran nivel de éxito, porque el logro requiere más que eso. El éxito exige más de lo que la mayoría de las personas están dispuestas a ofrecer, pero no más de lo que son capaces de dar. Lo que muchas veces marca la diferencia es un buen liderazgo. Eso no se encuentra en el Nivel 1.

**El éxito exige más
de lo que la mayoría de la gente
está dispuesta a ofrecer, pero no
más de lo que son capaces
de dar. La cosa que**

**a menudo hace la diferencia
es un buen liderazgo.**

Cuando las personas que trabajan para un equipo, un departamento o una organización dan poco de sí mismas, los resultados son, en el mejor de los casos, mediocres. Y la moral es abismal. Dick Vermeil, ex entrenador ganador del Super Bowl, comentó: "Si no inviertes mucho, la derrota no duele mucho y ganar no es muy emocionante". Ésta es una descripción bastante buena de un entorno de liderazgo de Nivel 1.

La mayor desventaja del liderazgo de Nivel 1 es que no es ni creativo ni innovador. Es el liderazgo el que simplemente se las arregla. Y si un líder permanece en el *Abajo* del Nivel 1 el tiempo suficiente, puede encontrarse en el *afuera*. Si un líder falla en el Nivel 1, no hay otro lugar adonde ir que el territorio de U-Haul. Se mudará y buscará otro trabajo.

Mejores comportamientos en el nivel 1

Cómo aprovechar al máximo su puesto

Si ha estado liderando el Nivel 1 y confiando en su posición o título para mantener las cosas en marcha, ¿está destinado a permanecer allí para siempre? ¡Absolutamente no! Todos los líderes pueden aprender a liderar de manera diferente y ascender en los niveles de liderazgo si están dispuestos a cambiar la forma en que lideran en el Nivel 1. ¿Cómo puede aprovechar al máximo su posición de liderazgo mientras pasa del liderazgo posicional al permisivo? Haciendo tres cosas:

1. Deje de depender de la posición para presionar a las personas

No hay nada malo en tener una posición de liderazgo. Ese es el punto de partida de la mayoría de los líderes. Sin embargo, tener una mentalidad posicional tiene todo lo malo. Para convertirse en un líder eficaz en el Nivel 1, debe dejar de depender de la Posición para impulsar a las personas.

Los mejores líderes no utilizan su posición en absoluto para hacer las cosas. Utilizan otras habilidades. Para ayudar a los nuevos líderes a aprender esta lección, Linda Sasser a veces les pide a los líderes potenciales que comiencen a liderar. *antes* recibir una posición de liderazgo, solo para que pueda ver cómo responden y prepararlos para ascender en los niveles de liderazgo. Ella lo describió de esta manera:

Cuando tengo una persona que siento que está lista para liderar, le asigno un desafío que involucra sacrificio, coraje y humildad. Antes de otorgarle un título, necesito asegurarme de que esta persona experimente lo que es ser un líder. La elección de liderar debe ser suya y necesito que vean que no siempre es tan glamoroso como parece. Entonces les doy responsabilidad sin el título y no les digo a los demás que esta persona los liderará. El nuevo líder tiene que descubrir cómo mejorar el desempeño de sus compañeros de equipo sin tener un título o autoridad posicional.

Al principio les resulta muy difícil. A menudo regresan a mí con frustraciones y me preguntan: "¿Cómo puedo decirles qué hacer cuando no tienen que seguirme?". Esto crea momentos de enseñanza perfectos. Me permite cuestionar su enfoque. Yo digo: "¿Por qué les dices qué hacer? Un líder encuentra formas de influir en la acción. ¿Les has preguntado cómo puedes ayudarlos? Pregúnteles sobre los desafíos que tienen en su puesto. Tal vez haya una manera de trabajar juntos como equipo y hacer las cosas más eficientes entre sí. Forma una relación con esta persona y muestra interés en ella".

Con el tiempo, es muy emocionante ver cómo se lleva a cabo este proceso. Lo que me sorprende es lo que pasa. *después* Les doy a estos nuevos líderes su título. Los compañeros de equipo a quienes lideraban generalmente se emocionan cuando la persona recibe una posición de liderazgo. Y su actitud de ilusión se siente en todo el departamento. todo esto pasa

porque el nuevo líder ha comenzado a aprender que el liderazgo no se trata de un título o de tener un cargo. Se trata de influencia y del hecho de que puedes generar un impacto en los demás.

Es fácil recurrir a una posición para presionar a la gente, aunque no siempre es efectivo. Christian Herter, ex gobernador de Massachusetts, lo aprendió por las malas cuando se postuló para un segundo mandato. Un día, después de una ajetreada mañana de campaña sin tiempo para detenerse a almorzar, Herter llegó a una barbacoa en la iglesia. Estaba hambriento. Mientras avanzaba por la fila de servicio, le tendió su plato a la mujer que servía pollo. Puso un trozo en su plato y se volvió hacia la siguiente persona en la fila.

"Disculpe", dijo el gobernador Herter. "¿Te importa si tengo otro trozo de pollo?"

"Lo siento", dijo la mujer. "Se supone que sólo debo darle un trozo de pollo a cada persona".

"Pero estoy muerto de hambre", dijo el gobernador. "Lo siento, sólo uno para cada cliente", dijo la mujer.

El gobernador era un hombre modesto, pero también tenía hambre, así que decidió echar un poco de peso. "Señora, ¿sabe quién soy?" él dijo. "Soy el gobernador de este estado".

"¿Sabes quién soy?" dijo la mujer. "Soy la señora encargada del pollo. ¡Ahora siga adelante, señor!"

A nadie le gusta que le den órdenes o que alguien más haga lo mismo. La mayoría de la gente responde muy mal al liderazgo posicional. ¿Cómo saber si posee un enfoque posicional del liderazgo? Revise los siguientes conceptos, que representan una mentalidad posicional. Los líderes de nivel 1 piensan:

De arriba hacia abajo: "Ya te superé". Separación: "No dejes que la gente se acerque a ti". Imagen: "Finge hasta lograrlo".

Fuerza: "Nunca dejes que te vean sudar".

Egoísmo: "Estás aquí para ayudarme".

Poder: "Yo determino tu futuro".

Intimidación: "¡Haz esto o si no!"

Reglas: "El manual dice..."

Por el contrario, los líderes de nivel superior piensan de manera diferente. Lo siguiente refleja cómo piensan los líderes de Nivel 2:

Lado a lado: "Trabajemos juntos".
Iniciación: "Iré a ti". Inclusión: "¿Qué piensas?" Cooperación: "Juntos podemos ganar". Servicio: "Estoy aquí para ayudarte".
Desarrollo: "Quiero agregarles valor".
Ánimo: "¡Creo que puedes hacer esto!"
Innovación: "Pensemos fuera de lo común".

El nivel 2 se basa en las habilidades interpersonales, no en el poder, para hacer las cosas. Trata a los individuos liderados como personas, no como meros subordinados.

La Ley de Whistler dice: "Nunca se sabe quién tiene la razón, pero siempre se sabe quién está a cargo". Bueno, creo que Whistler debe haber conocido a algunos líderes de Nivel 1. La verdad es que si tienes que decirle a la gente que eres el líder, no lo eres. Si continúa confiando en su posición para conmover a las personas, es posible que nunca desarrolle influencia sobre ellas y su éxito siempre será limitado. Si quieres convertirte en un mejor líder, suelta el control y comienza a fomentar la cooperación. Los buenos líderes dejan de mandar a la gente y empiezan a animarla. Ése es el secreto para ser un líder orientado a las personas, porque gran parte del liderazgo es estímulo.

**"Nunca se sabe quién tiene
razón, pero siempre se sabe
Quién está a cargo."
—Ley de Whistler**

2. Derecho comercial para el movimiento

El filósofo político Nicolás Maquiavelo escribió: “No son los títulos los que honran a los hombres, sino los hombres los que honran los títulos”. Entendió la naturaleza del liderazgo y la verdadera debilidad de los títulos. Si desea aprovechar al máximo su posición en el Nivel 1 y honrar los títulos que posee, no confíe en ellos para liderar a otros. No ejerzas tus derechos. No se vuelva posesivo con sus ventajas. Y nunca creas que mereces tu puesto. El liderazgo no es un derecho. Es un privilegio. Debe ganarse continuamente. Si posee algún sentido de derecho, eso jugará en su contra.

Si siguió las primarias presidenciales de 2008, es posible que haya notado dos ejemplos reveladores de cómo el sentido de derecho puede afectar el liderazgo. En el lado republicano, Rudy Giuliani era el favorito en las encuestas y muchos creían que recibiría la nominación de su partido. Debió haber hecho una suposición similar, porque cuando comenzaron las primarias decidió no ingresar a las primeras. En cambio, esperó hasta las primarias celebradas en Florida. Ese estado tenía muchos delegados y pensó que lo ganaría fácilmente y luego usaría ese impulso para impulsarlo y tomar la nominación a la presidencia. ¿Qué pasó? John McCain, a quien los expertos políticos daban pocas posibilidades de ganar la nominación, trabajó duro desde el principio y obtuvo un par de victorias, y el impulso comenzó a cambiar. Cuando comenzaron las primarias de Florida, el país se estaba acercando a John McCain y alejándose de Rudy Giuliani. El sentido de derecho de Giuliani probablemente le hizo perder la nominación.

En el lado demócrata, Hillary Clinton era la primera favorita en las encuestas y muchos creían que recibiría la nominación de su partido. A diferencia de Giuliani, ella trabajó duro desde el principio. Sin embargo, parecía suponer que tendría la nominación asegurada para el Supermartes y no parecía tener una estrategia más allá de esa fecha. Mientras tanto, Barack Obama llevó a cabo su disciplinada campaña, ganó un impulso increíble y recibió la nominación. El resto, como ellos dicen, es historia.

Los buenos líderes no dan nada por sentado. Siguen trabajando y siguen liderando. Entienden que el liderazgo debe ganarse y establecerse. En cierto modo permanecen insatisfechos, porque la insatisfacción es una

Buena definición de motivación en una sola palabra. Los buenos líderes se esfuerzan por mantener a las personas y a la organización avanzando hacia su visión. Reconocen que las organizaciones a veces pueden estar llenas de nombramientos, pero que los equipos sólo pueden formarse con un buen liderazgo.

Es posible que haya sido designado para un puesto de Nivel 1, pero tendrá que liderarse a sí mismo y a otros por encima de él. Debes estar dispuesto a renunciar a lo que es para alcanzar lo que podría ser. Deje que la visión de marcar la diferencia lo eleve a usted y a su gente por encima de los límites de las descripciones de trabajo y las reglas mezquinas. Olvídense de sus derechos de liderazgo. Concéntrese en su responsabilidad de marcar una diferencia en las vidas de las personas que dirige. Cuando recibes un puesto o título, no has llegado. Es hora de empezar a moverse y llevar a otros con usted.

3. Deja tu posición y avanza hacia tu gente

Las personas que dependen de la posición a menudo creen erróneamente que es responsabilidad de la gente acudir a ellos en busca de lo que necesitan y desean. Los buenos líderes entienden que es su responsabilidad de avanzar hacia su pueblo. Los líderes son iniciadores.

El filósofo griego Sócrates dijo: "Quien quiera mover el mundo, primero se mueva él mismo". Si quieres ascender al Nivel 2 en tu liderazgo, necesitas salir de tu territorio. Necesitas dejar de ser el rey de la colina, bajar de tu lugar alto y encontrar a tu gente. Debe ir más allá de la descripción de su trabajo, tanto en términos del trabajo que realiza como de la forma en que interactúa con su gente. Debes asumir la responsabilidad de saber quiénes son, descubrir qué necesitan y ayudarlos a ellos y al equipo a ganar.

**"Que el que quiera moverse
el mundo, primer paso
él mismo."
—Sócrates**

Para poder hacer algo nuevo en la vida, debemos estar dispuestos a salir de nuestra zona de confort. Eso implica correr riesgos, que pueden ser aterradores. Sin embargo, cada vez que salimos de nuestra zona de confort y conquistamos un nuevo territorio, no sólo expande nuestra zona de confort sino que también nos agranda. Si quieres crecer como líder, prepárate para sentirte incómodo. Pero sepa esto: los riesgos bien valen la recompensa.

Las leyes del liderazgo a nivel de puesto

PAGLa gente frecuentemente quiere saber cómo se combinan los muchos conceptos de mis distintos libros. Como he enseñado los 5 niveles de liderazgo a lo largo de los años, el libro sobre el que más me han preguntado es *Las 21 leyes irrefutables del liderazgo*. "¿Qué leyes prácticas en el Nivel 1?" la gente pregunta. La verdad es que todas las leyes se pueden practicar en todos los niveles. Sin embargo, también es cierto que ciertas leyes se aprenden mejor a medida que una persona crece y asciende en los 5 niveles de liderazgo. He incluido una explicación de las Leyes del Liderazgo que mejor se aplican a cada nivel. Ciertamente no son necesarios para aprender los 5 Niveles, pero se proporcionan como referencia en caso de que puedan servirle en su proceso de crecimiento.

La ley de la tapa*La capacidad de liderazgo determina la capacidad de una persona.*

Nivel de efectividad

Cada persona tiene un límite sobre su potencial de liderazgo. No todos tenemos el mismo talento. El desafío que todos enfrentamos es crecer y desarrollar todo nuestro potencial de liderazgo, revelando así nuestra capacidad real de liderazgo.

El mayor obstáculo para el crecimiento de un líder es volverse posicional en su pensamiento. Cada vez que cree que ha llegado, ya sea que su puesto sea el más bajo o el más alto en la organización, ha reducido sus expectativas, ha dejado corto su liderazgo y ha caído en una mentalidad de no crecimiento. Las personas no pueden alcanzar su potencial de liderazgo si permanecen en el Nivel 1.

Si estás dispuesto a olvidarte del título y la posición y, en cambio, concentrarte en tu potencial, te quitarás un gran peso que de otro modo te detendría. Si desea romper sus límites de liderazgo y elevar su liderazgo, debe ir más allá del Nivel 1.

La ley del proceso*El liderazgo se desarrolla diariamente, no en un día*

Un puesto de liderazgo se puede conseguir en un día, pero el desarrollo del liderazgo es un proceso que dura toda la vida. Quienes tienen una mentalidad de Posición suelen decir cosas como "Hoy me convertí en líder". Lo que necesitan pensar es, *Hoy recibí un puesto de liderazgo. Me esforzaré cada día por convertirme en un mejor líder.* Eso es abrazar la Ley del Proceso. Hacer ese tipo de declaración enfatiza que el nombramiento de liderazgo es sólo un punto de partida, y permanecer allí significa que en realidad nunca comenzará su viaje de liderazgo.

La Ley de la Navegación *Cualquiera puede dirigir el barco, pero Se necesita un líder para trazar el rumbo*

Cuando recibe un puesto de liderazgo, es aconsejable reconocer qué tan temprano se encuentra en el camino del liderazgo y cuánto le queda por aprender. La Ley de Navegación es un buen recordatorio de ello.

A mi amigo Bill Hybels le encanta navegar y es un marinero consumado. Hace unos años, él, yo y nuestras esposas disfrutamos de unos días navegando en las Islas Vírgenes Británicas junto con otras dos parejas. El barco que alquilamos venía con su propio capitán y tripulación, pero también pudimos participar en la navegación del barco. El primer día, Bill me puso al timón y me dio instrucciones mientras intentaba navegar el barco. No fue fácil, pero después de unas horas comencé a dominarlo.

¿Por qué menciono esto? Porque como marinero novato podía gobernar el barco, pero ciertamente no podía trazar el rumbo. Se necesitaba un líder experimentado para hacer eso. Bill podría haberlo hecho, pero en nuestro caso, lo hizo el capitán del barco.

Si estás en el Nivel 1 como líder, conoce tus limitaciones. Puedes aprender a trazar el rumbo, pero para hacerlo debes ascender a niveles más altos de liderazgo.

Creencias que ayudan a un líder a ascender al nivel 2

Para pasar de un líder de Nivel 1 a un líder de Nivel 2, primero debe cambiar su forma de pensar sobre el liderazgo. Nadie tiene que seguir siendo un líder posicional, aunque cuanto más haya confiado en su posición, más tiempo le llevará cambiar su forma de liderar y la forma en que los demás lo ven. Tendrás que ganarte el ascenso desde el nivel 1.

Aquí hay cuatro declaraciones que debe adoptar internamente antes de poder cambiar de un líder posicional a uno que permite permiso:

1. Los títulos no son suficientes

Vivimos en una cultura que valora los títulos. Admiramos y respetamos a las personas con títulos como médico, director ejecutivo, presidente, doctorado, ganador del Premio de la Academia, director, ganador del Premio Nobel, vendedor del año, presidente, poeta laureado. Pero, ¿qué significan realmente esos títulos? Muy poco. Los títulos, en última instancia, están vacíos y debes aprender a verlos de esa manera. Las personas que tienen como objetivo profesional obtener ciertos títulos no se están preparando para ser los mejores líderes posibles.

Quién es la persona y el trabajo que realiza es lo que realmente importa. Si el trabajo es significativo y agrega valor a las personas, entonces no es necesario que venga con un título. Muchas veces ni siquiera tenemos control sobre si recibimos un título o un premio. Y por cada persona que ha recibido reconocimiento, hay miles de otras que trabajan sin reconocimiento y que tal vez merezcan un honor aún mayor. Sin embargo, continúan trabajando sin crédito porque el trabajo en sí y el impacto positivo en los demás son recompensa suficiente.

Desarrollar la conciencia de que los títulos tienen poco valor real y que la Posición es el nivel más bajo de liderazgo genera una saludable sensación de insatisfacción con el Nivel 1, así como un deseo de crecer. Un Puesto no es un destino digno para la vida de ninguna persona. La seguridad no da propósito. El liderazgo debe ser activo y dinámico. Su propósito es crear un cambio positivo.

**Un puesto no es digno
destino para cualquier
la vida de la persona.**

2. Las personas, no la posición, son el activo más valioso de un líder

Si desea convertirse en un mejor líder, no puede concentrarse en reglas y procedimientos para hacer las cosas o mantenerlas en funcionamiento. Debes desarrollar relaciones. ¿Por qué? Porque la realidad es que *gente* hacer las cosas, no el manual que utilizan. Y como las personas son el poder detrás de cualquier organización, son su activo más valioso y apreciable.

Aprender esta lección marcó una gran diferencia en mi vida de liderazgo. Durante los primeros años de mi carrera, fui un líder de Nivel 1. Me concentré demasiado en la posición y me volví impulsado por la posición. Me preguntaba constantemente, *¿Cuáles son mis derechos? ¿Está clara mi autoridad? ¿Dónde estoy en el organigrama? ¿Cómo me comparo con otros líderes? ¿Cómo puedo subir la escalera? ¿A quién necesito saber? ¿Cuál es el siguiente paso en mi carrera profesional?* Mi preocupación por la posición creó frustración dentro de mí; Si te concentras en la posición, nunca estarás satisfecho si no estás en la cima. (Irónicamente, si te concentras en la posición y llegas a la cima, tampoco estarás satisfecho con eso).

Lamento decir que en aquel entonces estaba dispuesto a utilizar personas para mejorar mi posición en lugar de utilizar mi posición para mejorar a las personas. Eso no estuvo bien. Y no funcionó. Cuando finalmente me di cuenta de que confiar en la Posición y mandar a las personas no era la mejor manera de sacar lo mejor de ellas, mi actitud y mis acciones comenzaron a cambiar. Empecé a poner a las personas por delante de la posición. En lugar de apagarme, comencé a poblarme. Inmediatamente la gente notó que mi actitud hacia ellos había cambiado.

Me tomó algún tiempo desarrollar las habilidades interpersonales que necesitaba para convertirme en un mejor líder, pero no me tomó tiempo en absoluto hacerles saber a los demás que los valoraba, expresarles aprecio y interesarme personalmente por ellos. Así que ese es un cambio que también puedes hacer rápidamente. Y aquí está el beneficio inmediato: en el momento en que la gente notó el cambio en mi actitud, noté un cambio positivo en su respuesta hacia mí. Ellos comenzaron a ayudarme, lo que me permitió ayudarlos.

3. Un líder no necesita tener todas las respuestas

Los líderes posicionales a menudo creen que necesitan tener todas las respuestas. Después de todo, si admiten que no saben algo, demuestra debilidad. Y si muestran debilidad, ¿cómo van a mantenerse en la cima de la colina y conservar su preciosa posición? Para salir del Nivel 1, un líder tiene que pensar de manera diferente.

Cuando comencé mi carrera nada más terminar la universidad, pensé ingenuamente que tenía todas las respuestas. A los pocos meses me di cuenta de que no, pero tenía miedo de admitirlo. Mi inseguridad e inmadurez me hicieron actuar como el señor contestador. No importaba cuán ajena a mi experiencia estuviera la pregunta. Durante algunos años, probé el enfoque de liderazgo de “fingir hasta lograrlo”. Sin embargo, no fingí bien y otros se dieron cuenta. Y, por supuesto, ¡ese tipo de enfoque no te ayuda a lograrlo!

Empecé a darme cuenta de que el trabajo de un líder no es saberlo todo sino atraer personas que saben cosas que él o ella no. Una vez que reconocí que uno de nosotros no es tan inteligente como todos, dejé de reunir a la gente para darles las respuestas y comencé a pedirles que me ayudaran a encontrar las respuestas. Eso transformó mi liderazgo, no sólo porque pude ser yo mismo y dejar de fingir que sabía más de lo que sabía, sino también porque aprovechó el poder del pensamiento compartido.

Uno de nosotros no es tan inteligente

como todos nosotros.

4. Un buen líder siempre incluye a los demás

Debido a que los líderes posicionales a menudo trabajan solos, en la cima de la colina del liderazgo mientras sus subordinados trabajan juntos en la base, sus equipos trabajan muy por debajo de sus capacidades. ¿Por qué? El liderazgo independiente no conduce al trabajo en equipo, a la creatividad, a la colaboración ni a los grandes logros. Qué vergüenza y qué desperdicio de potencial.

La generación de mi padre poseía muchos líderes solitarios cuyo lema era "A mi manera o a la carretera". Como resultado, se perdieron mucho. Avanzar en los 5 niveles de liderazgo tiene que ver con los demás. Significa relacionarse bien con otras personas. Requiere que los líderes sean ejemplos para otras personas. Les desafía a desarrollar y equipar a las personas. Cuanto más subes en los niveles de liderazgo, más te das cuenta de que el buen liderazgo se trata de liderar *con* otros, no sólo liderar a otros. Requiere colaboración. Requiere inclusión. Requiere el sacrificio de la ambición personal egoísta por el bien del equipo y la visión de la organización. Significa ser parte de algo más grande que uno mismo. Significa poner a los demás por delante de usted mismo y estar dispuesto a ir tan rápido como las personas a las que dirige.

Un amigo me dijo que cuando un grupo de marines entra en combate, no llevan sus insignias de rango. Una razón es que no quieren que los oficiales y suboficiales sean el objetivo del enemigo. Pero también hay otra razón: cuando los marines van a la batalla, saben quién está a cargo. La cadena de mando ya ha sido claramente establecida. Nadie necesita que se lo recuerden. Pero no usar símbolos de rango también envía un mensaje claro de los líderes a los seguidores: todos estamos juntos en esto. Vivimos o morimos juntos, sin importar el rango.

Pasar del Nivel 1 al Nivel 2 requiere el mayor cambio personal por parte de un líder. Requiere un cambio de creencias y actitudes hacia otras personas y el liderazgo. Pero esta es la verdad: una vez que decide incluir a otros en el camino del liderazgo, estará bien encaminado para lograr el éxito en los otros niveles.

Guía para crecer hasta el nivel 1

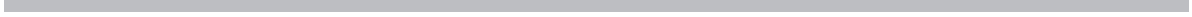
AA medida que reflexiona sobre las ventajas y desventajas, las creencias y los mejores comportamientos del nivel de liderazgo de Posición, utilice las siguientes pautas para ayudarlo a planificar su crecimiento.

- 1. Agradezca a las personas que lo invitaron al liderazgo:** Si alguna vez le pidieron que asumiera una posición de liderazgo, es una indicación de que alguien creyó en usted. Ya sea que lo invitaron a liderar hace una semana o una década, nunca es demasiado tarde para expresar gratitud a la persona que lo invitó a la mesa de liderazgo. Tómese el tiempo para escribir una nota o un correo electrónico para agradecer a esa persona y expresar el impacto positivo que ha tenido el liderazgo en tu vida.
- 2. Dedíquese al crecimiento del liderazgo:** No crecerá como líder a menos que se comprometa a salir de su zona de confort y tratar de ser un mejor líder de lo que es hoy. Escribe una declaración de compromiso con el crecimiento que describa lo que harás para crecer y cómo lo abordarás. Luego fírmalo y ponle la fecha. Colóquelo en algún lugar donde pueda consultarlo en el futuro. Este marca el día en que se comprometió a convertirse en el líder que tiene potencial para ser y a avanzar en los 5 niveles de liderazgo.
- 3. Defina su liderazgo:** El nivel 1 es el mejor lugar para dedicar tiempo a definir su liderazgo y decidir qué forma desea que adopte. Utilice las tres preguntas contenidas en la sección Nivel 1 del libro para describir el tipo de líder que desea ser:
 - ¿Quién soy?
 - ¿Cuáles son mis valores?
 - ¿Qué prácticas de liderazgo quiero implementar?

- 4. Cambio de posición a potencial:** En el pasado, ¿cómo ha expresado sus objetivos profesionales? ¿Ha pensado en términos de destinos, como puestos y títulos específicos, o ha pensado en términos del viaje, es decir, el trabajo que realizará mientras intenta alcanzar una visión más amplia? Si has pensado en términos de posición, cambia tu enfoque. En lugar de ello, piense en su potencial de liderazgo. ¿Qué tipo de líder tienes potencial para convertirte? ¿Qué tipo de efecto positivo puede tener en las personas que dirige? ¿Qué tipo de impacto puedes tener en el mundo? Reescribe tus objetivos para adoptar una mentalidad no posicional. Marcará la diferencia en su capacidad de enseñar y en la forma en que trata a los miembros de su equipo.
- 5. Centrarse en la visión:** Una de las formas de reducir el énfasis en el título o puesto es centrarse más en la visión de la organización y pensar en uno mismo más como alguien que ayuda a despejar el camino para que su gente cumpla esa visión. Para ayudarlo a lograrlo, tómese un tiempo para reescribir la descripción de su trabajo en esos términos. Escriba la visión de la organización y cómo su equipo o departamento ayuda a contribuir a esa visión. Luego, escriba formas específicas en las que puede facilitar que los miembros de su equipo hagan su parte para cumplir la visión.
- 6. Pasar de las reglas a las relaciones:** Si en el pasado ha dependido de reglas, regulaciones y procedimientos para guiar a las personas que dirige, entonces necesita hacer un cambio hacia un enfoque de liderazgo más relacional. Empiece por buscar valor en cada persona a la que lidere. Luego, haz todo lo posible para comunicar cuánto valoras a cada persona. Las personas son el activo más apreciado de cualquier organización. Debes estar seguro de tratarlos de esa manera.
- 7. Inicie contacto con los miembros de su equipo:** Si ha esperado a que las personas de su equipo acudan a usted en busca de liderazgo, debe cambiar su enfoque para conectarse con ellos. Sal de tu oficina o cubículo e inicia contacto con ellos. Haga que su objetivo sea conocerlos, expresarles su agradecimiento, animarlos y ofrecerles su apoyo.
- 8. No menciones tu título o puesto:** Si tiene la costumbre de mejorar su rango o recordarle a la gente su título o puesto, comprométase a dejar de hacer esas cosas. Incluso recomendaría ir tan lejos como para no mencionar tu título cada vez que te presentes. Hacer

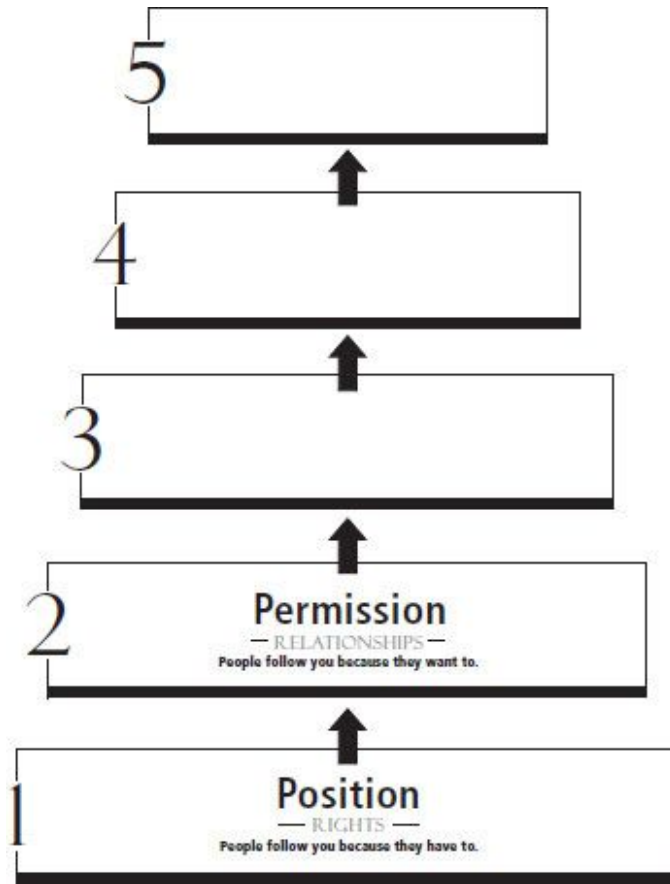
lo que sea que tengas que hacer para identificarte menos con tu título y posición y más con cómo contribuyes al equipo u organización.

9. **Aprenda a decir "No sé":** Si ha liderado pensando que tenía que tener todas las respuestas, entonces cambie su enfoque del liderazgo. Los buenos líderes no tienen todas las respuestas, pero reclutan y capacitan a personas que encontrarán las respuestas necesarias. Comience a adoptar este enfoque de inmediato. Durante el próximo mes, cuando alguien te pida una respuesta que no sabes, admítelo. Luego pide la opinión de las personas de tu equipo. Si no tienen las respuestas a las preguntas, pregúnteles si conocen a personas que las tengan. Haga que la resolución de problemas sea colaborativa.
10. **Encuentre un entrenador de liderazgo:** A la mayoría de las personas les resulta muy difícil crecer en liderazgo sin la ayuda de alguien que esté delante de ellos en el camino. Piensa en los mejores líderes que conoces personalmente y pídele a uno de ellos que te asesore o te oriente. Pregunte si puede reunirse con la persona de cuatro a doce veces al año. Prepárese siempre diligentemente antes de reunirse planificando qué preguntas hará y qué problemas pedirá consejo para resolverlos. Si no está preparado o no tiene preguntas, no solicite una reunión. Nunca hagas perder el tiempo a tu mentor.



Level 2: PERMISSION

You Can't Lead People Until You Like People



Making the shift from Position to Permission brings a person's first real step into leadership. Why do I say that? Because leadership is influence, nothing more, nothing less. Leaders who rely on their positions to move people rarely develop influence with them. If their subordinates do what they are asked, it's usually because they think they *have* to—to receive their pay, keep their jobs, prevent being reprimanded, and so on.

**People go along with leaders
they get along with.**

In contrast, when a leader learns to function on the Permission level, everything changes. People do more than merely comply with orders. They actually start to follow. And they do so because they really *want* to. Why? Because the leader begins to influence people with *relationship*, not just position. Building relationships develops a foundation for effectively leading others. It also starts to break down organizational silos as people connect across the lines between their job descriptions or departments. The more barriers come down and relationships deepen, the broader the foundation for leading others becomes. When people feel liked, cared for, included, valued, and trusted, they begin to work together with their leader and each other. And that can change the entire working environment. The old saying is really true: people go along with leaders they get along with.

Relationships are a major key to success, whether you're trying to sell, coach, teach, lead, or simply navigate the daily tasks of life. In the context of sales, Jeffrey Gitomer, author of *The Sales Bible* and *Jeffrey Gitomer's Little Red Book of Selling*, uses the analogy of the rock-paper-scissors game to describe the importance of relationships.

Here's the rock, paper, scissors game of selling:

Relationship is more powerful than price.

Relationship is more powerful than delivery.

Relationship is more powerful than quality.

Relationship is more powerful than service.

That can also be said about leading. Relationships have great power.

Moving up to Level 2 is an important development in leadership because that is where followers give their supervisors *permission* to lead them. People change from being subordinates to followers for the first time, and that means there is movement! Remember, leadership always means that people are going somewhere. They aren't static. No journey, no leadership.

The Upside of Permission

The Workplace Has Become More Pleasant for Everyone

There are many upsides to Level 2 because the focus on relationship building opens up so many new avenues of leadership. Here are my top five:

1. Leadership Permission Makes Work More Enjoyable

Positional leaders often focus their efforts on serving themselves or their organization, with too little regard for others. However, leaders who move up to Level 2 shift their focus from *me* to *we*. They like people and treat them like individuals. They develop relationships and win people over with interaction instead of using the power of their position. That shift in attitude creates a positive shift in the working environment. The workplace becomes more friendly. People begin to like each other. Chemistry starts to develop on the team. People no longer possess a “have to” mind-set. Instead it turns to “want to.” The workplace becomes more enjoyable for everyone—leaders and followers alike.

Leaders who move up to Level 2 shift their focus from *me* to *we*.

The key to moving up to the Permission level is having the right attitude. Level 2 leaders exemplify the words of J. Donald Walters, who asserted, “Leadership is an opportunity to serve.”

Permissional leaders like people and want to help them. They want to see them succeed. The prevalent attitude is one of serving others and bringing out the best in the people they work with.

I’m sorry to say that in my first professional leadership position, I focused way too much of my attention on myself and my organization. I knew where I wanted to go, and all I cared about in the beginning was getting there. What a mistake. It took me a couple of years to change my attitude and slow down enough to get to know people and find out what they cared about. It made a huge difference in my life and leadership. Now, more than forty years later, I have truly changed. Today my greatest joy comes from working with my team, not doing the work itself. I’ve gone from loving my work and looking for people to help me to loving my

people and looking for ways to help them. As a result, the journey has become much more enjoyable.

2. Leadership Permission Increases the Energy Level

What happens when you spend time with people you don't especially like or who don't like you? Doesn't it drain you of energy? That kind of environment brings most people down. Even in a neutral environment, if you are with people you don't know very well, doesn't it require a lot of energy to get to know them? Connecting with others always takes energy. Conversely, what happens when you spend time with people you know and like? Doesn't it give you energy? I know it does me. Spending time with the people I love—whether at work, at home, or while playing—is my greatest joy, and it always energizes me.

Good relationships create energy, and they give people's interaction a positive tone. When you invest time and effort to get to know people and build good relationships, it actually pays off with greater energy once the relationships are built. And in that kind of positive, energetic environment, people are willing to give their best because they know the leader wants the best for them.

3. Leadership Permission Opens Up Channels of Communication

On Level 2, top-down positional leadership is replaced with side-by-side relationships.

On Level 2, top-down positional leadership is replaced with side-by-side relationships. That requires and cultivates good communication. On the Permission level, leaders listen to their people, and their people listen to them.

The interplay of communication between good leaders and their people on Level 2 can be found in a quote by former General Electric CEO Jack Welch. He describes an ideal leader as

somebody who can develop a vision of what he or she wants their business unit, their activity to do and be. Somebody who is able to articulate to the entire unit what the business is, and gain through a sharing of discussion—listening and talking—an acceptance of the vision. And [someone who] then can relentlessly drive implementation of that vision to a successful conclusion.¹

Welch also commented, “Above all else, good leaders are open. They go up, down, and around their organizations to reach people. They don’t stick to established channels. They’re informal. They’re straight with people. They make a religion out of being accessible.”²

I believe most leaders are naturally better at talking than listening. I know that was true for me when I was early in my leadership journey. I was intent on communicating my vision to others and making sure they understood my agenda. I wanted communication to go only one way—from me to them. The result was that few people bought into my leadership or

my vision. I failed to realize that the road to vision buy-in was a two-way communication. That meant I had to learn how to listen.

Recently I came across an explanation of the Chinese symbol for the verb “to listen.” I thought it gave tremendous insight into the concept. The word, pronounced “ting,” is made up of smaller symbols with specific meanings:³



Those symbols represent *you*, indicating that the focus is on the other person, not on yourself; the *ear*, the primary tool used in listening; the *eyes*, which we used to discover nonverbal clues to communication; *undivided attention*, which every person deserves if we intend to listen to all that is said; and the *heart*, which indicates that we are open to the other person on an emotional level, not just an intellectual one. In other words, when I really open up the channels of communication on Level 2 and really listen, here is what I must give others:

Ears—I hear what you say.

Eyes—I see what you say.

Heart—I feel what you say.

Undivided attention—I value who you are and what you say.

Only when we do these things are we able to build positive relationships and persuade people to follow us.

When leaders forge relationships on Level 2, they not only create better communication, they also build a community. Sociologist Amitai Etzioni observed, “When the term *community* is used, the notion that typically comes to mind is a place in which people know and care for one another—the kind of place in which people do not merely ask ‘How are you?’ as a

formality, but care about the answer.” Level 2 leadership creates an environment where people begin to work together in a spirit of community and to communicate with one another openly.

4. Leadership Permission Focuses on the Value of Each Person

Level 2 leadership is relationally driven. That is only possible when people respect and value one another. It is impossible to relate well with those you don't respect. When respect lessens in a relationship, the relationship diminishes. You can care for people without leading them, but you cannot lead them effectively beyond Level 1 without caring for them.

**You can care for people
without leading them, but
you cannot lead them
effectively beyond Level 1
without caring for them.**

All great leaders value people. And they lift the value bar in their organizations. One of the greatest leaders in our lifetime is Nelson Mandela. He continually modeled a leadership that placed high value on every person. His strength and humility are legendary, and he was aware of how important his attitude was to his leadership. He observed, "You see, when there is danger, a good leader takes the front line. But when there is celebration, a good leader stays in the back room. If you want the cooperation of human beings around you, make them feel that they are important. And you do that by being humble."

Recently while on a trip to South Africa, I stopped in a bookstore in Johannesburg and picked up the book *Leading like Madiba: Leadership Lessons from Nelson Mandela*, by Martin Kalungu-Banda. I read it on my flight from South Africa to Kenya. It was filled with personal accounts of people who had witnessed their leader, Nelson Mandela, placing high value on people and lifting them up. One of my favorite stories was about a successful businessman named Peter, who had been invited by the president to come to his home and have breakfast.

On the day of their appointment, Peter dressed in his best and asked one of the company drivers, Dumi, to take him to Mr. Mandela's home. To

Peter's amazement, his host was waiting for him in the parking area. Peter recalled,

I felt both extremely elated and humbled that Mr. Mandela was waiting outside for me. He warmly greeted the driver and me. He then gestured that we enter the house. However, in the traditional way of corporate behaviour and protocol, the driver retreated quietly and remained in the car. Mr. Mandela invited me to the breakfast table. Just before we started eating, my host seemed to miss something. He asked, "Peter, I thought there were two of you?" I responded, "No, sir. I came alone." "What about the other gentleman?" he insisted, and I replied, "No, sir. That one is just a driver. He will wait in the car." At that point Mr. Mandela stood up and went out to where the driver was. He introduced himself to the driver and asked him to join us for breakfast. Mr. Mandela then walked to the kitchen and said, "Dumi is joining us for breakfast. Can we have another plate, please?"⁴

Peter never forgot what Mandela did. And neither did Dumi. Peter went on to say, "When leaders learn to see the personalities that lie behind these seemingly humble titles [drivers, guards, and servants], the people in those jobs do not just feel appreciated, they discover and walk into new horizons of their lives. They become great performers at what they do. They find personal fulfillment." That is the impact great leaders can have on people. But you don't have to be a great leader to care about people. You just have to make the decision to do it!

Nothing lifts a person like being respected and valued by others. As a leader on Level 2, your goals should be to become aware of the uniqueness of people and learn to appreciate their differences. You need to let them know that they matter, that you see them as individual human beings, not just workers. This attitude makes a positive impact on people, and it strengthens your leadership.

At the beginning of my ministerial career, my father gave me a great piece of advice. He said, "Son, the vast majority of people who walk through the doors of the church feel undervalued, insecure, and lost. It's your job to change that." I never forgot that. And during my twenty-six-year

career as a pastor, I always strove to follow that advice. I also try to bring it into my business relationships. I even do it at home. Every day I let my wife, Margaret, know how much I value her. When our children were growing up, we tried to provide an environment where we valued them and provided unconditional love. And as grandparents, Margaret and I enjoy seeing our grandchildren thrive as their parents and we show them every day how important they are to us.

There is a common thread in all great businesses, governments, educational centers, and religious institutions. That thread is everyone's valuing and respecting people. As a leader who moves up to Level 2, you can help to set an example of that for your organization.

5. Leadership Permission Nurtures Trust

Leaders who move up from Level 1 to Level 2 stop trying to impress others to maintain their position and start developing trust to maintain their relationships. That can be tough, because too often leaders place a higher value on impressing others than on having integrity with them. A story in a book by my friend Bill Hybels is a classic illustration of what can happen when leaders want others to be impressed. Bill writes,

A newly promoted colonel... had moved into a recently built makeshift office during the Gulf War. He had just arrived and was just getting things organized when out of the corner of his eye, he saw a private coming his way, carrying a tool box.

Wanting to seem important, he quickly spun around and picked up his phone. “Yes, General Schwarzkopf, yes, yes of course, I think that’s an excellent plan,” he said. “You’ve got my support on it. Thanks for checking with me. Let’s touch base again soon, Norm. Goodbye.” And he briskly hung up and turned around.

“And what can I do for you?” he asked the private.

“Ahh, I’m just here to hook up your phone.”⁵

Trust is the foundation of Permission. If you have integrity with people, you develop trust. The more trust you develop, the stronger the relationship becomes. The better the relationship, the greater the potential for a leader to gain permission to lead. It’s a building process that takes time, energy, and intentionality.

**“When the crunch comes,
people cling to those they
know they can trust—those
who are not detached, but
involved.”**

—James Stockdale

Retired admiral James Stockdale said, “When the crunch comes, people cling to those they know they can trust—those who are not detached, but involved.” That is the power of Permission. In times of difficulty, relationships are a shelter. In times of opportunity, they are a launching pad. Trust is required for people to feel safe enough to create, share, question, attempt, and risk. Without it, leadership is weak and teamwork is impossible.

The Downside of Permission

The Pressure Is on You to Build Positive Relationships

If you're a relational person, as I am, you may be saying to yourself, *What downside can there possibly be to developing relationships, building trust, and gaining people's permission to lead them? Isn't it all good?* My answer has to be no. While it is true that the positives far outweigh the negatives, there are still downsides to Level 2. Here are the ones I have observed:

1. Permission Leadership Appears Too Soft for Some People

In a hard-charging, high-performance, leadership-intensive environment, leading by Permission may appear “soft” to some people. Caring for people and being relational can be seen as weak, especially by leaders who possess a natural bias toward action (rather than affection). For that reason, some people dismiss it. What a mistake—and what a handicap to their leadership potential.

It’s been my observation that most people start their leadership focused on either the “hard” aspects of leadership, meaning the productivity side, or on the “soft” aspects, meaning the relational side. Those who start on the hard side and refuse to learn softer skills often get stuck on Level 1. They desire to go to Level 3 Production, but they can’t achieve it without learning and earning Level 2 first.

In contrast, those who start on the soft side gladly and easily work their way up to Level 2 Permission, but if they don’t do more than just win relationships, they get stuck and never move up to Level 3 Production, either. It takes both Permission and Production to become a good leader.

I started my leadership career on the soft side. Here is the good news: I quickly built relationships with people. Here’s the bad news: I never wanted to make hard decisions. I found it easy to love people, but when loving people created tension for leading them, I usually stopped leading. One of the reasons has to do with my upbringing. I grew up in a loving home, and as a result I mistakenly thought I could just love people to the top. But I also fell into the trap of wanting to make only decisions that were approved and accepted by all. I got stuck on Level 2 because my “softness” became a lid on my leadership.

It took an internal crisis to finally help me see what I was doing wrong. It occurred in my first pastorate, which was in a little country church in southern Indiana. Each year the congregation voted on whether to keep the pastor. As a young leader that first year in the church, my thoughts and actions had been dominated by making everyone happy. I had done everything in my power to do that, and I thought I had succeeded.

Then the vote came. For as long as I live, I will never forget the results: 31 yeses, 1 no, and 1 abstention. I was devastated! When your goal is to please *everyone*, and *anyone* is displeased, it is seen as a failure. I couldn't believe that someone didn't like me. And it was almost just as bad that someone else didn't even care one way or the other.

That night after everyone else had gone home, I called my father.

"Dad," I said, "I don't know what I should do. Should I stay or should I go?" I was shocked to hear him laughing on the other end of the line.

"Son, trust me, you need to stay," he responded. "It's the best vote you will ever have."

I stayed. But I still wasn't leading right. For the next few months I constantly asked myself two questions: Who voted against me? And what did I do wrong? My immaturity made me think that good leaders always had buy-in from everyone, they didn't have to deal with conflict, and they could avoid the reality of making hard decisions. (And, by the way, he was right. In my career, it was the best vote I ever had.)

I was stuck in this wrong kind of thinking for several months. But then I realized what my real problem was: I was a people pleaser. My goal had been to make everyone happy. That was the wrong goal. As a leader, my goal should have been to help people, not to make them happy.

That realization changed my leadership. For the first time I was freed up. I was no longer held captive by every person's opinion, which was a very unhealthy place to be. I could focus on doing what I believed was best for the organization and the people. Making everyone happy isn't responsible. Nor is it even possible. This realization made me more courageous and more realistic at the same time.

I needed to add the hard side of leadership to my natural bent toward the relational soft side. Others have to learn the soft side and add it to the hard, productive side. The point is you need both. If you're relational without being productive, you and your team won't achieve any progress. If you're productive without being relational, you may make a small degree of progress in the beginning, but you'll fall short in the long run because you'll either alienate your people or burn them out. You can't become successful in leadership until you learn both.

2. Leading by Permission Can Be Frustrating for Achievers

High achievers want to get things done and get them done *now!* They usually don't want to slow down for anything or anyone. Leading by permission requires them to do exactly that. Building relationships takes time. It can be very slow work.

If at one end of the spectrum you have achievers ignoring relationships, at the other end you have highly relational people who allow the relationships to become an end unto themselves. That's not healthy, either. In fact, the most common reason for leaders not moving up to Level 3 is that they become so relational that they lose sight of the primary goal of leadership: helping others work together, move forward, and achieve. When relationships become an end unto themselves, then high-achieving followers who focus on bottom-line results become restless. When that happens, they often try to do one of two things: take over or leave. You must win both levels as a leader to be successful.

If you step on people's fingers on the way up, they may trip you on the way down.

If you're a high achiever who has neglected relationships in your leadership, you may be saying to yourself, *I haven't needed to develop relationships to be a good leader. I don't think a leader really needs Level 2.* Here is my answer to that: as long as you're winning, people are willing to follow—even if you are hard on them or positional in your leadership. However, when you drive people to achieve without slowing down to build relationships, a part of them will want to see you lose. There's a saying that if you step on people's fingers on the way up, they may trip you on the way down. At the very least, if you fail, they'll celebrate your fall and then move on.

3. Permissional Leaders Can Be Taken Advantage Of

People whose leadership style is nonrelational are usually seen as no-nonsense leaders. Positional leaders often use their positions to distance themselves from subordinates. High achievers sometimes intimidate their followers. But when leaders are relational, their followers naturally get closer to them. That sometimes means that they mistake kindness for weakness. They believe that encouragement means they don't have to respect boundaries. They assume that empowerment means they have the freedom to do whatever they want. As a result, they take advantage of their leaders.

I have to admit this has happened to me. When I have encouraged people, some have built on it. Others have taken advantage of it. Developing close relationships with people who work with me has resulted in some lifelong friendships that I cherish deeply. But it has also resulted in some lifelong disappointments.

As you build relationships with people on Level 2, I believe you will find that there are four kinds of people:

- **Takers:** Those who leverage the relationship to better themselves, but not you or anyone else. They borrow your influence but keep the return.
- **Developers:** Those who leverage the relationship in a positive way, bettering themselves and you.
- **Acquaintances:** Those who live off of their relationship with you but never do anything with it. They hang around waiting for something good to come to them, content to live off of others' successes and never taking responsibility to grow themselves.
- **Friends:** Those who enjoy their relationship with you, returning your good will and never taking unfair advantage of it.

Being relational is a risk, just as it is when you open yourself up to falling in love. Sure, you can stay guarded and never get hurt. But you will also never have the chance to have deep, rewarding relationships that will enrich your life and the lives of others. I hope you will choose to build

relationships. I made that choice early in my leadership life, and though I have been hurt and I've occasionally had others take advantage of me, I don't regret it. Most people respect the relationship, treat it the right way, and add great value to me.

4. Permission Leadership Requires Openness to Be Effective

Author and pastor Rick Warren observes, “You can impress people from a distance, but you must get close to influence them.” When you do that, they can see your flaws. However, Warren notes, “The most essential quality for leadership is not perfection but credibility. People must be able to trust you.”

**“The most essential quality
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—Rick Warren

Most people don’t want to admit their mistakes, expose their faults, and face up to their shortcomings. They don’t want to be discovered. They don’t get too close to people because of the negatives in their lives. And if people receive a leadership position, the urge to hide their weaknesses can become even stronger. Most people believe they must show greater strength as leaders. However, if leaders try to maintain a façade with the people they lead, they cannot build authentic relationships.

To develop authentic relationships on the Permission level, leaders need to be authentic. They must admit their mistakes. They must own up to their faults. They must recognize their shortcomings. In other words, they must be the real deal. That is a vulnerable place to be for a leader. And truthfully, it is one of the main reasons many leaders never progress from Level 1 to Level 2 in leadership.

5. Permission Leadership Is Difficult for People Who Are Not Naturally Likable

If we're honest, we must admit that some individuals are naturally gifted with people. They interact well with others and easily develop relationships. Level 2 comes naturally for such people. But what about people who are not naturally gifted at working with people? For them moving up to Level 2 usually doesn't come as easily. If they want to win Permission with others, they have to work to make themselves more likable.

For years I have observed people who do not work well with others, and I have asked myself why they don't. My conclusion is that in most cases, people who are not likable don't like people very much. I'm not saying that they *hate* others. But I am saying that they don't care for others enough to commit the energy needed to make good connections with them.

I believe that people will not get ahead with others unless they are willing to get behind others. How can we do that? How can we become more likable? By doing the following:

- Make a choice to care about others. Liking people and caring about people is a choice within your control. If you haven't already, make that choice.
- Look for something that is likable about every person you meet. It's there. Make it your job to find it.
- Discover what is likable about yourself and do whatever you can to share that with every person you meet.
- Make the effort every day to express what you like about every person in your life.

If you want to win people's permission and lead effectively on Level 2, you must like people and become more likable.

6. Permission Leadership Forces You to Deal With the Whole Person

Auto pioneer Henry Ford once asked, “Why is it that I always get the whole person when what I really want is a pair of hands?” Let’s face it: relationships are messy. Many leaders would rather deal with people only in terms of their work life. But the reality is that when you lead someone, you always get the whole person—including their dysfunctions, home life, health issues, and quirks.

Good leaders understand that the heart of leadership is dealing with people and working with the good, the bad, and the ugly in everyone. They do this on Level 2. Leadership experts Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus put it this way:

Leadership is an essentially human business. Both universities and corporations seriously miss the point with their overemphasis on formal quantitative tools, unambiguous problems, and ridiculously oversimplified “human relations” cases. What we have found is that the higher the rank, the more interpersonal and human the undertaking. Our top executives spend roughly 90 percent of their time concerned with the messiness of people problems.⁶

I think if we’re honest, we have to admit that the messiness of people problems is what can make leadership no fun. So often, as we get to know others and we start to see their flaws, we become disillusioned with them. And we often end up like the woman at a cocktail party who was trying her best to look happy. Someone noticed a gargantuan sparkling rock on her finger and exclaimed, “Wow! What a beautiful diamond!”

“Yes,” she said, “it’s a Callahan diamond.”

“I wish I had one!” the onlooker replied.

“No, you don’t,” the woman tartly responded.

“Why not?”

“Because it comes with the Callahan curse.”

“The Callahan curse—what’s that?”

With a deep sigh and a forlorn look, she said, “Mr. Callahan!”

The more we learn about others, the more disappointed we may be. Why? Because each of us has imperfections and irritating habits. We all fail. After the Nixon years, Billy Graham said, “Everybody has a little Watergate in him.” We must learn to accept that about one another and still work together.

As a leader, you may be tempted to build relationships only with the people you like or with whom you are highly compatible, and to ignore the others. However, by doing that, you have the potential to lose a lot of people. It’s important to remember that while the things we have in common may make relationships enjoyable, the differences are what really make them interesting. Good leaders on Level 2 deal successfully with these differences and leverage them for the benefit of the team and organization.

Good leaders are able to look at hard truths, see people’s flaws, face reality, and do it in a spirit of grace and truth. They don’t avoid problems; they solve them. Abolitionist leader Frederick Douglass once said that you can’t expect to get a crop without plowing, and you can’t expect rain without thunder and lightning. Leaders who build relationships understand that conflict is a part of progress. Often it is even constructive.

The bottom line on Level 2 is that most of the downsides of leadership come from dealing with people. If you care about people and understand them, then you expect things not to go smoothly. If you go into leadership on the Permission level with that expectation, it frees you to lead with a positive attitude and an open mind. You know that as long as people still have a pulse, you will be dealing with messy and difficult situations.

Best Behaviors on Level 2

How to Gain People's Permission

If you find yourself in a place where you need to start working to win people's permission on Level 2, what should you do? How can you make the most of the opportunity to develop as a relational leader? Do the following:

1. Connect with Yourself Before Trying to Connect with Others

One of the secrets of connecting with people and building relationships is knowing and liking yourself. In my book *Winning With People*, I call it the Mirror Principle, which says, “The first person we must examine is ourselves.” The work in relationship building always has to start with yourself. What does that mean?

The First Person I Must Know Is Myself—Self-Awareness

Human nature seems to endow people with the ability to size up everybody in the world but themselves. Very few people are gifted with natural self-awareness. So what is a person to do? Become a student of yourself. Learn your strengths and weaknesses. Ask others to evaluate you. Understand the way you think, feel, and act in every kind of situation. Then once you know who you are, forget about yourself and place your focus on others. You will relate to other people from a place of strength.

The First Person I Must Get Along With Is Myself—Self-Image

I know people who’ve never gotten along with themselves a single day in their lives. They don’t like how they look. Or they wish they had been endowed with different gifting or a different personality type. They don’t like where they came from or where they’re going. There are a lot of things you can change about yourself. Work hard at those. But there are also many you can’t. Accept them. Take the advice of Thomas Jefferson: in matters of conscience, stand like a rock; in matters of fashion, go with the flow.

The First Person to Cause Me Problems Is Myself—Self-Honesty

Comedian Jack Paar quipped, “Looking back, my life seems like one big obstacle race, with me being the chief obstacle.” Most people who don’t get anywhere in life have themselves to blame. They don’t believe in themselves. They create problems and then pretend they are someone else’s fault. They want change but won’t grow. It’s very difficult to be self-deluded and successful at the same time. Even the few who manage to pull

it off can never sustain it. If you want to build relationships, you need to be honest—starting with yourself.

It's very difficult to be self-deluded and successful at the same time.

The First Person I Must Change Is Myself—Self-Improvement

If you want to change your life for the better, then the first thing you must do is change yourself for the better. Author Samuel Johnson advised that “he who has so little knowledge of human nature as to seek happiness by changing anything but his own disposition will waste his life in fruitless efforts and multiply the grief which he purposes to remove.” Too often we look outside of ourselves for the source of our problems. The reality is that many come from inside of us.

The First Person Who Can Make a Difference Is Myself—Self-Responsibility

Every significant accomplishment begins with one person stepping up and committing to make a difference. That person then takes responsibility to pass it on to others. If you don't take responsibility for yourself, then don't expect your life to become any different from what it is right now.

2. Develop a People-Oriented Leadership Style

Permissional leaders don't rely on rules to lead people. They don't depend on systems. And they never try to rule with a stick. (Anyone who does needs to know that every stick eventually breaks.) Instead, they use a personal touch whenever they deal with people. They listen, learn, and then lead. They develop relationships. They have more than an open-door policy—they know the door swings both ways. They go through it and get out among their people to connect.

“Leading an organization is as much about soul as it is about systems. Effective leadership finds its source in understanding.”

—Herb Kelleher

Herb Kelleher said, “Leading an organization is as much about soul as it is about systems. Effective leadership finds its source in understanding. Unless a leader has an awareness of humanity, a sensitivity toward the hopes and aspirations of those he leads, and the capacity to analyze the emotional forces that motivate conduct, he will be unable to produce and be successful regardless of how often other incentives are given.”

Another way to say it is that good leaders *never* take people out of the equation in anything they do. They always take people into account—where they are, what they believe, what they're feeling. Every question they ask is expressed in the context of people. Knowing what to do isn't enough to make someone a good leader. Just because something is right doesn't necessarily mean that people will let you do it. Good leaders take that into account. And they think and plan accordingly.

If you want to be successful on Level 2, you must think less in terms of systems and more in terms of people's emotions. You must think more in terms of human capacity and less in terms of regulations. You must think

more in terms of buy-in and less in terms of procedures. In other words, you must think of people before you try to achieve progress. To do that as a permissional leader, you must exhibit a consistent mood, maintain an optimistic attitude, possess a listening ear, and present to others your authentic self.

3. Practice the Golden Rule

One of the criticisms of permissive leadership is that it can become manipulative. I agree that leaders who put an emphasis on motivating people can use leadership for personal gain at the expense of others. There is a fine line between manipulating people and motivating them. However, a permissive leader can keep that tendency in check and keep from crossing over from motivation to manipulation by following the golden rule.

I am often given the opportunity to travel internationally and speak to a wide variety of audiences with different cultures, languages, histories, values, and interests. However, all request that I spend some time teaching them about integrity in relationships. In those situations, I always teach the golden rule: “Treat others as you want others to treat you.” That simple rule can be universally understood and followed. It establishes the relationship standard that make sense and can be applied. And it is a core teaching that can be found in every culture and religion. It is the simplest, most profound, and most positive guide to living there is. Take a look at how many variations on the golden rule I was able to find and the religions from which they come:

Christianity: “Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them.”⁷

Islam: “No one of you is a believer until he loves for his neighbor what he loves for himself.”⁸

Judaism: “What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow man. This is the entire Law; all the rest is commentary.”⁹

Buddhism: “Hurt not others with that which pains yourself.”¹⁰

Hinduism: “This is the sum of duty; do naught unto others what you would not have them do unto you.”¹¹

Zoroastrianism: “Whatever is disagreeable to yourself, do not do unto others.”¹²

Confucianism: “What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others.”¹³

Baha’i: “And if thine eyes be turned towards justice, choose thou for thy neighbour that which thou chooseth for thyself.”¹⁴

Jainism: “A man should wander about treating all creatures as he himself would be treated.”¹⁵

Yoruba Proverb (Nigeria):“One going to take a pointed stick to pinch a baby bird should first try it on himself to feel how it hurts.”¹⁶

**Practicing the golden rule
enables everyone to feel
respected.**

It is clear that the golden rule cuts across cultural and religious boundaries and is embraced by people from nearly every part of the world. And what does practicing the golden rule in leadership do? It enables everyone to feel respected. That changes the entire environment of a department or an organization. When leaders change from driving people in a positional environment to respecting people in a permissional environment, their people go from feeling like a stake to feeling like a stakeholder.

4. Become the Chief Encourager of Your Team

For many years I have enjoyed the friendship of the Cathy family, the leaders of Chick-fil-A. One day when I was having dinner with Truett Cathy, the company's founder, he said, "Do you know how I identify someone who needs encouragement? If the person is breathing they need a pat on the back!"

I have yet to meet a person who doesn't enjoy and benefit from encouragement. No one is too successful, old, experienced, or educated to appreciate positive praise and encouragement from another person. A great example of this can be found in the lives of two talented authors and teachers: C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien. The friends, both professors at Oxford, often met to share with each other the fiction they were writing. When Tolkien was writing *The Lord of the Rings*, he became discouraged. Lewis continually encouraged his friend to keep writing. "Tollers, where's the next chapter? You can't give up now," Lewis would chide. In later years, Tolkien acknowledged how much of a difference Lewis's positive input had made: "The unspeakable debt I owe him cannot be fathomed," wrote Tolkien. "For long, he was my only audience."

**"Kind words can be short
and easy to speak, but their
echoes are endless."**

—Mother Teresa

As a leader, you have great power to lift people up. Mother Teresa said, "Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are endless." I'm sure Lewis's encouraging words echoed in Tolkien's ears as he labored to write his fantasy masterpiece. As a leader, you can have a similarly positive impact on others. People enjoy affirmation from a peer. But they really value it from their leader. The words "I'm glad you work with me; you add incredible value to the team" mean a lot coming from someone who has the best interest of the team, department, or organization at heart.

If you want people to be positive and to always be glad when they see you coming, encourage them. If you become the chief encourager of the people on your team, they will work hard and strive to meet your positive expectations.

5. Strike a Balance between Care and Candor

Many people get the wrong idea about the concept of permissional leadership when they become acquainted with it. Some think that succeeding on the Permission level of leadership means treating the people on their team like family. That is almost always a mistake. People don't deal realistically with their family. I don't. I have a commitment level with them that is deeper than with others. Regardless of what they do, I am committed to giving them unconditional love. They have privileges that I extend to no other people. And compromise is a constant. (Anyone who says they don't believe in compromise has never been married—or stayed married.) What makes a family great isn't what makes a team great. Families value community over contribution. Businesses value contribution over community. The best teams strike a balance.

Others think being a permissional leader means giving team members permission to do whatever they want. That idea is also wrong. Just because you care about people doesn't mean you let them work without responsibility or accountability. If you care about people, treat them with respect, and build positive relationships with them, you actually have more numerous opportunities to speak candidly and have hard conversations with them that will help them to grow and perform better.

Every person has problems and makes mistakes in the workplace. Every person needs to improve and needs someone to come alongside them to help them improve. As a leader, it is your responsibility and your privilege to be the person who helps them get better. That often begins with a candid conversation. But before you have it, it helps to ask yourself what the nature of the problem might be. My friend Sam Chand says that when he is having difficulty with a person he asks himself one simple question, “Is this person a *can't* or a *won't*? *Can't* is about abilities. We can help these kinds of people in most cases—not in all cases, but in most. But *won't* is about attitude. If the issue is attitude, the time to let that person know there is a problem is now, because here is the deal: we hire people for what they know and fire them for who they are.”

**Care without candor
creates dysfunctional
relationships. Candor
without care creates distant
relationships.**

I believe that people can change their attitudes and can improve their abilities. And because I do, I talk to them about where they're coming up short. If you're a leader and you want to help people, you need to be willing to have those tough conversations. So how does a leader handle being relational while still trying to move people forward? By balancing care and candor. Care without candor creates dysfunctional relationships. Candor without care creates distant relationships. But care balanced with candor creates developing relationships.

Allow me to help you understand how care and candor work together to help a leader succeed on Level 2:

Caring Values the Person While Candor Values the Person's Potential

To lead successfully on Levels 2 and higher, it is important for you to value people. That is foundational to solid relationships. Caring for others demonstrates that you value them. However, if you want to help them get better, you have to be honest about where they need to improve. That shows that you value the person's potential. That requires candor.

One of the secrets of being candid is to think, speak, and act in terms of who the person has the potential to become and to think about how you can help them to reach it. Proverbs says,

Faithful are the wounds of a friend,
But deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.¹⁷

If you're candid with others but with their benefit in mind, it doesn't have to be harmful. It can be similar to the work of a surgeon. It may hurt, but it is meant to help and it shouldn't harm. As a leader, you must be

willing and able to do that. If not, you won't be able to help your people grow and change.

Caring Establishes the Relationship While Candor Expands the Relationship

The things that usually help to establish a relationship are common ground and care. But those things usually aren't enough to make a relationship grow. To expand a relationship, candor and open communication are required.

Most leaders I talk to have a difficult conversation that they know they need to have but are avoiding. Usually they are reluctant for one of two reasons: either they don't like confrontation, or they fear that they will hurt the person they need to talk to. But if a leader can balance care and candor, it will actually deepen and strengthen the relationship.

Let me give you an example. Sheryl came to work for me because she was a real go-getter with a lot of potential. For six months, I watched her work, and what I discovered was that she was great at the hard side of leadership. She was energetic. She was organized. She was a good planner. And she always got things done. But she totally neglected the soft side of leadership—the relational part. She wasn't winning over anyone she was leading. As a result, she wasn't gaining influence, which meant that her leadership was going to be very limited.

I scheduled a meeting with her so that we could have a candid conversation about her leadership style. I let her know how much I respected her ability and how much I cared about her as a person. But I also let her know where she was falling short and how that would limit her in her ability to lead people. I also offered to coach her on the relational side. To her credit, she accepted my criticism and took my help.

For the next couple of years, I met with her regularly, critiqued her interaction with others, gave her reading assignments, and asked her to do things that would stretch her. She blossomed as a leader and began to win people on Level 2. And that freed her to keep growing. It wasn't long before she worked her way up to Level 4 with many people in the organization.

Not everyone responds well to candid conversations. Let's face it: honesty can hurt. Some people shut down when you criticize them. Others leave and work somewhere else. However, if you have candid conversations with someone and that person hangs in there and grows, she will make herself a candidate for the climb up to Level 3 and beyond, just as Sheryl did.

Caring Defines the Relationship While Candor Directs the Relationship

Solid relationships are defined by how people care about one another. But just because people care about one another doesn't mean that they are going anywhere together. Getting the team moving together to accomplish a goal is the responsibility of the leader, and that often requires candor. My friend, Colin Sewell, owner of several auto dealerships, said to me, "Leaders have to make the best decisions for the largest group of people. Therefore, leaders give up the right to cater to an individual if it hurts the team or the organization."

"Leaders have to make the best decisions for the largest group of people. Therefore, leaders give up the right to cater to an individual if it hurts the team or the organization."

—Colin Sewell

Getting results always matters, and good leaders never lose track of that. One night at a basketball banquet the president of a junior college was congratulating the coach and the team profusely. The beaming coach asked the president, "Would you still like me as much if we didn't win?"

"I'd like you as much," the president replied. "I'd just miss having you around."

Retired army general and former secretary of state Colin Powell noted, “Good leadership involves responsibility to the welfare of the group, which means that some people will get angry at your actions and decisions. It’s inevitable—if you’re honorable.” If you want to lead people well, you need to be willing to direct them candidly.

Caring Should Never Suppress Candor, While Candor Should Never Displace Caring

The bottom line, which has already become very clear, is that good leaders must embrace both care and candor. You can’t ignore either. So to help you keep the balance between the two, I’ve created a caring candor checklist for working with people. Before having a candid conversation, make sure that you can answer yes to the following questions:

- Have I invested enough in the relationship to be candid with them?
- Do I truly value them as people?
- Am I sure this is their issue and not mine?
- Am I sure I’m not speaking up because I feel threatened?
- Is the issue more important than the relationship?
- Does this conversation clearly serve their interests and not just mine?
- Am I willing to invest time and energy to help them change?
- Am I willing to show them how to do something, not just say what’s wrong?
- Am I willing and able to set clear, specific expectations?

If you can answer yes to all of these questions, then your motives are probably right and you have a good chance of being able to communicate effectively.

As a young leader, I found it very difficult to have candid conversations with people. I often postponed those difficult talks, hoping that an issue would go away. Seldom did that happen. Maybe you relate to that. If so, you’ll be glad to hear that you’re normal. However, you need to know that candid conversations are a leader’s responsibility and must be done—but in the right way with the right attitude. When an employee is hired to get a certain job done and doesn’t, that hurts the team and the organization. And

then it's time for the leader to take action. That can be very hard; but in the long term, it's best not only for the organization but also for the person who needs to hear what's not going right.

The next time you find yourself in a place where you need to have a candid conversation, just remember this:

- Do it quickly—shovel the pile while it's small.
- Do it calmly, never in anger—use the caring candor checklist.
- Do it privately—you want to help the person, not embarrass him or her.
- Do it thoughtfully, in a way that minimizes embarrassment or intimidation.

If your goal is to help the individual, improve the team, and fulfill the vision of the organization, then this is the path you should follow as a leader.

As you work with people and have candid conversations, allow me to remind you of one more thing: candidness is a two-way street. If you want to be an effective leader and earn your way onto Level 2, you must allow the people you work with to be candid with you. You must solicit feedback. And you must be mature and secure enough to take in people's criticism without defensiveness and learn from it. Leadership expert Warren Bennis observed, "Effective leaders reward dissent, as well as encourage it. They understand that whatever momentary discomfort they experience as a result of being told from time to time that they are wrong is more than offset by the fact that 'reflective back talk' increases a leader's ability to make good decisions."¹⁸ Caring for people, making good decisions for everyone involved, and building solid relationships is what Level 2 is all about. This is Permission at its best.

The Laws of Leadership at the Permission Level

If you want to use the Laws of Leadership to help you grow and win Permission on Level 2, then consider the following:

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

If you boil leadership down to its essence, it is influence. Leaders help people work together to accomplish goals that benefit everyone involved. How does one person get others to do something willingly, excellently, and consistently? By influencing them.

When I first developed the 5 Levels, I called it The 5 Levels of Influence. Why? Because each time leaders climb a level, their influence increases. The influencing process begins at Level 2, where relationships are formed. That is where leadership begins the shift from coercion to cooperation.

The Law of Addition *Leaders Add Value by Serving Others*

Why do people initially want to be in leadership? Is it to gain power? To have more freedom? To receive a bigger paycheck? To feed their ego? Many times leaders begin their careers with selfish motives. Maybe that's not a good thing. But it doesn't have to be a bad thing if we are willing to change and put our focus on others.

I've observed that most Level 1 leaders who have no desire to move up to Level 2 Permission haven't gotten beyond the selfishness of wanting a leadership position for their own benefit. To move up to Level 2, leaders need to understand that great leaders practice the Law of Addition. They lead in order to help people and add value to them.

The Law of Solid Ground *Trust Is the Foundation of Leadership*

Trust is the foundation not only of leadership relationships but of all relationships. You cannot influence people who don't trust you. You cannot build positive relationships with people if they perceive you negatively. Trust is the glue that holds people together.

Trust begins at Level 2 and it grows as you climb to the higher levels of leadership. If people trust you, they will be willing to move upward with you. Without trust, you'll quickly find yourself back down at Level 1.

The Law of Magnetism *Who You Are Is Who You Attract*

I've studied leadership dynamics since I was a teenager, and something I noticed early is that birds of a feather flock together. It is a fact of life that like-minded people are attracted to one another. Groups of people tend to be of similar age, values, and background. I've also seen that leaders attract who they are, not necessarily who they want.

As you gain influence in your department or organization, that can be good news or bad news. If the people who start flocking to you are relational, nonterritorial, teachable, and productive, then that is a positive statement about your leadership. If they are positional, close-minded, and unmotivated, then that reflects negatively on your leadership. If you want to change your team, then change yourself.

The Law of Connection *Leaders Touch a Heart Before They Ask for a Hand*

***Connecting* is having the ability to identify with and relate to people in such a way that it increases your influence with them.**

If you want to build relationships and gain people's permission to lead them, then work hard to connect with them. I define *connecting* as having the ability to identify with and relate to people in such a way that it increases your influence with them. That is what you must do on Level 2 to win them over and earn the right to lead them.

The Law of Buy-In *People Buy into the Leader, Then the Vision*

Leaders are by nature visionary. They have great hopes. They have big dreams. They want to win, and win big. But a great vision without a great team often turns into a nightmare. Teamwork makes the dream work. (I'll discuss how to build a team on Level 3.)

Often leaders share their visions with me and then ask, "Do you think my people will buy into my vision?" When they ask me this, I know they don't understand Level 2 Permission and probably haven't won it yet with their people. Why do I say that? Because they're asking the wrong question. Instead, they should be asking, "Have my people bought into me?"

The size or the worthiness of a leader's vision often isn't what determines whether it will be achieved. The determining factor is usually the level of the leader. Before you ask people to move forward to achieve the vision, they must first buy into you as the leader. Before they buy into you as the leader, you must have earned their trust and gained permission to lead them. That begins on Level 2.

Beliefs That Help a Leader Move Up to Level 3

Moving up to Level 2 from Level 1 is a significant advance in leadership ability. Very often an achiever or a producer will be given a leadership position at Level 1 with the expectation that the person can make the transition from worker to leader. Most of the people who fail to move up into leadership don't make it because they never understand the importance of building relationships with the people they work with and gaining their permission to lead them. However, there are still more leadership levels to be won.

If you have worked your way up to Level 2 with people and have gained their confidence as a person who cares about them, then it's time to start thinking the way a Level 3 leader does. To begin that shift, keep in mind the following three things:

1. Relationships Alone Are Not Enough

Although the Permission level may bring you and your team great satisfaction relationally, if you stay on Level 2 and never advance, you won't really prove yourself as a leader. The good news is that if you've connected with your team, you now have some influence with them. The question now is: what are you going to do with that influence?

True leadership takes people somewhere so that they can accomplish something. That requires a leader to connect people's potential to their performance. The Permission level is foundational to good leadership, but it is not your ultimate goal.

2. Building Relationships Requires Twofold Growth

Throughout this chapter I've written about building relationships. In doing that, I've focused on how people need to grow *toward* each other. But for relationships to be meaningful, there is another kind of growth that's also needed. People must also grow *with* each other. Growing toward each other requires compatibility. Growing with each other requires intentionality.

If you are married or in a significant long-term relationship, then you probably understand how these dynamics come into play. When you first met your partner, you moved toward one another, based on attraction, common ground, and shared experiences. You established the relationship. However, a relationship can't last if you never go beyond those initial experiences. To stay together, you need to sustain the relationship. That requires common growth. If you don't grow together, there's a very good chance you may grow apart.

Similarly, if you are to have any staying power as a leader, you must grow toward and with your people. Just because you've developed good relationships with your people, don't think that you're done on the relational side. There is still more work to do.

3. Achieving the Vision As a Team Is Worth Risking the Relationships

Building relationships with people can be hard work. But to succeed as a leader and to move up to the higher levels of leadership, you have to be willing to risk what you've developed relationally for the sake of the bigger picture. Leaders must be willing to sacrifice for the sake of the vision. If achieving the vision is worth building the team, it is also worth risking the relationships.

Building relationships and then risking them to advance the team creates tension for a leader. That tension will force you to make a choice: to shrink the vision or to stretch the people to reach it. If you want to do big things, you need to take people out of their comfort zones. They might fail. They might implode. They might relieve their own tension by fighting you or quitting. Risk always changes relationships. If you risk and win, then your people gain confidence. You have shared history that makes the relationship stronger. Trust increases. And the team is ready to take on even more difficult challenges. However, if you risk and fail, you lose relational credibility with your people and you will have to rebuild the relationships.

Risk is always present in leadership. Anytime you try to move forward, there is risk. Even if you're doing the right things, your risk isn't reduced. But there is no progress without risk, so you need to get used to it.

The bottom line is that you can slow down early in your leadership to build relationships on Level 2, or you can forge ahead trying to skip straight to Level 3—but if you do, you will have to backtrack later to build those relationships. And you need to recognize that doing that will slow your momentum, and it can actually take you longer to build the team than if you did it the right way in the first place.

“If people relate to the company they work for, if they form an emotional tie

**to it and buy into its
dreams, they will pour their
heart into making it better.”**

—Howard Schultz

Starbucks founder Howard Schultz said, “If people relate to the company they work for, if they form an emotional tie to it and buy into its dreams, they will pour their heart into making it better.” I believe that is true. What is the key link between people and the company? The leader they work with! That leader is the face, heart, and hands of the company on a day-to-day basis. If that leader connects and cares, that makes a huge difference.

[Guide to Growing through Level 2](#)

As you reflect on the upsides, downsides, best behaviors, and beliefs related to the Permission level of leadership, use the following guidelines to help you grow as a leader:

1. **Be Sure You Have the Right Attitude toward People:** The key issue when it comes to the Permission level of leadership is how much you like people and how much they like you. And here's the good news. You can control how much you like people, and in general, if you genuinely like people, they will find you to be likable. This may seem too simplistic, but make a decision to like everyone from today forward—even if they don't like you. Write out that intention, then sign and date it. If you need to, keep it in front of you as a daily reminder to make people a priority.
2. **Connect with Yourself:** To become someone who is good at building relationships with others, you must become the kind of person *you* would want to spend time with. Using the five components listed in the chapter for connecting with yourself, put yourself on a growth plan that will help you to win the following:

Self-Awareness— know your personality type, temperament, talents, strengths, and weaknesses.

Self Image— deal with any personal issues you may have so that you can think of yourself in a positive way.

Self-Honesty— look at yourself realistically and decide to face reality, no matter how much it may hurt.

Self-Improvement— make a commitment to grow in your ability to develop relationships.

Self-Responsibility— acknowledge that you are responsible for your own actions and attitudes.

3. **Understand Where You're Coming From:** Are you a naturally relational person who tends to put people ahead of productivity? Or are you an achiever who tends to put productivity ahead of people? You must recognize which you are, and learn to win both relationships and results.
4. **Express Value for Each Person on Your Team:** Take some time and come up with positive things that you can honestly say about each person on your team. Then take the time during the next week to tell each person at least one positive thing about themselves.
5. **Evaluate Where You Are with Your Team:** Write a list with the names of the people on your team. Now for each, determine how well you know them by answering the following questions (which come from materials the Eli Lilly corporation developed from the 5 Levels of Leadership):

What three nonbusiness things do you know about this person?

What does this person value?

What are this person's top three concerns?

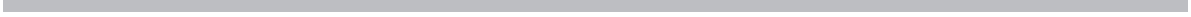
What does this person want or hope for in life?

If you are unable to answer these questions for someone on your team, then you need to spend more time getting to know that person. Set aside time this week to get to know him or her better.

6. **Accept the Whole Person As a Part of Leading:** If you want to be a good leader, you don't get to use people's time and skills while ignoring or neglecting the rest of them as individuals. That's not fair or right. Learn to accept responsibility for helping people and dealing with the messy side of leadership, or step down and get out of leading (without standing on the sidelines and criticizing the way other people lead).
7. **Make Fun a Goal:** One of the best ways for goal-oriented individuals to develop a more people-oriented style of leadership is to try to make the workplace more fun. If you're more task-oriented than people-oriented, then make fun a goal on your to-do list. That will make it

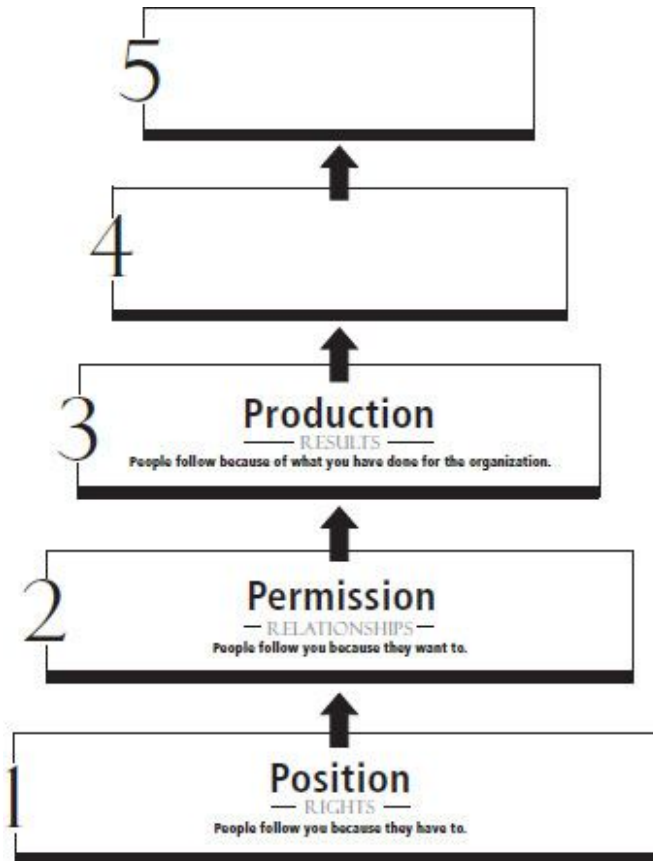
more palatable for you while at the same time making you more likable.

8. **Give People Your Undivided Attention:** Many people in the workplace today feel dehumanized and demoralized. They believe that the leaders and organizations they work for don't care about them as people. To counter that, when you engage with people, pay attention and really listen. Few things communicate that you care for people better than giving them your undivided attention. And it doesn't cost you anything but time.
9. **Become Your Team's Encourager-in-Chief:** People are naturally attracted to people who give them confidence and make them feel good about themselves. You can be a leader who does that if you're willing to become an intentional encourager. Try it out. For the next two weeks, say something encouraging to someone on your team every day. Then watch to see how the person responds. Do that with everyone on your team, and they will not only want to work with you, but they will also get more done.
10. **Practice Care and Candor:** If you care about your people, you'll want to be honest with them in a way that helps them. When you see that someone on your team is making mistakes or in some way falling short, plan to talk with the person immediately. Use the caring candor checklist to make sure you do it in the right way. And remember, it's hard to go wrong as long as you're practicing the golden rule.



Level 3: PRODUCTION

Making Things Happen Separates Real Leaders from Wannabes



The Production level is where leadership really takes off and shifts into another gear. Production qualifies and separates true leaders from people who merely occupy leadership positions. Good leaders always make things happen. They get results. They can make a significant impact on an organization. Not only are they productive individually, but they also are able to help the team produce. This ability gives Level 3 leaders confidence, credibility, and increased influence.

Production qualifies and separates true leaders from people who merely occupy leadership positions.

No one can fake Level 3. Either you're producing for the organization and adding to its bottom line (whatever that may be), or you're not. Thomas Watson, the founder of IBM, noted, "The outstanding leaders of every age are those who set up their own quotas and constantly exceed them." That is a good description of Level 3 leaders. They are self-motivated and productive. As a result, they create momentum and develop an environment of success, which makes the team better and stronger.

Another benefit of leadership on Level 3 is that it attracts other highly productive people. Producers are attractive to other producers. They respect one another. They enjoy collaborating. They get things done together. That ultimately creates growth for the organization.

Leaders can get to Level 1 for an almost endless number of reasons: They show promise. They have connections. They play politics. They have seniority. The organization is desperate. You name it, and someone has probably received a leadership position because of it. Leaders who are naturally good with people or who take pains to learn people skills can move up to Level 2. But some people never move up from Level 2 Permission to Level 3 Production. Why? They can't seem to produce results. When that is the case, it's usually because they lack the self-discipline, work ethic, organization, or skills to be productive. However, if you desire to go to higher

levels of leadership, you simply have to produce. There is no other way around it.

The Upside of Production

You Now Have Leadership Credibility.

With the addition of Production, people's leadership really begins to hit its stride. Built on a foundation of strong relationships, leaders who get results dramatically improve their team and organization. There are so many upsides to Level 3. Here are six:

1. Leadership Production Gives Credibility to the Leader

The ability to produce results has always been the separation line for success. It is also the qualifying line for leadership. Peter Drucker, often described as the father of modern management, expressed it this way: “There are two types of people in the business community: those who produce results and those who give you reasons why they didn’t.”

“There are two types of people in the business community: those who produce results and those who give you reasons why they didn’t.”
—Peter Drucker

Authentic leaders know the way and show the way to productivity. Their leadership talk is supported by their walk. They deliver results. They live on their performance, not their potential. They lead by example. And their ability to get results tends to silence their critics and build their reputations.

The credibility of a Level 3 leader can be summed up in one word: *example*.

Colin Powell asserted, “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 very best effort every single day, they won’t either.” Level 3 leaders *take* their people where they want them to go—they don’t *send* them there. They are more like tour guides than travel agents. Why? Because people always believe what we do more

than what we say. Therefore the credibility of a Level 3 leader can be summed up in one word: *example*.

Recently I ran across the story of a great general from history named Epaminondas. A leader of Thebes, he was a brilliant military tactician who defeated the vaunted Spartans. His victories brought him great acclaim, but they also produced enemies within his own city.

The opponents of Epaminondas could find no easy way to destroy or discredit him, so instead they sought to humiliate him. They put him in charge of collecting the city's garbage, a thankless job in a filthy city.

Even though he knew his appointment to the job was done out of spite and was meant to humiliate him, he accepted it with dignity, saying "If the position will not reflect glory on me, I will reflect glory on the work."¹

I suspect that the story is apocryphal, but it still proves the point. If we do our work with excellence and help others to be productive, we gain great leadership credibility.

I found this to be true in my own career. As I was graduating from college with a bachelor's degree, two churches offered me the job of being their pastor. One was in Maysville, Kentucky. It offered an excellent salary and benefits and was an exceptional place to begin my ministry career. The other was in Hillham, Indiana. It was a very small church in the middle of nowhere that could not afford to pay me a full-time salary.

I chose Hillham over Maysville. Why? I wanted to prove to myself and others that I could lead people and build a congregation. My father advised me that Hillham would be a better place to learn. It was one of my best decisions as a leader.

During the three years that I led that church, it grew and prospered in many ways. Many people began to attend the church for the first time, people were growing spiritually, and we were recognized as the fastest-growing church in the denomination. We even had to buy land and build a new building.

It was in Hillham that I learned to move up from Level 1 Position, to Level 2 Permission, to Level 3 Production. My leadership credibility among my peers was established there, and doors for greater opportunities quickly opened to me. Those are some of the reasons I say that every young leader should have a place like Hillham to learn how to lead.

Poet Walt Mason wrote a poem called “The Welcome Man,” which describes the credibility that Level 3 leaders have. Here is an excerpt:

*There is a man in the world who is never turned down,
wherever he chances to stray;
He gets the glad hand in the populous town,
or out where the farmers make hay;
He is greeted with pleasure on deserts of sand,
and deep in the isles of the woods;
Wherever he goes there's the welcoming hand—
he's The Man Who Delivers the Goods.²*

People welcome achievers who deliver the goods—who get results.

2. Leadership Production Models and Sets the Standard for Others Visually

Producers and achievers always have an impact on the people who work with them and for them. To illustrate the point, I want to share my all-time favorite story, called “Sel not Spel”:

A newly hired traveling salesman wrote his first sales report to the home office. It so stunned the brass in the sales department because it was obvious that the new sales person was ignorant! Here’s what he wrote:

“I seen this outfit which they ain’t never bot a dime’s worth of nothing from us and I sole them some goods. I’m now goin to Chicawgo.”

Before the man could be given the heave-ho by the sales manager, along came this letter from Chicago:

“I cum hear and sole them haff a millyon.”

Fearful if he did, and afraid if he didn’t fire the ignorant salesman, the sales manager dumped the problem in the lap of the president.

The following morning the ivory towered sales department members were amazed to see—posted on the bulletin board above the two letters written by the ignorant salesman—this memo from the president:

“We ben spending two much time trying to spel instead of tryin to sel. Let’s watch those sails. I want everybody should read these letters from Gooch who is on the rode doin a grate job for us and you should go out and do like he done.”³

Okay, I admit that it’s a corny story, but I just love it because it shows how loudly productivity speaks in any organization. Gooch in the story may

not be a Level 3 speller, but he is certainly a Level 3 producer. And as a result, the company president held up his example as the standard to follow.

That's how it is in leadership. Productivity puts people at the head of the class. And when that producer has already done the slower work of building relationships on Level 2, his or her leadership really takes off!

I had to learn this the hard way. When I came out of college, someone could have written a book about all the things I *didn't* know. I was just a kid and had no idea how little I knew. But I liked people and I worked hard. And I could produce. As a result, new worlds opened up to me very quickly. I was surprised and pleased when people started asking me to speak at conferences to tell my story. As a result, my influence began to grow, and soon leaders began to visit our church and ask more questions. Many times these leaders were older and much more experienced than I was. I found that very humbling. But it also inspired me to want to help people more. That was when I began to develop resources. I wanted to keep helping people long after my personal contact with them was finished. This eventually led to my writing books and being published.

I don't tell you this to brag. What I'm really trying to communicate is that *anyone* who can produce has a chance to influence people at a higher level. That's the power of Level 3 Production. If you can develop solid relationships with people and you can produce, you can be an effective leader.

Productive leaders are an example to the people they lead, and their productivity sets the standard for the team. President Abraham Lincoln recognized this. During the American Civil War, the president relieved General John C. Fremont of his command. He said it was for this reason: "His cardinal mistake is that he isolates himself and allows no one to see him." Lincoln knew that leaders need to be among their people, inspiring them with their ability, letting them see what the standard should be for their performance. When leaders produce, so do their people. Productive leaders thrive on results—from themselves and the team. They show the way and others follow.

3. Leadership Production Brings Clarity and Reality to the Vision

Good leaders constantly communicate the vision of the organization. They do it clearly, creatively, and continually. But that doesn't mean that everyone who receives the message understands and embraces it. The Production level of leadership communicates the vision through action, which helps people understand it in ways they may not have before. When followers see positive results and see goals being met, they get a clearer picture of what it means to fulfill the vision.

One day during the American Revolutionary War, George Washington rode up to a group of soldiers trying to raise a beam to a high position. The corporal who was overseeing the work kept shouting words of encouragement, but they couldn't manage to do it. After watching their lack of success, Washington asked the corporal why he didn't join in and help.

The corporal replied quickly, "Do you realize that I am the corporal?"

Washington very politely replied, "I beg your pardon, Mr. Corporal, I did."

Washington dismounted his horse and went to work with the soldiers until the beam was put into place. Wiping the perspiration from his face, he said, "If you should need help again, call on Washington, your commander in chief, and I will come."

Level 3 leaders help their people to see what productivity looks like. And with each day of productivity, the team gets one step closer to making the vision a reality. That encourages members of the team. It validates their efforts. It makes the vision that much clearer. And clarity is compelling. Productivity also expands the vision, because with increased confidence and skill, the people doing the work recognize that they can actually accomplish more than they may have believed was possible.

4. Leadership Production Solves a Multitude of Problems

Many people in leadership positions try to solve problems by using systems. Or they pay others to try to solve problems for them. But the truth is, leaders cannot delegate the solving of problems to someone else. They have to be active in breaking through obstacles, putting out fires, correcting mistakes, and directing people. Leaders on the Production level do that. And once their effectiveness becomes contagious and spreads throughout the team, productivity begins to solve many problems—many more than management or consultants ever will.

**“Nothing builds self-esteem
and self-confidence like
accomplishment.”**
—Thomas Carlyle

Historian and essayist Thomas Carlyle observed, “Nothing builds self-esteem and self-confidence like accomplishment.” Productivity is inspiring. People who feel good about themselves often produce good results. And good results create positive momentum and high morale.

For years I wondered which comes first: high morale or high productivity. I have heard good arguments for both sides of this chicken-or-egg question. I have seen high morale stimulate production. I have also seen productivity create high morale. I can’t say that it always happens one way, but here is what I do know: remove production and high morale will fade fast. Keep producing, and high morale will continue for a long time.

Leaders who can produce positive results on Level 3 always have a positive impact on their team. Leaders who can’t produce always hurt their team. In the War of 1812, the American general William Winder led his forces to defeat against the British—despite a four-to-one troop superiority. In the process, he was taken prisoner. However, realizing that Winder’s incompetence made him an ideal opponent, the British returned him to the American army. As a result, when the British later attacked the American

capital, they were able to overcome defending forces led by Winder and burn much of it to the ground. If Winder had been able to advance to Level 3 in leadership prior to taking command as a general, perhaps his men could have stopped the British army's advances in battle. As it was, he succeeded only in hurting the American cause.

Productive organizations led by Level 3 leaders are hard to beat. Their effectiveness is high, and so is their morale. Former general George C. Marshall said, "Morale is the state of mind. It is steadfastness and courage and hope. It is confidence and zeal and loyalty.... It is staying power, the spirit which endures to the end—the will to win. With it all things are possible, without it everything else... is for naught."

5. Leadership Production Creates Momentum

When well-led organizations sustain high morale and high productivity over time, they gain momentum, which is any leader's best friend. Momentum helps a leader do anything and everything more easily. That's why I call it the great exaggerator. Without momentum, everything is harder to do than it should be. With it, everything is easier.

My wife and I live in coastal Florida on a river that flows into the ocean about a mile from our house. So every day we witness the ebb and flow of the tide. I sometimes enjoy swimming in the river, and I've made a discovery. When I'm swimming with the tide, my progress has little to do with the speed and strength of my strokes. It is determined by how fast the tide is moving. Swim with it and you make fast progress. Swim against it and you move very slowly, no matter how hard you work at it. When the tide is up, all the boats rise. When it is down, all the boats go down. It's hard to fight the tide.

The same can be said of leadership momentum. Have it on your side, and your performance is actually better than your capability. For example, think about what happened with Apple when the company introduced the iPhone. It created a tidal wave of momentum and vastly increased their market share, not only in smartphones but also in computers. After years of being marginalized as a niche company with a relatively small but very loyal following, they are now mainstream again and going strong. That's why I often advise leaders to spend less time trying to fix problems and more trying to create momentum.

Level 3 is a momentum-producing environment. Production-level leaders understand momentum and use it to the organization's advantage. And they also understand that not everyone in an organization helps to create momentum. Here's what I mean. There are three types of people when it comes to momentum. They are:

Momentum Takers

The vast majority of people don't start anything, nor do they stop anything. They just go along for the ride. If momentum is moving, they

move with it. If it has stopped, so do they. Their productivity and effectiveness are based almost entirely on what others do to make things happen in the organization. For that reason, they need good leaders who produce and create a productive environment. That is one of the reasons that I define morale as “faith in the leader.”

I define morale as “faith in the leader.”

Momentum Breakers

The second type of person actually hurts morale and momentum in an organization. Not only do they not produce, but they prevent others from producing. These types of people cause problems and, whether intentionally or not, hurt the organization.

Momentum Makers

The final type, momentum makers, are Level 3 leaders. They produce. They make things happen. They create momentum. Their behavior is consistent with the advice given by the legendary Alabama football coach Paul “Bear” Bryant, who said, “Don’t worry about making friends; don’t worry about making enemies. Worry about winning, because if you win, your enemies can’t hurt you, and if you lose, your friends can’t stand you.”

“Don’t worry about making friends; don’t worry about making enemies. Worry about winning, because if you win, your enemies can’t hurt you, and if you lose, your friends can’t stand you.”

—Paul “Bear” Bryant

If you build solid permissional relationships on top of a foundation of positional rights and add the results of productivity, you will gain momentum. And when you do, you'll find that your work comes to fruition more quickly. That is a benefit of Level 3.

6. Leadership Production is the Foundation for Team-Building

Who wants to leave a championship team? No one! Who wants to leave the cellar dweller? Everyone! People simply love being on a winning team.

Winners attract people—some good, some bad, some average. The key to building a winning team is recognizing, selecting, and retaining the best people from the ones you attract. The good news is that if you reach Level 3, you know what productivity looks like because you live it. The bad news is that having talented people on the team doesn't automatically guarantee success. You can still lose with good players, but you cannot win without them. The difference comes from building them into a team, which I'll discuss later in the chapter. But remember this: if you aren't a proven producer, you won't attract and keep other proven producers. That's why you need to win Level 3.

The Downside of Production

The Weight of Leadership Just Got Heavier

Like everything else in life, the Production level of leadership has its downsides as well as its upsides. With Level 3 leadership, achievement within the organization becomes easier. However, the leadership itself doesn't become easy. Here are the four main downsides I've discovered on Level 3:

1. Being Productive Can Make You Think You're a Leader When You're Not

All great leaders are productive. However, it is possible to be a producer and not a leader. Personal success does not always translate into team success. Leadership is defined by what a person does with and for others. It is established by making the team better and more productive. It's measured by what the entire group accomplishes, not by the individual efforts of the person in charge. Good leadership is never based on what someone does by and for himself.

I know many individual producers who have no desire or ability to lead others. Some don't have the people skills. Others don't have the desire to be responsible for others or take the time to help them become productive. For example, Ted Williams was one of the greatest hitters in baseball. He is the last player to have a batting average over .400 during a season. Yet he was not a successful hitting coach. When his players were not hitting well, he would say, "Keep your eye on the ball." That advice was given by a man with extraordinary coordination, who was successful because he was able to look at a ball and tell what kind of pitch it was by how the stitching moved. In his mind, it was all simple. All he did was keep his eye on the ball. His players, who were less talented, needed more instruction. Ted Williams was a great player, but he never made it as a leader in baseball.

Organizations all over the world make the mistake of putting high producers into leadership positions only to watch them fail to lead well. I've done that. I've seen someone make things happen, and I thought, *Wow, this person is going to be a fantastic leader*, only to have that person continue to make things happen for himself but ignore and demoralize his team. That's not leadership.

Why is this mistake made so often? Because a prerequisite for being an effective leader is the ability to be effective yourself. That is one of the qualifying marks of a leader, but it is not the only qualification. Good leaders must establish themselves in their position on Level 1, gain people's permission on Level 2, be productive on Level 3, *and* possess the desire to take the entire team to a higher level.

2. Productive Leaders Feel a Heavy Weight of Responsibility for Results

I once saw a cartoon depicting a sales meeting in which the speaker said, “We run our business like a game show—produce and you come back, don’t produce and we have some lovely parting gifts for you.” That’s humorous, but that’s also the way it is for leaders. If a football team doesn’t win, the coach gets fired. If a corporation doesn’t make profits, the CEO gets the ax. If a politician doesn’t do a good job for his constituents, he doesn’t get reelected. In any organization, the responsibility for results rests with the leaders. What the World War II British field marshal Bernard Law Montgomery said was true: “No leader, however great, can long continue unless he wins victories.”

**“No leader, however great,
can long continue unless
he wins victories.”**
—Bernard Law Montgomery

Productivity is measurable. Organizational growth is tangible. Profitability is quantifiable. Leaders who fail to increase them are held accountable. Leaders who add to them are rewarded—and then asked to achieve even more the next time. High performance requires high commitment.

Honestly, many leaders who reach Level 3 tire of leading because of the weight of responsibility they feel. Most leaders experience days when they wish no one was watching their performance, looking to them for direction, or wanting them to make something happen. However, effective leaders understand that the cost of leadership is carrying the responsibility of their team’s success on their shoulders. That is a weight every leader feels starting on Level 3. You will have to decide whether you are willing to carry it.

3. Production Leadership Requires Making Difficult Decisions

A large corporation recently made a stray dog a senior vice-president. When asked why they would do such a thing, the board of directors replied, “His ability to get along with anyone, his prompt response to a pat on the back, his interest in watching others work, and his great knack for looking wise while saying nothing made him a natural for the position.” If only leadership were that easy!

Whenever you see a thriving organization, you can be sure that its leaders made some very tough decisions—and are continuing to make them. Success is an uphill journey. People don’t coast their way to effective leadership. As billionaire oilman and environmental advocate T. Boone Pickens says, “Be willing to make decisions. That’s the most important quality in a good leader.”

Today as I look back, I regret the decisions I failed to make more than I do the wrong decisions I did make.

If you want to lead at a higher level, be ready to make difficult decisions. On Level 2, leaders often have to start making difficult people decisions. On Level 3, leaders continue to make those but also add difficult production decisions. That makes leadership even more difficult. I’ve already told you about how difficult I found it to make decisions early in my career. You may find it helpful to know that today as I look back, I regret the decisions I failed to make more than I do the wrong decisions I did make. Don’t fall into the same trap I did of postponing decisions when I should have made them.

What kinds of difficult decisions are leaders likely to make on Level 3? Most of them will be decisions you must make related to yourself! I found that about 25 percent of the decisions I make on Level 3 relate to my team.

The rest are personal ones that require change, honesty, and self-discipline. As the American writer Mark Twain said, “To do right is wonderful. To teach others to do right is even more wonderful—and much easier.” That is so true.

As a leader on Level 3, you must make the Difficult Decision to...

- Be successful *before* you try to help others be successful.
- Hold yourself to a higher standard than you ask of others.
- Make yourself accountable to others.
- Set tangible goals and then reach them.
- Accept responsibility for personal results.
- Admit failure and mistakes quickly and humbly.
- Ask from others only what you have previously asked of yourself.
- Gauge your success on results, not intentions.
- Remove yourself from situations where you are ineffective.

It has been my observation that when leaders are confronted with these difficult decisions on Level 3, many fail to make them. What they may not understand until it's too late is that failing to do so will eventually disqualify them from leading themselves or others. Their leadership potential becomes stunted, and they cannot remain on Level 3.

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

—Mark Twain

I can remember facing each of these decisions on Level 3. It took me a long time to make some of them. It certainly wasn't easy. Sometimes it still isn't. But each decision created a personal breakthrough in my leadership journey.

I encourage you to win in this area of your leadership life. Persevere—even in moments when you feel the way Moses must have when the Red

Sea parted and the people waited for him to take them forward, saying to himself, *Why must I always go first?* Going first may not always be easy or fun, but it is always a requirement of leaders. It paves the way for the people who follow and increases their chances of success for completing the journey.

4. Production Leadership Demands Continual Attention to Level 2

Becoming accountable for the productivity of the team does not mean that leaders can stop caring for the people they lead. Remember, just because you add a new level of leadership doesn't mean you leave the previous one behind.

There is a real temptation for leaders on the Production level to neglect relationships in pursuit of achieving a good bottom-line result. However, if leaders do that for an extended period of time, they burn their relationships with their people, and they will eventually find themselves back on Level 1. Don't fall into that trap. Keep developing the relationships and caring for them as you produce results.

Best Behaviors on Level 3

How to Make the Most of Production in Leadership

Moving up through Level 3 based upon solid Level 2 relationships is no small feat for any person. Many people find themselves incapable of achieving it. If you have the opportunity, here is what you need to do to make the most of it:

1. Understand How Your Personal Giftedness Contributes to the Vision

One of the keys to the Production level of leadership is understanding how your gifts and abilities can be used productively to further the vision of the organization. Part of that is personal. In previous chapters I discussed the importance of knowing yourself and deciding on your personal leadership style. This is slightly different. If you are a leader, you must have a sense of vision for your leadership. And it must align, at least during the current season, with the vision of the organization you serve.

It took me a long time to develop a sense of where my true strengths lie and how I can serve an organization that I lead. Discovering it took effort, and the process was often messy. But eventually I came to understand that I had special gifts and abilities. (So do you.) There is a strong relationship between giftedness and effectiveness as a leader on the Production level. If I ever wanted to reach my potential as a leader, I had to know what my personal contribution could be to the organization. The same is true for you.

As an example, I'll tell you the four areas where I personally contribute the most to the productivity of an organization or a team:

- Influencing People (Leadership)
- Connecting with People (Relationships)
- Communicating with People (Speaking)
- Creating Resources to Help People (Writing)

These comprise my strength zone. These are the key to production for me and where the best results will be realized.

Knowing this doesn't let me off the hook as far as growth and learning are concerned. I am as committed to learning and growing today as I was back in the early 1970s, when I started my first personal growth plan. The difference is that I now concentrate almost exclusively on growing in those four areas. After discovering what I was made to do, I began to focus my efforts.

The more focused you are within your talents, the more rapid the rate of growth and the greater you increase your overall potential to be a

productive leader. If you want to maximize your ability on Level 3, you need to follow the advice of Walt Disney, who said, “Do what you do so well that those who see you do what you do are going to come back to see you do it again and tell others that they should see you do what you do.”

If you want your team or department to be good at what they do, then you need to become good at what you do. Productivity has to start with the leader. Focus there first, and you will earn opportunities to help others improve and reach their potential.

2. Cast Vision for What Needs to Be Accomplished

Vision casting is an integral part of leading. Fuzzy communication leads to unclear direction, which produces sloppy execution. Productive leaders create a clear link between the vision of the organization and everyday production of the team. They show how the short term impacts the long term. They are clear in their communication and continually point the way for their team.

A compelling vision is clear and well-defined, expansive and challenging. It is aligned with the shared values of the team. It is focused primarily on the end, not means. It fits the giftedness of the team. And when it is communicated and understood, it fills the room with energy!

How do leaders give their teams the greatest possible success in achieving the vision? By helping team members to do three things:

Level 3 Leaders Help People Define the Success of the Vision

In every organization I have led, I found it necessary to define or redefine what success meant for the people working there. For example, when I owned Injoy Stewardship Services, it meant working to help churches raise money to advance their vision. When I founded EQUIP, it meant working to bring long-term leadership development to every country in the world and give local leaders resources in their own languages. When I created the John Maxwell Company, it meant developing resources and teaching coaching skills to people who wanted to add value to others. How in the world can an organization be successful if the people in it don't know what the target is?

Level 3 Leaders Help People Commit to the Success of the Vision

The commitment of the team begins with the commitment of the leader. Teams don't win unless their leaders are determined to do everything they can to succeed, to dedicate their productivity to advancing the organization toward the vision. Once they have committed to use their time, talents, and resources to achieve the vision, they gain credibility and their people gain

the confidence to follow suit. Only then has the groundwork been laid for team building.

The commitment of the team begins with the commitment of the leader.

Level 3 Leaders Help People Experience Success

Few things inspire people like victory. The job of a leader is to help the team succeed. As individuals on the team get to experience small successes, it motivates them to keep going and reach for larger successes. If you want your people to be inspired to win, then reward and celebrate the small daily victories that they achieve. And make them part of your personal victory celebrations whenever possible, giving them as much of the credit as you can. Not only does that motivate people, but it also helps them to enjoy the journey.

3. Begin to Develop Your People into a Team

When you get to Level 2 with people in your organization, they begin to like *being* together. But when you get to Level 3, they begin to *work* together. Production makes team building possible. That can be accomplished only by a leader who is willing to push forward and lead the way for the people.

In his book *Principle-Centered Leadership*, Stephen M. R. Covey tells how Columbus was once invited to a banquet, where he was assigned the most honorable place at the table. A shallow courtier who was meanly jealous of him asked abruptly: “Had you not discovered the Indies, are there not other men in Spain who would have been capable of the enterprise?”

Columbus made no reply but took an egg and invited the company to make it stand on end. They all attempted, but in vain; whereupon he tapped it on the table, denting one end, and left it standing.

“We all could have done it that way!” the courtier accused.

“Yes, if you had only known how,” retorted Columbus. “And once I showed you the way to the New World, nothing was easier than to follow it.”

Team building is one of my favorite aspects of leading people. Why? Because a good team is always greater than the sum of its parts and is able to accomplish more than individuals working alone. Working as a team is also just plain fun! I love teamwork and team building so much that I’ve written a few books on it, including *The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork*. There’s a lot to say about teamwork—more than I have space for here. But I want to give you some critical things to think about related to team building as you strive to become good at leading on Level 3 (and I’ve listed the Laws of Teamwork that apply to each for your reference):

Team Members Should Complement One Another—Team Leaders Should Make That Happen

Author Stephen Covey asserted, “The job of a leader is to build a complementary team, where every strength is made effective and each weakness is made irrelevant.” That is the ideal that every leader should

shoot for—people working together, each bringing their strengths to make the team better and compensating for each other’s weaknesses. How does that happen? First, you must know the strengths and weaknesses of each player.

“The job of a leader is to build a complementary team, where every strength is made effective and each weakness is made irrelevant.”
—Stephen Covey

John Wooden, the great UCLA basketball coach, once told me, “Most of my college players shot for a higher percentage at UCLA than they did in high school.” I played basketball, so I knew it was unusual for a player to move in that direction when going to a higher level.

“How did you accomplish that?” I asked.

“The first few days of basketball practice,” he explained, “I would observe the players shooting the ball from various places on the court. When I determined the place they made the best percentage of shots, ‘their spot,’ I would take them to that place and say, ‘This is where I want you to shoot the ball. I will design plays to make sure that happens.’ ”

“The one who scores a basket has ten hands.”
—John Wooden

Coach Wooden would also point out places on the floor where they needed to pass the ball instead of shoot it. In this way, he made the most of a strength (by having them shoot) and turned a potential weakness into a strength (by having them pass to someone in their place of strength). That practice really sheds light on one of Wooden’s most famous quotes: “The

one who scores a basket has ten hands.” In other words, it takes all the players to help one player make a basket. And it takes a leader to help them figure out how to do it and lead them through the process.

Applicable Laws of Teamwork

The Law of Significance: One Is Too Small a Number to Achieve Greatness

The Law of Mount Everest: As the Challenge Escalates, the Need for Teamwork Elevates

The Law of the Catalyst: Winning Teams Have Players Who Make Things Happen

The Law of the Bench: Great Teams Have Great Depth

The Law of Dividends: Investing in the Team Compounds over Time

Team Members Should Understand Their Mission—Team Leaders Should Make That Happen

Good leaders never assume that their team members understand the mission. They don't take anything for granted. No doubt that was the reason the legendary NFL coach Vince Lombardi's first speech every season began with the sentence, "This is a football." It's the reason Coach Wooden taught his players at the beginning of every season the proper way to put on socks so that they wouldn't sustain foot injuries. They made sure their players knew what they needed to in order to accomplish their mission.

As you lead people on Level 3, don't take for granted that they know what you know or believe what you believe. Don't assume they understand how their talents and efforts are supposed to contribute to the mission of the team. Communicate it often.

Applicable Laws of Teamwork

The Law of the Big Picture: The Goal Is More Important Than the Role

The Law of the Niche: All Players Have a Place Where They Add the Most Value

The Law of the Compass: Vision Gives Team Members Direction and Confidence

The Law of the Price Tag: The Team Fails to Reach Its Potential When It Fails to Pay the Price

Team Members Should Receive Feedback about Their Performance— Team Leaders Should Make That Happen

I sometimes speak about a basketball coach who had a regular practice during halftime to help the team prepare for the second half. On a whiteboard in the locker room, the coach would write three columns: Did Right—Did Wrong—Will Change. A friend of mine who runs a business heard the story and decided to do that with her company at the midpoint of the year, calling it the organization's halftime.

She went into the meeting prepared, having made a list of her own for each of the columns. But being an effective leader on Level 3, the first thing she did was ask all the people on her team to share their observations. She added her own items to their list only when no one else mentioned them, which was rare. The meeting was a success. Here's what she discovered as a result:

- She was not leading by assumption. She knew where her team stood and what they thought about the work they did during the first six months.
- She gained a new perspective and learned things she didn't know. This allowed her and the team to be on the same page.
- The team was able to make halftime adjustments before it was too late. The same kind of meeting at the end of the year would not have had the same benefits.
- The team took ownership of the rest of the year because their ideas had come from the heart. They were the ones who came up with what was on the whiteboard.

The process was so effective that it became a regular event every year.

People always want to know how they're doing. They want to succeed. And if they're not succeeding, most of the time they want to know how to make adjustments to improve. Most people are willing to change if they are

convinced that changing will help them win. Productive leaders take responsibility for walking team members through that process.

Applicable Laws of Teamwork

The Law of the Chain: The Strength of the Team Is Impacted by Its Weakest Link

The Law of the Bad Apple: Rotten Attitudes Ruin a Team

The Law of Countability: Teammates Must Be Able to Count on Each Other When It Counts

The Law of the Scoreboard: The Team Can Make Adjustments When It Knows Where It Stands

Team Members Should Work in an Environment Conducive to Growth and Inspiration—Team Leaders Should Make That Happen

A few years ago while Margaret and I were in Venice, we visited a former palace in which there was a large room where 1,500 leaders met periodically to make important decisions. Our guide pointed out the beautiful paintings on every wall. Each painting represented a specific time in the city's history in which the Venetian leaders had achieved a significant victory because of a courageous decision and subsequent action. We were both inspired. It reminded me how important it is for leaders to create an environment for their people that inspires, challenges, and stretches them.

As you lead on Level 3, you need to make it your goal to lift up others and help them do their best. Founding Father Benjamin Franklin was a leader who understood this. In a letter written to John Paul Jones, Franklin gave the new officer advice concerning how to lead others:

Hereafter, if you should observe an occasion to give your officers and friends a little more praise than is their due, and confess more fault than you justly be charged with, you will only become the sooner for it, a great captain. Criticizing and censuring almost everyone you have to do with, will diminish friends, increase enemies, and thereby hurt your affairs.

Franklin's wisdom is as valid today as it was then. He knew how to create a work environment conducive to growth and inspiration. Effective leaders on Level 3 do this well. It is a key to productivity.

I have sometimes been criticized as a leader for being too positive and praising people more than I should. I think that criticism is justified. There have been times when I have built up people on my team more than their performance has warranted, and it has come back to bite me. Believing the best in people usually has a positive return, but sometimes it doesn't. High faith in people is both a strength and a weakness of mine. But it's a weakness I'm willing to live with because the usual benefits are so high. Besides, I'd rather live as a positive person and occasionally get burned than be constantly skeptical and negative. I believe that to a large extent you get what you expect in life. I don't want to expect the worst for myself or anyone else. People need a positive environment to be productive and thrive.

The leaders set the tone more than anyone else on a team, in a department, or for an organization. Their attitude is contagious. If they are positive, encouraging, and open to growth, so are their people. If you want to succeed on Level 3, acknowledge the influence you have and use it to everyone's best advantage.

Applicable Laws of Teamwork

The Law of Identity: Shared Values Define the Team

The Law of Communication: Interaction Fuels Action

The Law of the Edge: The Difference Between Two Equally Talented Teams Is Leadership

The Law of High Morale: When You're Winning, Nothing Hurts

Developing a group of people into a productive team is no easy task. If it were, every professional sports team would be a winner and every business would earn high profits. It's a challenge to get everybody working together to achieve a common vision. But it is definitely worth the effort. Being part of a team of people doing something of high value is one of the most rewarding experiences in life. As a leader, you have a chance to help people experience it. Don't shrink from that great opportunity.

4. Prioritize the Things That Yield High Return

What's the key to being productive? Prioritizing. To be an effective Level 3 leader, you must learn to not only get a lot done, but to get a lot of the right things done. That means understanding how to prioritize time, tasks, resources, and even people.

Jim Collins, author of *Good to Great*, asserts that effective prioritizing begins with eliminating the things you shouldn't be doing. He writes,

Most of us lead busy but undisciplined lives. We have ever-expanding “to do” lists, trying to build momentum by doing, doing, doing—and doing more. And it rarely works. Those who build the good-to-great companies, however, made as much use of “stop doing” lists as “to do” lists. They displayed a remarkable discipline to unplug all sorts of extraneous junk.⁴

Truly, the best companies channel their resources into only a few arenas—ones where they can be successful.

Effective prioritizing begins with eliminating the things you shouldn't be doing.

Staying in your areas of strength—where your efforts yield the highest return—and out of your areas of weakness is one of the keys to personal productivity. And if you can help others on your team to do the same, then you can be successful in leadership on Level 3. For years I have relied on the Pareto Principle as a guideline to help me decide what is worth focusing on and what isn't. The Pareto Principle basically says that if you do the top 20 percent of your to-do list, it will yield you an 80 percent return on your efforts.

To help me understand what my top 20 percent is, I ask myself three questions:

- What is required of me? (what I must do)
- What gives me the greatest return? (what I should do)
- What is most rewarding to me? (what I love to do)

If you are early in your career or new to leadership, your must-do list will probably be the largest. Your goal as you climb the levels of leadership, is to shift your time and attention to the should-dos and love-to-dos. And if you lead well enough for long enough and build a great team, the answers for all three questions should be the same things. I feel very fortunate because that has come to pass for me. There are relatively few things I am required to do that I don't enjoy doing.

As you lead your team, your goal should be to help every person get to the place where they are doing their should-dos and love-to-dos, because that is where they will be most effective. As a rule of thumb, try to hire, train, and position people in such a way that

- 80 percent of the time they work in their strength zone;
- 15 percent of the time they work in a learning zone;
- 5 percent of the time they work outside their strength zone; and
- 0 percent of the time they work in their weakness zone.

To facilitate that, you must really know your people, understand their strengths and weaknesses, and be willing to have candid conversations with them. If you've done your work on Level 2, then you should be ready, willing, and able to do those things.

5. Be Willing and Ready to Be a Change Agent

Progress always requires change. That's a fact. Most leaders desire to create progress. It's one of the things that make them tick. However, only when leaders reach Level 3 are they in a place where they can start to effect change. Why is that? Well, your position is established as a leader on Level 1. You've built strong relationships with people on your team on Level 2. And once you've helped the team to achieve some results on Level 3, you've got the credibility and the momentum to start making changes. It's very difficult to make changes when an organization is standing still. Get it going in *any* direction and you will find it easier to make changes to move it in the *right* direction. Momentum provides the energy for needed change.

Momentum provides the energy for needed change.

Change in an organization is always a leadership issue. It takes a leader to create positive change. And the best way to start working as a change agent is the same as when trying to build a relationship. You need to find common ground. Any leader who wants to make changes is tempted to point out differences and try to convince others why change is needed. But that rarely works. Instead, focus on the similarities and build upon those. To get started, look for common ground in the following areas:

- **Vision:** When the vision is similar, you can bet that the people are standing together and they have the same view. If their vision is similar to yours, you all see it clearly, and everyone has a strong desire to see it come to fruition, you can probably work well together.
- **Values:** It's difficult to travel with others very long if your values don't align. Find out what others stand for and try to meet where you share the same standards.
- **Relationships:** Great teams have people who are as committed to one another as they are to the vision. If you've done the work on Level 2,

you should already share common ground in this area.

- **Attitude:** If you are going to get people to work together for positive change, their attitudes need to be positive and tenacious. If they're not, there will be trouble ahead.
- **Communication:** For change to occur, communication must be open, honest, and ongoing. When people are in the dark, they start to speculate about what's happening. And their assumptions are often wrong. Inform people so that everyone is on the same page.

If you can find or create common ground in these five areas, you can move forward and introduce change. That doesn't necessarily mean that being a change agent will be easy. But I can guarantee that if you don't win those five areas, change will be very difficult.

6. Never Lose Sight of the Fact That Results Are Your Goal

There's a big difference between Level 3 leaders and critics who simply theorize about productivity. Good leaders have an orientation toward results. They know that results always matter—regardless of how many obstacles they face, what the economy does, what kinds of problems their people experience, and so on. They fight for productivity and are held accountable no matter what. Even when they experience success! Automaker Henry Ford observed,

More men are failures on account of success than on account of failures. They beat their way over a dozen obstacles, overcome a host of difficulties, sacrifice and sweat. They make the impossible the possible; then along comes a little success, and it tumbles them from their perch. They let up, they slip and over they go. Nobody can count the number of people who have been halted and beaten by recognition and reward!⁵

Good leaders on Level 3 keep pushing. If they gain momentum, they don't back off and coast. They press on and increase the momentum so that they can accomplish even greater things. And they help their people do the same. How are they able to stay focused and accomplish so much—despite success as well as failure? Once again Henry Ford has a suggestion. “Make your future plans so long and so hard,” Ford advised, “that the people who praise you will always seem to you to be talking about something very trivial in comparison with what you are really trying to do. It is better to have a job too big for popular praise, so big that you can get a good start on it before the cheer squad can get its first intelligent glimmering of your plans. Then you will be free to work and continue your journey towards even greater success.”

Leaders who reach Level 3 always experience success. But not all of them capitalize on that success and go to the next level. To do that, they have to remain focused and productive—all while cultivating and preserving positive relationships. And the really good ones use the

Production level as a platform for Level 4, where they develop other people to become good leaders in their own right.

The Laws of Leadership at the Production Level

If you want to use the Laws of Leadership to help you grow and win Permission on Level 3, then consider the following:

The Law of Respect

People Naturally Follow Leaders Stronger Than Themselves

People do not naturally follow people whose leadership is weaker than their own. People follow others they respect, people who have credibility. If they recognize that someone else's success is greater than their own, then they gladly follow that person's lead. Why? Because what that leader has done for the organization is very likely to spill over into the life and work of the person following. It's a win for everyone involved.

When you're working to gain relational credibility on Level 2, the positive results are often intangibles, such as morale and trust. In contrast, the results of good leadership are highly tangible at Level 3. People see better organization, increased productivity, and higher profitability. The result is that they see your strengths and understand what you can do. Your credibility is established. People respect that, and they follow not only because you treat people well, but because of what you do for the team and organization.

The Law of Magnetism

Who You Are Is Who You Attract

In general, people attract others similar to themselves. Birds of a feather flock together. Often I ask leaders to list the three or four characteristics they most desire in their team members. After they have decided on them, I ask a question: “Do you possess those same characteristics?” Why? Because if we don’t exhibit them, we won’t attract them. We tend not to attract who we want. We attract who we are.

When you reach Level 3 and create a highly productive team, you begin to attract other producers. The great thing about this is that it helps you to make the productive team you’ve developed even more productive. Introducing additional highly productive people to the team raises the bar and makes everyone more productive. And if there are people on the team who won’t or can’t produce, others will be lined up at your door willing to take their place.

The Law of the Picture ***People Do What People See***

Leaders are usually highly visible to the people they lead, especially if they lead by going first. As a result, their actions are always noticed. If you're a producer, that's a good thing. Nothing motivates people in a positive way more than seeing a positive leadership model. When people see results from their leaders, they know results are expected from them. And whenever results are an expectation, greater productivity happens. Good leaders on Level 3 know that they are showing the way by going the way because people do what people see.

**Nothing motivates people
in a positive way more than
seeing a positive
leadership model.**

The Law of Victory ***Leaders Find a Way for the Team to Win***

If you were going to play basketball and you could choose anyone in the world to be on the same team with you, who would you pick? How about if you were playing football? Or if you were going into business? Or starting a nonprofit? Chances are the people you listed are the top leaders in their fields. Why would you want them on your team? Because your odds of winning go through the roof when you're teamed with a leader who has a track record for finding ways to win.

The best leaders on Level 3 find ways to win. They always do. They produce! And they do so day in and day out, regardless of the odds, obstacles, or circumstances. If you are one of those people who consistently produces, then everyone will want to be on your team. That makes leading that much better.

The Law of the Big Mo ***Momentum Is a Leader's Best Friend***

Leadership is easier at Level 3 than Level 2. Why? Level 3 is where momentum kicks in. Good results create momentum. Having momentum gives you greater results. Greater results create even more momentum. Production creates a positive cycle that can continue to roll on and on. With momentum, an organization can overcome problems, negativism, past issues, pettiness, and upcoming obstacles.

If you find yourself on Level 3 gaining momentum, it's not time to have a rest or back off. It's time to press on. Never take momentum for granted. Keep giving your all. As Jim Collins might say, keep the fly-wheel moving.

The Law of Priorities
Leaders Understand That Activity Is Not Necessarily
Accomplishment

According to a well-known seller of daily planners, only a third of American workers plan their daily schedules, and fewer than 10 percent of people complete what they do plan. That's not very encouraging.

Most leaders feel a great deal of pressure to get a lot of work done. Productive leaders understand that activity is not necessarily accomplishment. It's very easy for people to work hard all day every day, and never get done the important things that make themselves and their teams productive. What's the key? Prioritizing. Level 3 leaders do the right things the right way at the right time for the right reasons. They know that an organization where anything goes eventually becomes a company where nothing goes. They plan and act accordingly.

The Law of Sacrifice ***A Leader Must Give Up to Go Up***

Radio broadcaster Paul Harvey remarked, “You can tell you’re on the road to success; it’s uphill all the way.” Climbing to the higher levels of leadership isn’t easy. It takes effort. It also requires sacrifices. You won’t be able to win one level using the skills you used to win the last one. You’ll have to give up some privileges and resources to move up. You’ll have to give up doing some of the things you love that don’t give a great enough return on your time. And some people you’d love to take with you to the top will refuse to go.

**“You can tell you’re on the
road to success; it’s uphill
all the way.”**

—Paul Harvey

Leaders learn to let go of everything but the essentials as they climb. No leader who made it to the top ever said, “It was easier than I thought and took less time.” As you work to climb higher, prepare yourself for the sacrifices you’ll have to make to become a better leader.

The Law of Buy-In

People Buy into the Leader, Then the Vision

Most leaders have a vision for where they're going and how their team can accomplish something they believe in. Do you have a vision? How do you know whether your team members will buy into it? By knowing whether they already buy into you!

People buy into the leader, then the vision. That buy-in comes from two things: the relationship you have with them and the results you demonstrated in front of them. They want to know you care about them, and they want to know you can produce. They learn both of those things from watching you and seeing your example. When they enjoy you as a person and perceive you as a producer, then they have what they need to buy in.

Beliefs That Help a Leader Move Up to Level 4

Leadership is an exciting journey. The most talented and dedicated leaders feel the pull to go higher. They hear a call to continually grow and help others do the same. Their beliefs give them the incentive to climb, but their behaviors are what actually take them to the next level.

If you want to go to that next level, then embrace the following ideas while still on Level 3:

1. Production Is Not Enough

Leading a productive team is quite an accomplishment. Achieving goals can be very rewarding. But there are higher levels of leadership than just getting work done effectively and adding to the bottom line. What's better than excellence at your work and high productivity from your team? Developing people so that they can lead with you. Great leaders measure themselves by what they get done through others. That requires developing people in a leadership culture. That is the focus of leaders on Level 4.

Great leaders measure themselves by what they get done through others. That requires developing people in a leadership culture.

For many years I was satisfied to be a Level 3 leader. To be honest, when I first learned to be a productive leader on Level 3, I thought I had arrived at the highest level of leadership. I enjoyed producing and developing my team. But then I felt the pull to go higher. I realized that I could do more. I could develop people to become excellent leaders in their own right. If I did, not only would I increase the capacity of the organization and lighten my personal leadership load, but I would also add value to people in a way that would really benefit them. That soon became my focus—and my greatest joy.

If you have reached Level 3 with your team members and you lead a productive team, congratulations. You've achieved more than most people ever do. But don't settle for Production. Seek the higher levels where you can help change people's lives.

2. People Are an Organization's Most Appreciable Asset

Most of what an organization possesses goes down in value. Facilities deteriorate. Equipment becomes out of date. Supplies get used up. What asset has the greatest potential for actually going up in value? People! But only if they are valued, challenged, and developed by someone capable of investing in them and helping them grow. Otherwise, they are like money put on deposit without interest. Their potential is high, but they aren't actually growing.

People don't appreciate automatically or grow accidentally. Growth occurs only when it's intentional. Where does growth happen on the 5 Levels of Leadership? On Level 4. It is on this level that leaders engage in People Development. If you want to go to the next level in your leadership, think beyond Production and start thinking in terms of how you can help the individuals on your team to improve themselves and tap into their potential.

3. Growing Leaders Is the Most Effective Way to Accomplish the Vision

How do you make an organization better? Invest in the people who work in it. Companies get better when their people get better. That's why investing in people always gives a greater return to an organization.

Companies get better when their people get better. That's why investing in people always gives a greater return to an organization.

Everything rises and falls on leadership. The more leaders an organization has, the greater its horsepower. The better leaders an organization has, the greater its potential. You cannot overinvest in people. Every time you increase the ability of a person in the organization, you increase the ability to fulfill the vision. Everything gets better when good leaders are leading the organization and creating a positive, productive work environment.

If you want a pleasant work environment, win Level 2. If you want a productive work environment, win Level 3. If you want a *growing* work environment, win Level 4.

4. People Development Is the Greatest Fulfillment for a Leader

When I was in my late thirties, I found myself trying to accomplish a large vision that required more of me than I was capable of giving on my own. The only solution I could see was to train and develop other people to help carry the load. But then something wonderful happened. What started as a necessity soon became the greatest source of fulfillment in my life.

Few things in life are better than seeing people reach their potential. If you help people become bigger and better on the inside, eventually they will become greater on the outside. People are like trees: give them what they need to grow on a continual basis for long enough, and they will grow from the inside out. And they will bear fruit.

**It is impossible to help
others without helping
yourself.**

If you invest in people, they will never be the same again. And neither will you. It is impossible to help others without helping yourself.

[Guide to Growing through Level 3](#)

As you reflect on the upsides, downsides, best behaviors, and beliefs related to the Production level of leadership, use the following guidelines to help you grow as a leader:

Some leaders make the same mistake as some parents. They expect people to do as they say, not as they do.

1. **Be the Team Member You Want on Your Team:** Some leaders make the same mistake as some parents. They expect people to do as they say, not as they do. But here's the problem: people do what people see. If you want dedicated, thoughtful, productive people on your team, you must model those characteristics. Take time to list all the qualities you desire in your team members. Then compare your own personal qualities to those on the list. Wherever you don't measure up, next to the characteristic write an action statement describing what you must do to possess the trait you'd like to see. For example, if you want people to be dedicated, then write, "I will not give up solving a problem or doing a task until it is completed," or "I will arrive early and stay late to set an example for the team."
2. **Translate Personal Productivity into Leadership:** Just because you have a history of being a productive individual doesn't necessarily mean you are a Production level leader. How can you tell the difference? The evidence can be found in your impact on the rest of the team. Are other members of the team improving or producing more as a result of your presence? If not, why not? Think about the things

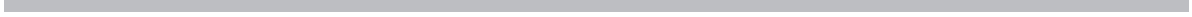
- you could do to help others become better, both individually and as a team. Turn your focus outward from your own production and begin helping others to become high producers.
3. **Understand Everyone's Productivity Niche:** One of the hallmarks of successful Level 3 leaders is knowing not only where they add the greatest value to the team, but where everyone else adds value, too. Take some time to define each team member's area of contribution (including your own), and figure out how they all work together to make the team most effective.
 4. **Cast Vision Continually:** When was the last time you cast vision to your team? Unless it was today, you're probably overdue. Team members need you to describe the vision and define its success. Take time to carefully craft your communication, and deliver it creatively as often as possible.
 5. **Build Your Team:** As team members come to understand the vision and begin to learn their strengths and roles, they can be formed into a productive team. That can be accomplished by creating a growth and performance environment. Plan to meet with your team daily (or at least weekly) to give feedback on performance. Do not penalize risk taking. Praise people's effort, help them learn from their failures, and reward their successes.
 6. **Use Momentum to Solve Problems:** What's the most effective way to solve problems? Using momentum. How does a leader create momentum? By helping the team get wins under its belt. If you're not thinking in terms of helping your team win, then you aren't thinking like a Level 3 leader. Find small challenges for individual team members to take on in order to experience individual wins. Then look for obtainable challenges for people to win together as a team. The greater the number of wins there are both individually and corporately, the more you can increase the difficulty of the challenges. And the more momentum you can gain.
 7. **Discern How Team Members Affect Momentum:** Every team has momentum makers, takers, and breakers. As the leader of the team, your job is to know who is who and to lead the team in a way that maximizes the makers, motivates the takers, and minimizes the breakers. Begin by categorizing everyone on the team:

- Momentum Makers (Producers who make things happen):
- Momentum Takers (People who go along for the ride):
- Momentum Breakers (People who cause problems and hurt morale):

Put the majority of time and energy into the momentum makers and place them strategically in the organization so that they make the greatest impact. And enlist their aid to help lead the momentum takers as you motivate them. Meanwhile, have candid conversations with the momentum breakers. Give them a chance to change their attitude and become productive members of the team. However, if they fail to rise up to the challenge, get them off of the team. If that is impossible, then isolate them from the rest of the team to minimize the damage they can do.

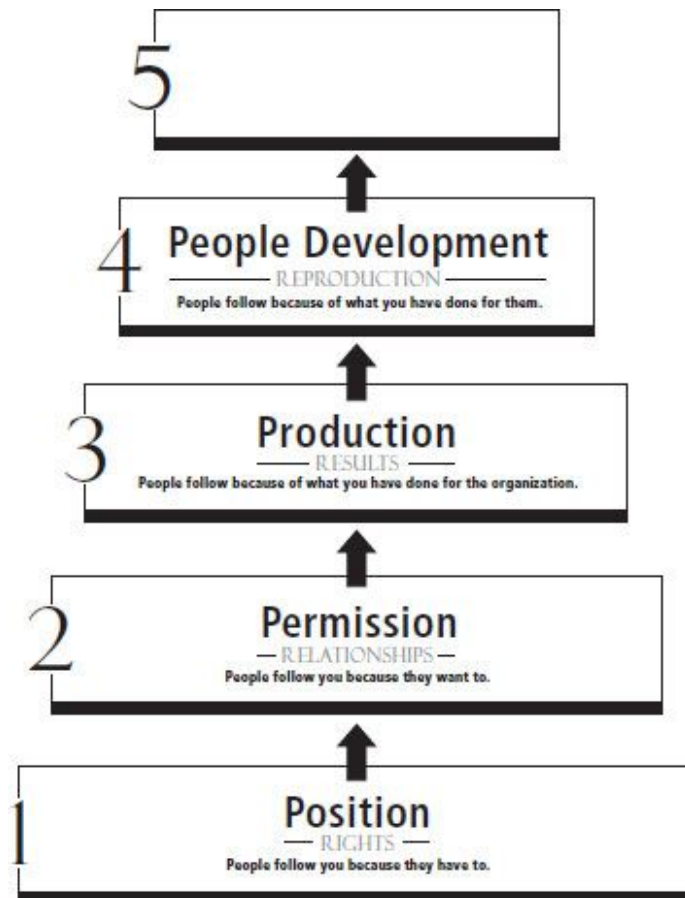
8. **Practice the Pareto Principle:** If you want your productivity to be at the highest possible level, then work according to the 80/20 rule. First, focus on your overall efforts. Set aside a block of time to make a list of all of your responsibilities. Then put them in order of importance according to the impact they make for the good of the organization. You need to make sure the lion's share of your time and effort is focused on the areas at the top of the list. Second, practice the 80/20 rule on a daily basis. Every day list the tasks you must do. Then focus 80 percent of your time on the top 20 percent. Third, focus your team on the top 20 percent. On a regular basis (perhaps daily or weekly), review the team's priorities with them and make sure 80 percent of the team's efforts are focused on the top 20 percent in terms of importance.
9. **Accept Your Role as Change Agent:** Effective leaders on Level 3 take responsibility for making decisions and initiating changes needed for the team to succeed. If you are a leader, accept this responsibility. Be forever on the lookout for ways to improve the team and initiate them. Start today by setting aside an hour to think of five ways to change things for the better. And if things go wrong, take responsibility for that as well.

10. **Don't Neglect Level 2:** There's a lot to be done on Level 3. Because of that, many leaders lose sight of the human element in leadership. As you work on the Production level, don't forget to stay relationally connected to your people. Get out among them and spend time with them. Put connecting times on your schedule, if needed. Do whatever it takes to keep from losing what you've gained on Level 2.



Level 4: PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT

Helping Individual Leaders Grow Extends Your Influence and Impact



Effective leaders understand that what got them to their current level of leadership won't be enough to get them to the next one. They understand that if they want to keep getting better as leaders, they have to be willing to keep growing and changing, and that each move up the 5 Levels of Leadership requires a paradigm shift and a change in the way a person leads.

On Level 3, the emphasis is on personal and corporate productivity. The ability to create a high-productivity team, department, or organization indicates a higher level of leadership ability than most others display. But to reach the upper levels of leadership that create elite organizations, leaders must transition from producers to developers. Why? Because people are any organization's most appreciable asset.

To reach the upper levels of leadership that create elite organizations, leaders must transition from producers to developers.

Good leaders on Level 4 invest their time, energy, money, and thinking into growing others as leaders. They look at every person and try to gauge his or her potential to grow and lead—regardless of the individual's title, position, age, or experience. Every person is a potential candidate for development. This practice of identifying and developing people compounds the positives of their organization, because bringing out the best in a person is often a catalyst for bringing out the best in the team. Developing one person for leadership and success lays the foundation for developing others for success.

Bringing out the best in a person is often a catalyst for bringing out the best in the team.

Peter Drucker observed,

Making the right people decisions is the ultimate means of controlling an organization well. Such decisions reveal how competent management is, what its values are, and whether it takes its job seriously. No matter how hard managers try to keep their decisions a secret—and some still try hard—people decisions cannot be hidden. They are eminently visible. Executives who do not make the effort to get their people decisions right do more than risk poor performance. They risk losing their organization's respect.¹

How does this emphasis on people and people decisions translate into action? Leaders on the People Development level of leadership shift their focus from the production achieved by others to the development of their potential. And they put only 20 percent of their focus on their personal productivity while putting 80 percent of it on developing and leading others. This can be a difficult shift for highly productive people who are used to getting their hands dirty, but it's a change that can revolutionize an organization and give it a much brighter future.

The Upside of People Development

The Potential of the Organization Just Got Greater

When you become capable of leading people on Level 4, the upside of leadership becomes even stronger and the potential of the organization increases dramatically. Here are the primary positive benefits of leading on the People Development level:

1. People Development Sets You Apart from Most Leaders

Most leaders are looking for ways to grow their organizations. Where do they usually focus their attention? On Level 3. They work to increase production. That's the wrong focus. How do you grow a company? By growing the people in it. And if you *really* want to expand the organization and its potential, focus on growing the leaders.

Author and friend Denis Waitley once shared with me a wonderful insight about personal development. He said that people need to have the conviction that there is value in their dreams, and he said that it required "the belief that you are worth the effort, time, and energy to develop yourself." That can also be said when it comes to developing others. We must believe in their value. We must value their dreams. We must believe that they are worth the time, effort, energy, and resources that developing them requires. Unfortunately, many leaders do not have that belief.

One of the leaders I admire is Jim Blanchard, for many years the leader of Synovus. In 1999, *Fortune* named the company the best place in America to work. I believe one of the main reasons Synovus was so successful and such a great place to work was because of their dedication to developing people. That started with Blanchard, who said he loved reading books and any kind of opportunity to receive leadership training. Blanchard explained,

We made a decision twenty-five years ago that... putting people in jobs that they are not prepared for because we have not invested in their training is one mistake we are not going to make.... Training and preparing leaders, teaching them the basics, and trying to enthuse them to seek their own highest level of leadership was a good approach and a good investment in a corporate environment. It has certainly paid off. One thing we learned is that developing leaders is probably the most appreciated benefit in the company. When current or would-be leaders realize that you are investing in their growth, it's more important to them than money. It's more important, in my opinion, than a supervisor taking personal interest

in their person and encouraging them along the way in their career, although that is probably second.²

That is a good description of the jump from Levels 2 and 3, where a leader builds relationships with people and helps them to be productive in their career, to Level 4, where the leader helps them develop their potential and become the leaders they are capable of being.

The mark of someone with potential to grow is openness to the process.

Blanchard says that the mark of someone with potential to grow is openness to the process. “When you look at people who are eager to learn more,” Blanchard remarked, “you can bet they are on the right track. And when you talk to people who just don’t want any more instruction, then they have pretty much hit the wall. They are done.”

If you want the best for your organization, you need to invest in its people. That’s where the greatest potential is. And in a competitive business world, the ability to develop people is often the difference maker between two organizations competing to succeed using similar resources. Former Secretary of Labor Robert Reich pointed out, “If employers fail to upgrade their workers, then they’re trying to be competitive only with their capital. Anybody can replicate physical capital. But the one resource nobody can replicate is the dedication, the teamwork, the skills of a company’s employees.” Develop them, and you become a one-in-a-thousand leader.

2. People Development Assures That Growth Can Be Sustained

Achieving success isn't easy. Thousands of new businesses are launched every year only to fail a short time later. Those that make it discover that sustaining success isn't easy, either. Many companies said to have been "built to last" don't. Even some of the giants who seem invincible don't remain successful forever. What gives an organization the best chance for sustaining growth and success? Developing and training people. Only by helping your people reach their potential will your organization reach its potential.

In the early years of leadership, I didn't understand this. Equipping and developing others wasn't a high priority for me. Once I discovered the Production level of leadership, that was where I poured my seemingly endless store of energy. I was able to work long hours, and I loved the affirmation that others gave me for my work ethic and productivity. Words such as "How can you accomplish so much?" were music to my ears. Only after I left an organization did the music stop. I realized that as soon as my personal touch was no longer on a particular task or effort, it wasn't sustained. As a result, many of the things I built ceased to thrive or in some cases even to exist after my exit. I had flunked the leadership test!

This really threw me for a loop. Author and friend Ken Blanchard says, "The test of your leadership is not what happens when you are there, but what happens when you're not there." I wondered what the secret was. Why did some organizations continue to succeed after their leaders left while others fell apart?

I began to gain leadership insight in an unlikely place. One night Margaret and I went to a circus, and in the center ring was a man who began to spin a plate on the end of a stick. (If you're from my generation, you may have seen this done on a variety show.) After he got that first plate spinning, he started to spin another plate on a second stick. Then another and another and another until he had six plates spinning. For the next few minutes he hurried from stick to stick, keeping the plates spinning so that none of them would lose momentum and fall. The more plates spinning, the faster he ran to keep them from falling.

All of a sudden I realized: that was me! I was doing everything myself, and as long as I ran quickly, I could hold everything together. But the moment I stopped, everything would crash around me. By not training anyone else to spin the plates of leadership, I was wearing myself out and limiting the potential of my organization. What a mistake. That was when I made developing others to lead a priority in my organization. It has revolutionized my leadership and made an incredible impact on every organization I've led.

I think many of us come from the paradigm where the leader is connected to everything of importance in an organization. Authors James A. Belasco and Ralph C. Stayer liken this mind-set to that of a buffalo herd, where everyone waits around to see what the head buffalo thinks and wants to do. Instead, they argue, effective organizations need to be less like herds of buffalo and more like flocks of geese, flying in V formation and sharing the load. Their book *Flight of the Buffalo* states,

Rather than the old head-buffalo leadership paradigm, I developed a new lead-geese leadership paradigm. Crafted in the crucible of real-time leadership experience, that paradigm is built around the following leadership principles:

- Leaders transfer ownership for work to those who execute the work.
- Leaders create the environment for ownership where each person wants to be responsible.
- Leaders coach the development of personal capabilities.
- Leaders learn fast themselves and encourage others also to learn quickly.³

When leaders take this kind of approach, then everyone has the potential to lead—at least in some area and capacity.

If you haven't made developing leaders a priority in the past, allow me to encourage you to do so now. It will take time and commitment, but you can do it. If you have been successful leading on Levels 1, 2, and 3, you have the potential to move up to Level 4. It will require you to shift from doing to developing. It will require you to believe in people. And it will require you to share the load. But if you desire to make the shift in

emphasis and put in the work, you can do it. Never forget that leadership is the art of helping people change from who they're thought to be to who they ought to be.

Stephen Covey observes, "People and organizations don't grow much without delegation and completed staff work, because they are confined to the capacities of the boss and reflect both personal strengths and weaknesses." Don't allow yourself to become the lid on your organization. Give it the best chance for a bright future by developing other leaders.

Don't allow yourself to become the lid on your organization. Give it the best chance for a bright future by developing other leaders.

3. People Development Empowers Others to Fulfill Their Leadership Responsibilities

Many leaders become a lid on their teams or organizations. The typical lid is the person who can't lead yet possesses a leadership position. It's the Peter Principle playing out, where people rise to the level of their incompetence. Because they can't empower and motivate people, their area of responsibility suffers and their people go nowhere. But there is another kind of person who also puts a lid on those he leads: the competent person who won't share responsibility.

People development by its very nature shares responsibility for getting things done. I say that because people development is more than just teaching. It's transforming. It invites people into the process of leadership because many things can be learned only through experience. History provides abundant examples of people whose greatest gift was in redeeming, inspiring, liberating, and nurturing the gifts of others. John Quincy Adams said, "If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader." When you give someone responsibility and authority, they not only learn, but they also start to fulfill their leadership responsibilities. That action transforms people and organizations.

When established leaders focus on People Development and empower others to lead, everybody wins. The first benefit comes to the people being led. When new leaders are developed, they become better at what they do and they help everyone who works with them to do the same. When these new leaders start building relationships with their people on Level 2, they treat them better and the working environment improves. When they master Level 3, they become more productive.

The second benefit comes to the organization. With the addition of more good leaders, the organization's current efforts improve. Every developed leader adds more horsepower to the organization. And expanding the leadership of the organization also gives it the ability to expand its territory and take on new initiatives.

The final benefit comes to the leaders who are doing the developing, because new leaders help to share the load. All leaders feel a weight of responsibility for leading. They understand that leaders are expected to produce no matter what. They feel a responsibility to the organization and their leaders to fulfill the vision. If there are stockholders, they feel responsible to them for making a profit. They feel responsible to the people they lead. They want to help them succeed. And they know that people's jobs are ultimately on the line.

One of the principles I teach is that everything rises and falls on leadership. Most people apply that concept to productivity. But it also applies to responsibility. When I owned three companies, I felt the weight of my leadership responsibilities every day. I was responsible for the direction the companies were heading, the values that we were establishing, and the bottom-line success of the organizations. Every leader who has a lot of responsibility in an organization feels that weight. (Anyone who doesn't feel it needs to examine their motives, because they may be taking their responsibility too lightly.)

As you develop people and they begin to share the load of leadership, it's important for you to give them the right expectations. Let them know that you're responsible to them, but not for them. By that I mean you will take responsibility for providing training, supplying tools, offering opportunities, and creating an environment conducive for their development. They must take responsibility for their growth through their choices, attitude, and commitment. If they don't, you will pay for their failure along with them, but that is a risk worth taking because the upside advantages if they succeed are so great. And when it does work and people seize the opportunity to grow and lead, it's fantastic.

Philanthropist Melinda Gates understood this dynamic at an incredibly early age. In her valedictory address at Ursuline Academy in 1982, she said, "If you are successful, it is because somewhere, sometime, someone gave you a life or an idea that started you off in the right direction." That is true for all of us. No leader is self-made. Everyone was given a start by somebody else. That is a gift. Our gift back is to take responsibility and do our best to lead others with effectiveness and integrity.

“If you are successful, it is because somewhere, sometime, someone gave you a life or an idea that started you off in the right direction.”

—Melinda Gates

Farzin Madjidi, professor of leadership at Pepperdine University, asserts, “We need leaders who empower people and create other leaders. It’s no longer good enough for a manager to make sure that everybody has something to do and is producing. Today, all employees must ‘buy in’ and take ownership of everything they’re doing. To foster this, it’s important that employees should make decisions that most directly affect them. That’s how the best decisions are made. That’s the essence of empowerment.” What he’s describing is Level 4 leadership—leadership that empowers others to share the load. In healthy organizations led by Level 4 leaders, rewards are given for empowering others, not for climbing over them.

If you want to improve an organization, improve its leaders. If you want to grow an organization, grow its leaders. When you increase the number of leaders you have and you make the leaders you have better, the potential of the organization increases greatly.

4. People Development Empowers the Leader to Lead Larger

Many leaders don't want to share responsibility with others because they don't want to lose any of their power. But when you share leadership with others, it doesn't actually take away from you. Instead, it actually gives you something you can get *only* by developing others: it gives you back time. As you develop people and empower them to lead, their territories expand and so does yours. But you are also freed up to do more important things, the most important of which are often thinking, envisioning, and strategizing.

Leaders always need more quality thinking time. Yet because most leaders have a bias toward action, they often don't have it. As you develop other leaders and empower them to lead, they take on work that used to be yours, and you can use that time to take your team or organization to the next level. Everyone benefits.

It's often difficult to hand over responsibility for a task to others, especially if you believe they won't do as good a job as you will. But that's no excuse. You cannot become an effective Level 4 leader unless you are willing to let go of some of your responsibilities. So what's a good rule of thumb for transferring ownership of a leadership responsibility to someone else? I use the 80 percent rule. If someone on my team can do one of my tasks 80 percent as well as I do (or better), then I give him or her responsibility for it. If you want to be an effective leader, you must move from perfectionist to pragmatist.

If you want to be an effective leader, you must move from perfectionist to pragmatist.

5. People Development Provides Great Personal Fulfillment

In his book *Man, The Manipulator*, Everett Shostrom quotes a teacher who learned the secret to reaching people and changing their lives:

I had a great feeling of relief when I began to understand that a youngster needs more than just subject matter. I know mathematics well, and I teach it well. I used to think that was all I needed to do. Now I teach children, not math. I accept the fact that I can only succeed partially with some of them. When I don't have to know all the answers, I seem to have more answers than when I tried to be the expert. The youngster who really made me understand this was Eddie. I asked him one day why he thought he was doing so much better than last year. He gave meaning to my whole new orientation. "It's because I like myself now when I'm with you," he said.⁴

The greatest satisfaction in life comes from giving to others. We are most fulfilled when we forget ourselves and focus on others. And what's really wonderful is that when we add the giving that comes from developing people on Level 4 to the solid relationships we've developed on Level 2, the closeness and warmth that result can provide the richest experiences of our lives. We are often closest to people when we help them grow.

My best friends are the people who have brought out the best in me, and the people I've tried to help be their best. Our growth journey has been filled with laughter and tears, wins and losses, hopes and hurts, questions and answers. I treasure the notes I've received from people who generously share the credit for their growth and success with me.

“Victory is much more meaningful when it comes not just from one person, but from the joint achievements of many. The

euphoria is lasting when all participants lead with their hearts, winning not just for themselves but for one another.”

—Howard Schultz

Howard Schultz, founder of Starbucks, said, “Victory is much more meaningful when it comes not just from one person, but from the joint achievements of many. The euphoria is lasting when all participants lead with their hearts, winning not just for themselves but for one another.” That is a good description of how I feel about the people closest to me in life: my family and my inner circle. Just last night I enjoyed dinner with a group of them—all of whom I have developed in some way. We laughed, shared pictures, told stories, and traded ideas. The evening went way too fast.

Mark and Stephanie Cole were there. I assisted in their ceremony the day they got married. Now, years later, Mark has become my go-to guy and confidant. Many a project that needs a good leader’s attention I give to him. Stephanie freely allows him to travel with me whenever I need him. What a gift. What would I do without them?

David and Lori Hoyt were there. David handles all my speaking engagements with great care and professionalism, representing me so well to so many people. Lori expresses her love and support for me every time I am with her.

Charlie and Stephanie Wetzel were there. Charlie has helped me write for over seventeen years. With over 20 million books sold, I acknowledge that he has become the greatest influencer of others in my inner circle. Stephanie is Ms. Social Media. She manages my blog as well as my Twitter and Facebook accounts. Some in the publishing industry credit her with much of the recent success of my books.

And finally, Patrick and Linda Eggers were there. Patrick used to be a member of my board. He has been a good friend for over thirty years. He’s big enough to be my bodyguard and smart enough that he once worked as an honest-to-goodness rocket scientist. Linda has been my assistant for fifteen years. She has been a great friend to my wife, Margaret, and me.

Linda knows what I'm thinking before I think it, and she handles everything for us.

As I looked around the table last night, I thought three things: First, these people that I have helped to develop have really grown me. In the beginning I helped them more than they helped me. Today, they help me more than I help them. There is a huge return in developing people!

Second, these are true friends. Our best times are when we are with each other. In 2010, we all went to Israel together and had a blast. The journey of life was not meant to be traveled alone. I'm grateful I get to travel much of it with them.

Third, my greatest fulfillment has come not from the books I have written, the companies I have started, or the recognition I have received. My greatest fulfillment comes from the people I love, and especially from the people whom I have helped to develop.

“The purpose of life is not to win. The purpose of life is to grow and to share. When you come to look back on all that you have done in life, you will get more satisfaction from the pleasures you have brought into other people’s lives than you will from the times that you outdid and defeated them.”

—Harold Kushner

Rabbi Harold Kushner asserted, “The purpose of life is not to win. The purpose of life is to grow and to share. When you come to look back on all that you have done in life, you will get more satisfaction from the pleasures you have brought into other people’s lives than you will from the times that you outdid and defeated them.” That is great wisdom. Helping others grow

and develop brings great joy, satisfaction, and energy to a leader. If you can achieve Level 4 as a leader, you will create a sense of community where victories are celebrated, gratitude is evident, and loyalty is shared. Level 4 is the sweetest of all levels a leader can achieve.

The Downside of People Development

Leading on Level 4 Requires High Levels of Maturity and Skill

There is a reason that many leaders don't develop people. It's not easy! And there's no guarantee that it will work out. Every leader has horror stories of investment in others that turned out badly. You pour yourself into some people and nothing happens. Some people take without giving anything in return. Others make an effort but fall far short of your expectations. And sometimes you give your best to someone, he turns out to be an absolute star, and then he leaves and becomes part of another organization! What can be worse than that? Well, how about not training them and having them stay? If you think about it, you have only one great choice as a leader if you want to lead to the full extent of your potential; you need to invest in your people.

People development requires a very high maturity level. It also requires a very high level of skill. That can create problems for some leaders, and it prevents many from following through with it. Here are the primary causes of breakdowns on Level 4:

1. Self-Centeredness Can Cause Leaders to Neglect People Development

Maturity is the ability to think beyond yourself, see things from the perspective of others, and place their needs above your own. Selfishness prevents people from reaching that level of maturity.

My friend Gerald Brooks says, “When you become a leader you give up the right to think about yourself.” Becoming a Level 4 leader requires us to recognize that we now have the authority to serve people in a special way and we need to exercise that ability. You can’t do that if you have a self-serving attitude.

“When you become a leader you give up the right to think about yourself.”
—Gerald Brooks

If you want to lead on Level 4, you need to focus 80 percent of your attention on others and helping them to grow, learn, and achieve. If your focus is always on yourself and what you want, then people become an obstacle to your goals. *Their* needs are seen as interfering with *your* goals. And you spend most of your time disappointed with others because they aren’t on your selfish agenda and are forever letting you down.

Leadership expert and author Max Depree says, “The leader is the servant who removes the obstacles that prevent people from doing their jobs.” What a great description. That kind of Level 4 mind-set requires maturity. It means coming to work every day placing other people first in our thoughts and actions. It means asking, “Who can I add value to today?” and “What can I do for others?” That is not the mind-set of an immature leader. It is the mind-set of a People Developer.

**“The leader is the servant
who removes the obstacles
that prevent people from
doing their jobs.”**

—*Max Depree*

So if you want to move up to Level 4 leadership, get over your selfishness, get outside of yourself, and adopt the attitude of speaker and master salesman Zig Ziglar, who said, “If you will help others get what they want, they will help you get what you want.”

2. Insecurity Can Make Leaders Feel Threatened by People Development

My friend Wayne Schmidt, vice president of Wesley Seminary at Indiana Wesleyan University, once told me, “No amount of personal competency can compensate for personal insecurity.” He is so right. Insecure leaders continually sabotage themselves and others. And because they worry about their position and standing, they have a hard time investing in other people. Why? Because they fear that someone will take their place. For that reason, leaders who don’t deal with their insecurities and overcome them rarely reach Level 4 as leaders.

**“No amount of personal
competency can
compensate for personal
insecurity.”**

—Wayne Schmidt

If you suspect that your insecurities may prevent you from moving up to the People Development level of leadership, then be prepared to do some work in the following three areas:

Ego

Leaders who are honest with themselves know that they don't have all the answers. They recognize that success always comes from the combined contributions of everyone on a team. Success comes when people work together, each person playing his or her part. And because of this, they don't try to answer every question themselves. They don't try to make every decision. They see winning as a collaborative effort. And their goal isn't to make others think more highly of them. It's to get their people to think more highly of themselves.

How can you tell if your ego might be getting in the way of your ability to move up to Level 4? Consider what happens when you meet with your team.

- Do your team members share their thoughts and ideas freely?
- Are the best ideas rarely your ideas?
- If you often contribute ideas, does the discussion quickly move from your idea to the best idea—and you're happy about it?

How about when your team performs?

- When your team succeeds, do the other team members get the majority of the credit?
- Is there a shared sense of pride in the work that's being done?
- When things go wrong, do you personally accept the greatest share of the blame?

If you can honestly answer yes to these questions, ego may not be a problem. If you answered no to many of those questions, beware. You may need to deal with your ego. Positive working environments led by secure leaders allow team members to get the credit. Level 4 leaders experience genuine joy in the success of others. When others shine, so do they.

Control

Author Tom Peters observed, “There is nothing more useless than the person who says at the end of the day, ‘Well, I made it through the day without screwing up.’ ” Why would anyone have that kind of goal? Because they’re afraid of making mistakes. Many insecure workers try to avoid making mistakes by doing as little as possible or by trying to keep a low profile. Insecure leaders often deal with the issue differently. They rely on control. They think if they micromanage their people, they can keep them from making mistakes.

Unfortunately, controlling leaders don’t understand that progress comes only from taking risks and making mistakes. They would be better off taking the advice of someone like Chuck Braun, of Idea Connections Systems, who developed the concept of the “Mistake Quota.” When he trains people, he tells students that he expects them to make thirty mistakes per training session. Braun says he can almost hear the sighs of relief in the room as people relax and begin participating.

Good leaders forge ahead, break ground, and make mistakes. And they expect the same from their people. Authors James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner say it this way: “Leaders are pioneers—people who are willing to step out into the unknown. They are people who are willing to take risks, to innovate and experiment in order to find new and better ways of doing things.” To succeed as a leader on Level 4, you must embrace that attitude and give up controlling others.

Since you can’t prevent mistakes, why not adopt an attitude in which you and your team learn from them? That’s the only way anyone can really profit from mistakes anyway. So don’t try to put people in a box. Try to help them make the most of their fumbles, flops, and failures. As Jack Welch, the former CEO of General Electric, said, “A leader’s role is not to control people or stay on top of things, but rather to guide, energize, and excite.” That’s what Level 4 leaders do.

“A leader’s role is not to control people or stay on top of things, but rather to

**guide, energize, and
excite.”**

—*Jack Welch*

Trust

Different leaders see trust in different ways. Secure leaders see it as the glue that keeps relationships together and makes business work. Stephen M. R. Covey, author of *The Speed of Trust*, says that trust produces speed because it feeds collaboration, loyalty, and, ultimately, results. Contrast that with the words of Al Neuharth, former CEO of the U.S. newspaper chain Gannett and author of *Confessions of an S.O.B.* He wrote, “Now that I was on top, I knew others would want to topple me... I believe in practicing the S.O.B.’s Golden Rule: *Expect others to do unto you what you would do to them.*” I don’t know about you, but I don’t want to live with that kind of attitude.

Insecure leaders don’t place their trust in others, nor do they engender trust from others. As a result, they don’t invest in others. And they don’t become Level 4 leaders. As a leader, you should never take trust for granted. Only when you lose it do you really understand the value of it. My daughter Elizabeth learned this in high school when she was a cheerleader. Because Elizabeth was tiny, she was a flyer. That means she was always either at the top of their pyramid or being tossed high into the air. With daredevil abandonment she would soar. How was she able to take such risks? Trust. She had practiced with her teammates for hours, having been thrown and safely caught hundreds of times. Then during her senior year, an inattentive teammate missed and let her fall on a throw. She wasn’t the same after that. From then on, she experienced moments of hesitation whenever she was thrown.

If you want to become a People Development leader, you must give others your trust and earn their trust in return. There is no other way to succeed on Level 4.

3. Shortsightedness Can Keep Leaders from Seeing the Need for People Development

How many times have you considered giving someone something to do and instead thought, *It's easier to just do it myself?* I bet you've done it often. Why? Because it *is* easier. Doing work yourself is always faster and easier than developing other people to do it. But that's short-term thinking! To become a developer of people, you have to be willing to adopt a long-term mind-set. If you pay the price on the front end, the return is great on the back end. On Level 4, the question isn't "What can you do?" The question is "Who can you develop?" Investing in people takes a lot of time and energy.

To become a developer of people, you have to be willing to adopt a long-term mind-set.

Shortsightedness, like selfishness and insecurity, is another sign of immaturity in a leader. People Development requires big-picture thinking. It takes patience. Helping another person to become a competent leader almost always takes longer than you think and is more difficult than you expect. You must do it anyway. Otherwise you limit the potential for yourself, your people, and your organization.

4. Lack of Commitment Can Keep Leaders from Doing the Hard Work of People Development

Nearly anyone can lead others positionally. Many people can lead others relationally. Few people can be productive and put a team together to achieve goals. But very few people are both able and willing to develop others to become leaders. That is why most leaders only ever lead followers. Anyone who can relate well with people, produce personally, and communicate a vision is capable of attracting a following. However, attracting, developing, and leading other leaders is much more difficult. And most leaders are not willing to put forth the tremendous effort it takes and to make the sacrifices necessary to do it.

In the organizations I have led, developing people has been a high priority. I tell the leaders who work for me, “Your job is to work yourself out of your job.” By that I mean that I want leaders to figure out how to do the job with the highest level of excellence, recruit a team, develop them, model leadership, find a potential successor, train and develop that person, and empower him or her to lead in their place. When people do that, they’ve worked themselves out of a job, and they’re ready to move up to the next job.

That’s a high bar of expectation for leaders. In some organizations, leaders can’t even get the job done on their own, much less develop someone else to do it. But that’s what Level 4 leadership takes. In my world of leadership, People Development is the target for every leader I employ. And if they are not willing or able to work themselves out of their job, I might have to take the job away from them and give it to someone else who can. So the goal for my leaders is never to keep their jobs. The question to them is, “Will you lose it by developing others or will you lose it because you didn’t develop others?” It’s always the leader’s choice.

My nonprofit organization EQUIP exists to help leaders in countries around the world develop people to lead on Level 4. Every six months EQUIP sends two associate trainers to a site to train leaders. For two days they take indigenous leaders through training material in a conference setting, equipping them for leadership. At the end of the conference, these

leaders are given training materials in their own language that they can take back and use to train potential leaders in their sphere of influence. They are also given additional books to help them continue growing during those six months between sessions with EQUIP's associate trainers. As long as these local leaders are committed to training their own people and becoming Level 4 leaders themselves, they are welcome to engage in EQUIP's training process. In this way, EQUIP has been able to train millions of leaders internationally during the past decade.

In many countries where EQUIP works, this concept at first seems odd to people. Many leaders, especially in developing nations, are very positional and territorial. Their goal is to obtain a position of power, attract as many followers as they can, and do whatever is necessary to hold on to their power. The idea of giving themselves away by developing and empowering others to lead is very counterintuitive. But many get it. They do it. And they see the incredible impact People Development can make. It transforms organizations and even impacts cultures. But it takes a high level of security and skill to do. And it requires a high degree of commitment.

Best Behaviors on Level 4

How to Develop People

Only leaders can develop other people to become leaders. A well-intentioned person with no leadership knowledge and experience cannot train another person to lead. Theorists who study leadership without practicing it cannot equip someone to lead, no more than a cookbook reader who has no experience in the kitchen would be able to teach someone how to cook. Nobody really understands leadership until he or she does it. Put another way...

It Takes a Leader to KNOW a Leader (Recruiting and Positioning)

It Takes a Leader to SHOW a Leader (Modeling and Equipping)

It Takes a Leader to GROW a Leader (Developing, Empowering, and Measuring)

In light of that truth, my goal in this section on People Development is to give you a clear path to follow as you seek to develop other people to lead. My assumption going into this is that you are already leading people somewhere in some fashion. If you are (or have in the past), the following seven steps will make sense. If not, you will need to gain experience leading on Levels 1, 2, and 3 before you will be capable of implementing these Level 4 best behaviors.

**Only leaders can develop
other people to become
leaders.**

If you want to make the most of People Development and raise up others to lead, then follow these guidelines:

1. Recruiting—Find the Best People Possible

Recruiting is the first and most important task in developing people and creating winning organizations. College football coach Bobby Bowden says, “If you get the best players and coach them soundly, you’re going to win.” In college sports, the most successful coaches are the ones who are the best recruiters. You can’t develop people without potential—no matter how hard you work at it. So the people you recruit must possess natural ability in the area where they are to be developed, exhibit the desire to grow, and be a good fit for the organization.

**“If you get the best players
and coach them soundly,
you’re going to win.”**
—Bobby Bowden

The key to success in recruiting is a clear picture of who you are looking for. Many years ago Charlie Grimm was the manager of Major League Baseball’s Chicago Cubs. Speaker Linda Ellerbee tells the story of how one season the Cubs were having a hard time winning games because they didn’t have any good hitters. It’s said that Grimm received a phone call one day from an excited scout, who enthused, “Charlie, I’ve landed the greatest young pitcher in the land. He struck out every man who came to bat. Twenty-seven in a row. Nobody even got a foul until two were out in the ninth. The pitcher is right here with me. What shall I do?”

“Sign up the guy who got the foul,” answered Grimm. “We’re looking for hitters.”

This may sound overly simplistic, but it’s true nonetheless: it’s easier to find something when you know what you’re looking for. Say you’re looking for a tool on a messy workbench. If you know what it looks like, you can find it much more quickly and easily than if you don’t. If you’re trying to find a can in your pantry, you can find it more quickly and easily if you know what color and size it is.

It's the same for potential leaders. If you know what you're looking for, your chance of finding them goes up astronomically. Recruiting a nonleader to be developed in leadership is like asking a horse to climb a tree. It just isn't going to happen. If you want a potential tree climber, find a squirrel. If you want a potential leader, find someone with the traits of a good leader.

When I go looking for potential leaders, I use what I call the Four Cs:

Chemistry

Let's begin with the easiest one: it doesn't take long to figure out if you like people who are applying for a job or asking to be mentored. Is liking them important? Absolutely. If you don't like the person, you will not be an effective mentor to them. It's very difficult to spend time with people, be open with them, and invest in them if you don't like them and want to be around them.

If you are seriously considering recruiting or promoting someone, ask members of your team to spend time with that individual, preferably in a social setting if possible. After they've been around the person, find out if your team likes and would enjoy working with him or her. If not, there may not be a good fit. The Friendship Principle, which I describe in my book *Winning with People*, always applies: "All things being equal, people will work with people they like; all things not being equal, they still will." Chemistry matters.

Character

Good character makes trust possible. Trust makes strong relationships possible. Strong relationships make mentoring possible. You won't be able to develop someone whose character you do not trust.

Character is what closes the gap between knowing and doing. It aligns intentions and action. That consistency is appealing, and it is also essential to good, credible leadership. If I suspect that someone I'm considering recruiting doesn't have strong character, I don't go through with it.

Good character makes trust possible. Trust makes strong relationships possible. Strong relationships make mentoring possible.

Jim Rohn observed, "Good people are found, not changed." He said that he came across a slogan from a company stating, "We don't teach people to be nice. We simply hire nice people." He thought that was a clever shortcut. It's also good leadership. If you go into a mentoring relationship expecting to change a person's character, you're liable to be disappointed.

**"Good people are found,
not changed."
—Jim Rohn**

Capacity

During the NBA playoffs, I heard commentator and former player Charles Barkley distinguish the difference between a star player and a support player. “The stars can *at any time* meet the requirements needed to help the team,” explained Barkley. “Support players can *sometimes* do that.” (Emphases mine.) What determines the difference between these two types of players? Capacity.

Fulfillment on Level 4 is bringing out the best in people. Frustration is trying to bring out what isn’t there. If you want to develop people and help them become good leaders, you must not ask for what they *wish* they could give, only for what they have the potential to give. I haven’t always found it easy to assess other people’s capacity. It was especially difficult for me when I began my leadership career. But with experience I began to see patterns in people.

As you look at potential leaders, try to assess their capacity in the following areas:

- Stress Management—their ability to withstand and overcome pressure, failure, deadlines, and obstacles
- Skill—their ability to get specific tasks done
- Thinking—their ability to be creative, develop strategy, solve problems, and adapt
- Leadership—their ability to gather followers and build a team
- Attitude—their ability to remain positive and tenacious amidst negative circumstances

As a leader, your goal should be to identify what their capacity is, recognize what *they* think their capacity is, and motivate, challenge, and equip them in such a way that they close the gap between the two.

Contribution

Some people possess an X factor. They are winners. They contribute beyond their job responsibilities, and they lift the performance of everyone on their team. When you discover people with these characteristics, recruit them. They are a joy to develop, and whatever you put into them returns to you compounded.

One such person in my life is Mark Cole, whom I mentioned previously. He has been working with me for twelve years and has a track record of making everything he touches better. Everyone who works with him performs better as a result of his contact. It has been a joy to develop him because of his servant's heart and superior skills. What a combination!

Once when I was having lunch with coach Lou Holtz, he told me with a grin, "I've had good players and I've had bad players. I'm a better coach with good players." The same is true with leaders. If you want to be better, recruit better players. If you want to develop better leaders, recruit people with potential according to the Four Cs.

**"I've had good players and
I've had bad players. I'm a
better coach with good
players."**

—Lou Holtz

2. Positioning—Placing the Right People in the Right Position

Red Auerbach won nine NBA championships as coach of the Boston Celtics and sixteen championships overall as coach, general manager, and front office president. Few leaders in sports have come anywhere close to his accomplishments. Once, when asked about his team's success, Auerbach said,

When I first started coaching, people told me to put my five best players on the court. But I learned early on that this was not the key to success. It wasn't putting the five best players on the court that was going to cause us to win. It was putting the five players on the court *who could work together the best*. We won championships because we put people together. They weren't always our best players.

In other words, it's not enough just to recruit good players. A leader must understand how those players best fit on the team and put them there. To do that, he must have a clear picture of each person's strengths and weakness and understand how they fit the needs of the team.

Author Jim Collins has helped many of us to understand this principle. In his book *Good to Great*, he writes about the importance of getting the right people in the right seats on the bus. Successful people find their right seats. Successful leaders help their people find their right seats. Sometimes that requires moving people around to find where they make the greatest contribution. Sometimes it means trying and failing. As a leader, you have to take it all in stride. Positioning people correctly is a process, and you have to treat it that way. But if you don't do it, you will never help your people reach their potential, nor will you create a team of championship caliber, as Red Auerbach did.

3. Modeling—Showing Others How to Lead

I once read a story about a woman who took her young son to see Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi. “Mahatma,” she requested, “please tell my little boy to stop eating sugar.”

“Come back in three days,” said Gandhi.

Three days passed and the woman returned with her son.

“Young boy, stop eating sweets. They are not good for you,” Gandhi said to the little boy.

Puzzled, the woman asked, “Why did you ask us to leave and come back in three days? I don’t understand.”

“I asked you to return with the boy in three days,” replied the leader, “because three days ago, I, too, was eating sweets. I could not ask him to stop eating sweets so long as I had not stopped eating sweets”⁵

I’ve already written about how important it is to model what you want to see in others, so I won’t say a lot more about it here. However, as I think about developing others, here are the things I believe I must model with integrity in order to help people to develop on Level 4:

Authenticity—This is the foundation for developing people.

Servanthood—This is the soul for developing people.

Growth—This is the measurement for developing people.

Excellence—This is the standard for developing people.

Passion—This is the fuel for developing people.

Success—This is the purpose for developing people.

And allow me to mention one more thing: When discussing Level 3, where you focus on Production, I mentioned how important it is not to neglect Level 2 relationships. Similarly, when focusing on Level 4 People Development, do not neglect the modeling that you worked to establish on Level 3.

4. Equipping—Helping Others Do Their Jobs Well

Comedian Jack Benny was once appointed as honorary manager of the Hollywood All-Stars baseball team. As the team prepared to play an exhibition game against a professional team in Los Angeles, Jack handed a bat to his first batter and said, “Go up to the plate and hit a home run.”

The batter struck out, and with great theatrics, Jack Benny quit as manager. “How can I manage them,” he quipped, “if they won’t follow orders?”

It’s not enough to simply tell people what they need to do. That’s not developing their potential. Instead, a leader must *help* them to do their jobs and do them well. Peter Drucker pointed out, “The largest single source of failed promotion is the failure to think through and help others to think through what a new job requires.”

“The largest single source of failed promotion is the failure to think through and help others to think through what a new job requires.”

—Peter Drucker

How does a leader equip people to do their work and succeed at it? The best method I’ve ever found is a five-step equipping process. Here’s how it works:

Step 1—I do it (competence).

Step 2—I do it and you are with me (demonstration).

Step 3—You do it and I am with you (coaching).

Step 4—You do it (empowerment).

Step 5—You do it and someone is with you (reproduction).

If you adopt this method, not only will you equip leaders, you will begin teaching them how to equip others, which sets them up to become Level 4 leaders themselves.

5. Developing—Teaching Them to Do Life Well

One of the recurring things I hear from leaders in America who work with people in their twenties is how talented they are—and how few life skills they possess. Some speculate that this generation’s struggle to navigate the basics of life is due to the breakdown of the family and the absence of strong fathers in the home. No matter what the cause may be, it is the responsibility of a leader on Level 4 to help people to learn how to do life well. If the only thing you’re helping a new leader learn is how to get ahead in the workplace, you’re not truly developing that person to succeed, because there’s a lot more to life than work and career.

The Greek philosopher Socrates said, “The individual leads in order that those who are led can develop their potential as human beings and thereby prosper.” That should be your goal in developing people.

“The individual leads in order that those who are led can develop their potential as human beings and thereby prosper.”

—Socrates

The Center for Creative Leadership has observed that three key elements drive leadership development in others: assessment, challenge, and support. What do these things mean to you as a developing leader?

Assessment

As a Level 4 leader, you should be continually on the lookout for holes in the life skills of someone you are leading and developing. Ask yourself:

Where does this person seem to be failing?

Where are this person's blind spots?

What does my intuition tell me is "off" in this person's thinking?

Why isn't this person reaching his or her potential?

Who is this person following who might be leading him or her in a wrong direction?

When does this person do well?

When does this person stumble?

What telltale clues can I find that give me insight into where this person needs help?

Where is this person's sweet spot?

A good Level 4 leader is always on the lookout for a person's weaknesses and wrong thinking—not to exploit that person, but to strengthen and help him or her succeed.

Challenge

If you've done your work on Level 2 to build a strong relationship with the people, and you've proven yourself on Level 3 by modeling success and productivity, there is a very good chance that they will buy into your leadership and accept a challenge from you to improve. To do that, ask the people you lead to do the following:

- Read books related to their areas of strength.
- Attend conferences that will inspire them.
- Take on new and challenging tasks in their sweet spot.
- Practice difficult disciplines that slowly build character.
- Meet with you on a regular basis for mentoring.

The idea is to challenge them in every area of their lives where you see that they need improvement. Just be sure to gain their permission to do it before starting the process.

Support

Nobody gets ahead in life without the help and support of other people. One of the great privileges of leading on the People Development level is helping new leaders navigate through life's difficulties. The primary way I do that is by allowing the people I mentor to request a meeting with me whenever they need it. On those occasions, they are to drive the agenda by asking specific, difficult questions. I answer them as best I can, and in return, the next time we meet, I ask that the person tell me how they applied what they learned.

It's difficult for someone to make the most of their leadership potential when the rest of their life is a wreck. Good life skills help a person to create a strong foundation upon which to build a family, career, and spiritual life. I admit that I get the greatest joy from seeing people reach their leadership potential, but it is also very satisfying to know that I've helped someone to enjoy life and live it well.

6. Empowering—Enabling People to Succeed

President Theodore Roosevelt is often quoted as saying, “The best executive is the one who has sense enough to pick good men to do what he wants done, and self-restraint enough to keep from meddling with them while they do it.” What he’s describing is empowerment. That’s helping people to see what they can do without your help, and releasing them to do it.

I have to admit that as a leader, it’s hard not to meddle. That’s especially true when you know the work you’re delegating very well but the person you’re giving it to is new to it. Yet releasing work to be done by others is an essential link to empowering and ultimately developing them as leaders.

As you release tasks to the leaders you’re developing, you need to trust them, believe in them, and hold them accountable. Trust creates a bond between you and them. When I trust the people I will empower, I put a little piece of myself into their hands. When they respond in kind, the shared vulnerability creates a bond between you that deepens the relationship.

When I trust the people I will empower, I put a little piece of myself into their hands.

When you believe in people, you motivate them. Few things put wind in another person’s sails like your faith in them. And the belief must be genuine. Pretending you believe provides no passion for empowerment. Nor can you borrow the belief from someone else because it will have no power. You must draw upon the experiences you have with them and the growth that they have already exhibited. Besides helping them, it will also help you. If you don’t believe in them, you won’t be able to let go and release them to achieve.

When you hold people accountable, you increase their chances for positive results. Why? Because everyone finds focus in goals. They work

better toward deadlines. And they usually rise to the level of a leader's expectations. Without accountability, people drift. With it, they achieve results.

7. Measuring—Evaluating Those Whom You Develop to Maximize Their Efforts

Many people look at winning sports teams, and they often tend to attribute the team's success to how knowledgeable the coach is. But games aren't won according to what the coach knows. Games are won according to what the coach's players have learned. How can you measure that as a leader? By judging how independently your team members are able to function.

The Center for Organizational Effectiveness in Cincinnati, Ohio, suggests that there are different degrees of ability when it comes to empowerment, based on how independently a team member can work. Here are the six they recognize, from least independent to most independent:

1. Look into it. Report. I'll decide what to do.
2. Look into it. Report alternatives with pros and cons and your recommendation.
3. Look into it. Let me know what you intend to do, but don't do it unless I say yes.
4. Look into it. Let me know what you intend to do and do it unless I say no.
5. Take action. Let me know what you did.
6. Take action. No further contact required.

As you work in People Development with team members, you can measure where they are in leadership development based on where they typically function according to those six benchmarks. Obviously, your goal is to help them become leaders who can take action without needing your input. When the leaders you develop reach that benchmark, then they—and you—are ready to lead them at the highest level of leadership, Level 5, which I'll discuss in the final section of this book.

The Laws of Leadership at the People Development Level

As you work to master the People Development level of leadership, please keep in mind how the following Laws of Leadership come into play.

The Law of Process *Leadership Develops Daily, Not in a Day*

No matter how much you want to be a good leader, it will take you time to improve your leadership. Leadership develops daily, not in a day. Likewise, developing people also takes time. You can't make it happen using a "microwave" mind-set. You have to be willing to take it step by step. You have to put in many hours of mentoring and wait months, years, and sometimes decades for people to develop into good leaders. But it's worth the effort. Just remember: mentoring is not a race. If you run fast and try to finish first, you'll finish alone. Leaders who make it to Level 4 cross the finish line in the company of the people they've developed.

**Mentoring is not a race. If
you run fast and try to
finish first, you'll finish
alone.**

The Law of Addition *Leaders Add Value by Serving Others*

As a young leader I thought, *It will be great to have people follow me toward my vision and help me achieve it.* I could hardly wait for others to put me first in their lives. I was leading for all the wrong reasons. Good leaders put their people first, not themselves.

If you want to become a great leader, serve the people you lead. Make their success your success. Clear the way for them to achieve. Invest in them so that they succeed. Maintain the mind-set of a servant. Many people pursue success. Few pursue success for their people.

The Law of the Inner Circle *A Leader's Potential Is Determined by Those Closest to Him*

The highest levels of achievement in life cannot be accomplished by any person working alone. People need one another. If you are a leader with a big vision, you won't be able to achieve it without a team of leaders—an inner circle. These people help you lead and achieve, and are almost like an extended family. If you desire to have a great inner circle, then start developing people. Only by raising up leaders and inviting them to pursue the vision with you will you achieve big things.

“The first method of estimating the intelligence of a ruler is to look at the men he has around him.”

—*Niccolo Machiavelli*

Niccolo Machiavelli said, “The first method of estimating the intelligence of a ruler is to look at the men he has around him.” Look at the people closest to you. What is their caliber? What can be said about their integrity? A leader's inner circle is the most accurate picture of his or her life. If you don't like what you see, then invest more of yourself into potential leaders and raise them up to succeed. They in turn will do the same for you.

The Law of Empowerment *Only Secure Leaders Give Power to Others*

I once heard Jack Welch say in an interview that when he was at GE, he noticed there were two types of leaders: those who would hide their key players and those who would promote them. He said the leaders who hid their best people had a selfish spirit. In contrast, those who promoted and empowered others had a generous spirit.

People don't reach Level 4 unless they are willing to empower leaders, promote them, and release them to lead. That takes a strong sense of security and an abundance mind-set. If you want to succeed on the People Development level of leadership, work to address your insecurities so that you can become an empowerer of other leaders.

The Law of Explosive Growth *To Add Growth, Lead Followers— To Multiply, Lead Leaders*

Leadership productivity and organizational impact begin to occur when a leader reaches Level 3. Those things multiply on Level 4. Every time you develop people and help them become leaders, you not only gain their ability and put their horsepower to use in the organization, but you also engage the abilities of everyone they lead. There is not a faster or more effective way to compound your time, effort, and resources than by developing leaders.

The Law of Buy-In *People Buy into the Leader, Then the Vision*

You may have noticed that this is the third time I've referenced the Law of Buy-In. Why? Because developing influence with others is a continuing process of earning their buy in.

Few things are more inspiring and energizing than leaders who seek to serve their people and see those people rise up to their potential and become leaders themselves. When leaders act worthy of their positions on Level 1, build good relationships on Level 2, model productivity on Level 3, and invest in their people by developing them on Level 4, people go beyond just knowing the vision. They feel the vision. Why? Because it comes to life in the leader. People find that inspiring and energizing. And they buy in.

Beliefs That Help a Leader Move Up to Level 5

If you have managed to move up to Level 4, you are leading at a very high level, higher than 90 percent of all other leaders. But there is still one level higher that may be within your reach. Fewer than 1 percent of all leaders achieve it. To prepare yourself to attempt that final climb and give yourself the best chance of making it to the top, you must first embrace the following beliefs:

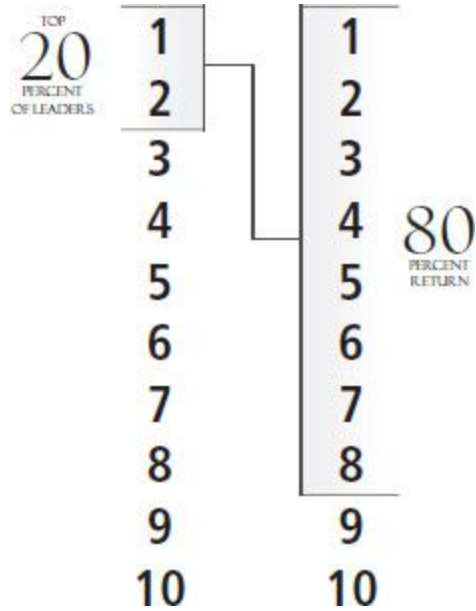
1. The Highest Goal of Leadership Is to Develop Leaders, Not Gain Followers or Do Work

Getting work done can be important and rewarding. And leading others and having them help you achieve a vision can be wonderful. But developing others is even more wonderful. And it should be your goal as a leader.

The improvement to individual leaders' lives is the highest goal of leadership development.

I believe I've already made a pretty good case for how leaders become more productive by focusing on leadership development. But I think it is worth saying that the improvement to individual leaders' lives is the highest goal of leadership development. When you help other people become leaders, you change their lives. You change the way they see the world. You change their capacity. You increase their potential. You change the way they interact with others. If they become good leaders, you help them improve not only their lives, but also the lives of everyone they touch. I believe that is how you change the world for the better.

How does a leader do this? By applying the Pareto Principle. I described in Level 3 how the 80/20 rule can be used to increase productivity. That same principle can be used when developing leaders. As a Level 4 leader, you should focus 80 percent of your attention on developing the best 20 percent of the leaders you have. That focus will bring you the highest return. A handful of leaders will give an organization a far greater return than hundreds of followers.



Focusing your development on the top 20 percent also sets you up for success on Level 5 because the leaders with the most potential and who give you the highest rate of return on your investment also have the greatest likelihood of turning around and raising up other leaders, which is the emphasis on Level 5.

2. To Develop Leaders, You Must Create a Leadership Culture

Even if you place great emphasis on developing leaders and practice the 80/20 rule, you will not be able to move up to Level 5 unless you also create a leadership culture. Jim Blanchard did this at Synovus. In an interview with George Barna, Blanchard said, “I think the most important and difficult thing is to create a culture in the organization where leadership is really important. It’s important for people in the company to realize that this is a growth-oriented company, and the biggest thing we have to grow here is you, because it’s you who will make this company better by your own growth.... So I would think making a culture aware of the significance of developing leaders is valuable.” Blanchard went on to ask some critical questions that help leaders examine whether they are indeed working to create a leadership culture and putting the right emphasis on developing leaders. He asked,

- What percentage of the payroll goes into leadership development?
- What kinds of formal training do they do?
- To what extent do they reward leadership?
- Do they have a directory of good mentors?⁶

If you want to start creating a Leadership Development culture that cultivates Level 5 leaders, then do the following:

- Champion Leadership**—Define and model good leadership.
- Teach Leadership**—Train leaders on a regular, frequent, consistent basis.
- Practice Leadership**—Help emerging leaders to plan and execute, fail and succeed.
- Coach Leadership**—Review new leaders’ performance and correct their errors.
- Reward Leadership**—Reward good leadership with pay, resources, and recognition.

If you make the purpose of your organization to champion, teach, practice, coach, and reward leadership, then people will want to become good leaders. They will strive to help others become good leaders. And the potential of the organization to fulfill its vision will explode.

3. Developing Leaders Is a Life Commitment, Not a Job Commitment

Level 4 leaders develop people. Level 5 leaders consistently develop leaders over a lifetime, and the leaders they raise up also develop leaders. It becomes a lifestyle they practice everywhere and at all times, not a program they implement or a task they occasionally practice. Mentoring is a mantle that they wear willingly, and they strive to add value to others. They value it because they have transitioned from chasing a position of success to pursuing a role of significance.

We live in a very needy world. If you often ask yourself, *How do we meet so many needs?* then please realize that the greatest needs will never be met until we equip leaders who can work to meet those needs. That is one of the reasons I train leaders. I believe it is a cause worthy of a lifetime commitment. I hope you will accept the challenge to develop people and raise up leaders. If you do, you won't regret it.

[Guide to Growing through Level 4](#)

As you reflect on the upsides, downsides, best behaviors, and beliefs related to the People Development level of leadership, use the following guidelines to help you grow as a leader:

1. **Be Willing to Keep Growing Yourself:** Few things are worse than the teacher who is unteachable. As a leader, you will reproduce what you are. If you remain teachable, your people will remain teachable. If your mind is closed, so will be the minds of the people you mentor. How do you keep growing and have an open mind? First, maintain a teachable spirit, which says, *Everyone can teach me something. Everything can teach me something.* Second, keep yourself on a growth plan. It is impossible to help others intentionally grow if you are not intentionally growing. And here's the good news: If you have already been investing in your personal development, guess what? You have already done much of the hard work. Just keep learning.

**Few things are worse than
the teacher who is
unteachable.**

2. **Decide that People Are Worth the Effort:** Comedian and author David Sedaris said, "I haven't got the slightest idea how to change people, but still I keep a long list of prospective candidates just in case I should ever figure it out."⁷ That's not the way to approach People Development. You shouldn't go into it because people cause trouble and you want them to change. You should go into it because people are worth it, and you're willing to take the trouble to help

them. If you haven't already made that decision, then make it before you engage in the process.

“I haven't got the slightest idea how to change people, but I keep a long list of prospective candidates just in case I should ever figure it out.”

—David Sedaris

3. **Work Through Your Insecurities:** Leaders who are afraid of looking bad or of being replaced rarely develop other leaders. If that description applies to you, then you need to process through those issues so that you can work your way up to the higher levels of leadership. Spend some time with people you trust and who know you well enough to talk through your issues. Ask for their help and accountability. Get the advice of a counseling professional, if needed. Do whatever it takes, because insecure leaders don't develop people, and leaders who don't develop people never become Level 4 leaders.
4. **Recruit the Best People You Can to Develop:** Most leaders spend their time and energy on the wrong people: the bottom 20 percent. The individuals who usually take up most of a leader's time are the troublemakers, the complainers, and those who are struggling. These people often have the *least* potential to lead and take the organization forward. Level 4 leaders focus their best time and energy on the top 20 percent, the people who don't *need* attention but would most profit from it. Take a look at all of the people in your sphere of influence. Who are the individuals with the greatest potential to lead and make an impact? These are the people to target for development.
5. **Commit to Spend the Time Needed to Develop Leaders:** People development takes a lot of time. To lead on Level 4, you may need to dedicate as much as half of your time to developing people if you want to properly invest in them. In order to do that, first build a

support system to free yourself up; when you have to do everything yourself, you have little time to mentor others. Second, determine the amount of time you give someone based on his or her potential. A leader's value is in the investment he makes in others, not in what he can do personally. That investment must be made wisely and should be a top priority.

6. **Create a Personal Development Process:** Benjamin Franklin observed, "The eye of the master will do more work than both his hands." The ability to see, discern, and analyze is essential to developing people. Level 4 leaders recognize the abilities in people and work fluidly with them. They are able to mentor people with different talents, temperaments, and styles. While average leaders try to lead everyone the same way, Level 4 leaders lead everyone differently. That takes creativity and confidence.

Having said that, I must add that Level 4 leaders also bring structure and stability to the development process. As you develop leaders, keep in mind the following guidelines:

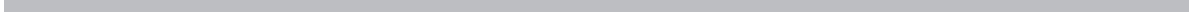
- ***The process must occur daily.*** The secret of your success is determined by your daily agenda. No one ever got good at something they seldom practiced.
- ***The process must be measurable.*** Although growth begins inwardly, it must be proven outwardly. Therefore, the goals of growth must be something that can be seen and verified by you and the person you mentor. If they don't know where they're going, how will they ever know if they get there?
- ***The process must include things they value.*** If you include things they desire, people will be motivated to achieve them.
- ***The process must align with your strengths.*** When people ask me to mentor them, my first question is, "In what area?" I do only a few things well and can help people only in the areas of my strengths. As you prepare to develop people, teach from those strengths and encourage those you mentor to seek out others who can help them in areas where you can't.

- ***The process must fit into their dream plan.*** I state in my book *Put Your Dream to the Test* that the more valid reasons a person has to achieve their dream, the higher the odds are that they will. Valid reasons also increase the odds that a person will follow through with personal growth.

Although growth begins inwardly, it must be proven outwardly.

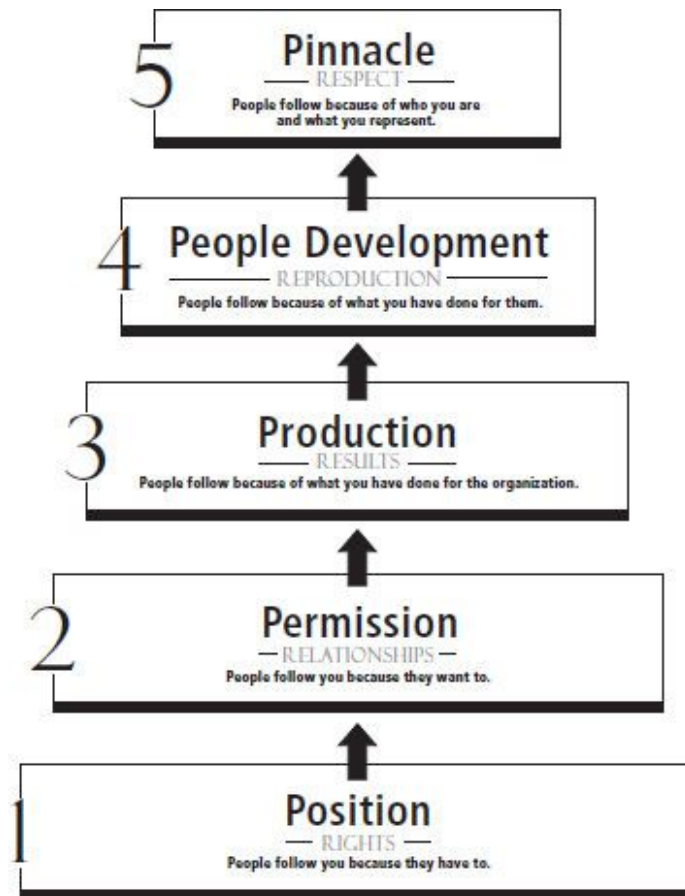
7. **Never Work Alone:** One of the secrets of developing leaders on Level 4 is to have the people you are mentoring beside you as often as possible so that they can learn how you think and act in a variety of situations. Your goal at first is for them to observe as you model leadership. But as quickly as you can, give them responsibilities that you can monitor. And as soon as they're ready, empower them to act on their own.
8. **Blend the Soft and Hard Sides of Development:** Level 4 leaders have to deal simultaneously with people issues and business issues, and they need to be able to do both effectively. That's an art. As you work to develop people, maintain a relational approach, valuing them and adding value to them. At the same time, do what you must to achieve a good bottom line. Write out a philosophy that will help you to do both. If it helps, write out your priorities and put them in order of importance as a guide.
9. **Take Responsibility for Energizing Others:** While it's true that the people you develop need to be self-motivated, it's also true that leaders create energy and inspire others to achieve. As you work to develop people, strive to create an emotionally engaging process that encourages those you mentor to take risks and enjoy their experiences. Too many leaders disconnect. They have a been-there-done-that mentality that is alienating, not alluring. In contrast, if you have a been-there-love-that way of thinking, people will be attracted to you and want to do their best when they engage with you.

- 10. Remain Approachable As a Leader, Role Model, and Coach:** An open door and open heart invite people to come into a leader's life. That openness comes only when a leader initiates and takes responsibility for having it. I encourage you to take that responsibility, because when you do, you will develop a special connection with your people. Openness, humility, and transparency are always very attractive. These qualities give others permission to ask questions, take risks, and be themselves. And that takes leadership development to a whole new level.



Level 5: THE PINNACLE

The Highest Leadership Accomplishment Is Developing Other Leaders to Level 4



Rare is the leader who reaches Level 5—the Pinnacle. Not only is leadership at this level a culmination of leading well on the other four levels, but it also requires both a high degree of skill and some amount of natural leadership ability. It takes a lot to be able to develop other leaders so that they reach Level 4; that’s what Level 5 leaders do. The individuals who reach Level 5 lead so well for so long that they create a legacy of leadership in the organization they serve.

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Pinnacle leaders stand out from everyone else. They are a cut above, and they seem to bring success with them wherever they go. Leadership at this high level lifts the entire organization and creates an environment that benefits everyone in it, contributing to their success. Level 5 leaders often possess an influence that transcends the organization and the industry the leader works in.

Most leaders who reach the Pinnacle do so later in their careers. But the Pinnacle level is not a resting place for leaders to stop and view their success. It is a reproducing place from which they make the greatest impact of their lives. That’s why leaders who reach the Pinnacle should make the most of it while they can. With gratitude and humility, they should lift up as many leaders as they can, tackle as many great challenges as possible, and extend their influence to make a positive difference beyond their own organization and industry.

The Upside of the Pinnacle

Your Influence Has Expanded Beyond Your Reach and Your Time

When writing about Level 1, I told you that as you climbed the 5 Levels of Leadership, the upsides would continue to increase while the downsides would decrease. However, Level 5 doesn't fit that pattern. On the Pinnacle, I see only three major upsides. But though they are few, each carries a tremendous weight and huge impact.

1. Pinnacle Leadership Creates a Level 5 Organization

Many organizations seem to struggle to maintain their existence. Others work hard to inch their way toward growth or increased profitability. Meanwhile, a few organizations rise above the rest and seem to function at an extraordinarily high level. What's their secret? Leadership. Great organizations have great leaders, and the best organizations that function at the highest capacity—Level 5 organizations—become what they are because they are led by Level 5 leaders.

General Electric has been held up as a business model for decades. Year after year it is cited by *Fortune* magazine as a top-ten organization for leadership. Why? Because for many years it was led by Jack Welch, a Level 5 leader, and his emphasis was on developing other leaders to become Level 4 leaders—leaders who produce other leaders.

Because Level 5 leaders empower many people to lead larger, they lift the leadership lid for everyone in the organization. Because they produce lots of leaders and continue to do so over the long haul of their careers, their organizations develop an abundance mind-set. People in the organization receive lots of opportunities, and they expect to continue getting them. With the development of each leader and the pursuit of every opportunity, the organization continues to get stronger. And in time, leadership becomes part of their DNA. And even when one leader steps down or retires, there are many leaders ready and able to take their place because Level 5 organizations have a pipeline of leaders being produced.

Because Level 5 leaders have worked their way up through each level to arrive at the Pinnacle position, they understand and practice leadership at a high level. They have experienced a transformation of sorts with each transition from one level to another, and as a result they have insight that helps them to recognize where other leaders are in the process and to help those leaders navigate the various changes required to move up to the next level.

2. Pinnacle Leadership Creates a Legacy within the Organization

Level 5 leaders want to do more than just run an organization well. They want to do more than succeed. They want to create a legacy. Journalist Walter Lippmann was right when he said, “The final test of a leader is that he leaves behind him in other men the convictions and the will to carry on.” If you reach the Pinnacle of leadership, you have an opportunity to make an impact beyond your tenure and possibly beyond your own lifetime. You do that by developing a generation of leaders *who will develop the next generation of leaders*.

“The final test of a leader is that he leaves behind him in other men the convictions and the will to carry on.”
—Walter Lippmann

Level 5 leaders are measured by the caliber of leaders they develop, not the caliber of their own leadership. Their approach to leadership changes accordingly. Larry Bossidy, former CEO of AlliedSignal, understood this when he asked,

How am I doing as a leader? The answer is how the people you lead are doing. Do they learn? Do they manage conflict? Do they initiate change? You won't remember when you retire what you did in the first quarter of 1994.... What you'll remember is how many people you developed.

Not only that, you'll remember how well you developed them and how effectively they were able to carry on after you were no longer leading. In Level 5 organizations, when the top leader steps down, there are usually

many leaders ready to rise up and take the reins. And the organization experiences continuity unfamiliar to organizations with lesser leaders.

3. Pinnacle Leadership Provides an Extended Platform for Leading

In America, we believe everyone has the right to speak. But even in a free society, you have to earn the right to be heard. Level 5 leaders have paid their dues and earned that right. And because they lead well and develop others to do likewise, their influence extends beyond their reach. People outside of their direct sphere of influence hear about them and seek them out for advice. Level 5 leaders are able to cross lines out of their industry or area of expertise to speak with authority. People respect them for who they are and what they represent. That gives them a greater platform and extended influence. They often have a chance to make a broader impact on society or to advance the cause of leadership, redefine it, and pour themselves into the next generation of leaders.

In America, we believe everyone has the right to speak. But even in a free society, you have to earn the right to be heard.

Think of the great leaders of government, business, education, and faith. Their influence far exceeds the organizations they led. Nelson Mandela's authority has few boundaries. Everyone respects him. Jack Welch no longer leads General Electric, but his leadership advice is sought internationally. For decades presidents of the United States have sought the counsel of Billy Graham. Their influence is extensive and their reputations are legendary.

With this extended influence comes a responsibility to steward it with integrity. Level 5 leaders understand that the highest position of leadership is not a place to be served by others but to serve others. It is not a place to receive, but a place to give.

Margaret and I recently saw evidence of such stewardship when we visited the Nobel Museum in Stockholm, Sweden. Our guide told us stories

of great men and women who have made our world a better place to live. One of the Nobel recipients was Albert Einstein. He once said,

Strange is our situation here upon earth. Each of us comes for a short visit, not knowing why, yet sometimes seeming to divine a purpose. From the standpoint of daily life, however, there is one thing we do know: that man is here for the sake of other men—above all for those upon whose smile and well-being our own happiness depends, and also for the countless unknown souls with whose fate we are connected by a bond of sympathy. Many times a day I realize how much my own outer and inner life is built upon the labors of my fellow men, both living and dead, and how earnestly I must exert myself in order to give in return as much as I have received.

Einstein's reputation went far beyond the halls of academia and the field of physics. His influence has continued long after death. That is what happens with leaders and thinkers of his caliber. That's what happens with leaders who make it to the Pinnacle.

The leadership journey has the potential to take individuals through a lifelong process in three phases: *learn, earn, return*. People at the start of the journey who are given a position of leadership are faced with a decision. Are they going to learn now to lead better, or are they going to rely on their position, guard their turf, and play king of the hill to maintain what they've got? Those who choose to learn enter the *learning* phase and start to slowly climb up the levels of leadership. Typically, when they reach the Production level, they begin to receive recognition and the rewards of leadership. That's when most leaders enter the *earning* phase. Many are content to stay there. They climb the ladder in the organization, they have the respect of their peers, and they earn a good living. Only those leaders who decide to give back to others and develop leaders enter the *returning* phase. Leaders who dedicate themselves to developing more leaders and pour themselves into the task, giving their best energies and resources to raise up other leaders, are the only ones who have the chance to move up to the Pinnacle.

No matter where you are in your own leadership journey, I encourage you to learn all you can and keep learning. And when you reach the earning

phase, don't stop there. Don't lead others solely for your own benefit. Start giving to others and teaching them to lead so that you can enter the returning phase. Do that long enough and well enough, and you give yourself an opportunity to reach Level 5 and experience its upsides.

The Downside of the Pinnacle

You May Start to Believe It's All about You

Each level of leadership has a downside. This level is no exception. But here's the good news: fewer leaders become victims of the downside at the Pinnacle level than at any other. Why? Because it's difficult to reach the Pinnacle without a great measure of maturity. Every lesson leaders learn at the previous levels becomes a curb that helps to keep them from getting off course. However, here is the bad news. Those who are susceptible to the downside on the Pinnacle fall dramatically. They can derail everything they've worked for up to this point.

Here are the three negative things you need to look out for if you reach the Pinnacle:

1. Being on the Pinnacle Can Make You Think You've Arrived

It's ironic, but one of the greatest dangers for Pinnacle leaders at the top is similar to a downside for Position leaders at the bottom: thinking they've arrived. If you came into leadership with a destination mind-set, and you carried it with you as you've moved your way up through the 5 Levels of Leadership, you may think that the Pinnacle is a place to rest, smell the roses, and make the most of your privileges. If that's your mind-set, beware!

It's ironic, but one of the greatest dangers for Pinnacle leaders at the top is similar to a downside for Position leaders at the bottom: thinking they've arrived.

In his book *How the Mighty Fall*, Jim Collins wrote that those who fall often have an entitlement mind-set, bolstered by arrogance. He wrote that for such leaders, "Success is viewed as 'deserved' rather than fortuitous, fleeting, or even hard earned in the face of daunting odds; people begin to believe that success will continue almost no matter what the organization decides to do, or not to do."

A leader's decisions always make an impact—for better or worse. Leaders who have reached the top of their profession or the top of their organization cannot take anything for granted. No matter how good they've been in the past, they still need to strategize, weigh decisions, plan, and execute at a high level. Momentum can overcome a lot of problems, but even great momentum cannot continually compensate for negligence, arrogance, or stupidity.

Nor should they treat the organization as their personal property—even if it *is* their property. Every organization for which people work is a trust. If

you're the leader, you cannot make decisions with only you and your personal interests in mind. To whomsoever much is given, much will be required.

People who reach the top of their field are always in danger of thinking they have nothing left to learn. If that happens to you, it's the beginning of the end. To be effective, leaders must always be learners. You can never arrive—you can only strive to get better. That is the mind-set you must bring to every day of your leadership. If you're through learning, you're through.

**If you're through learning,
you're through.**

2. Being on the Pinnacle Can Lead You to Believe Your Own Press

Few things are more ridiculous than leaders who take themselves too seriously and begin to believe they are God's gift to others. Yet it happens continually. History is filled with stories of people who got carried away with their power and position.

One such leader was King Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden. He was known as a brilliant military commander, and during his reign he elevated Sweden from a minor to a major power in Europe and ushered in what's known as the Golden Age of Sweden. But like many strong leaders, he started to believe that anything he desired to do would automatically succeed.

As the king fought in the Thirty Years War, he desired to rule the Baltic Sea. To do so, he was determined to build a ship that towered over the other ships in beauty and size. He decided on the measurements and armament of the ship, even though he had no naval expertise, and gave them to the shipbuilders. The following words were written about this venture.

“Nothing can be more impressive and more dedicated to glorifying to his royal majesty than for his ship to bear the most magnificent decoration that has ever been held on the ocean.”

The ship was called the *Vasa*, named after the monarch's royal house. As the war raged on, the king became impatient for its launch. Tests were made to check its stability, but the monarch would not tolerate a delay. So on August 10, 1628, *Vasa* was launched on its maiden voyage. Thousands watched as the ship slowly left the harbor in Stockholm. But as soon as the ship was exposed to a gust of wind, it began to sway. It heeled over, took on water, and sank a few hundred feet from shore less than a mile from where it began! Clearly the king's confidence wasn't enough to keep his dream afloat.

Any time a leader begins to believe his own press, he's in trouble. When people excel to a high level in their profession, a type of mythology grows up around them. They become larger than life in other people's minds. A lot of the time it's hype. No Level 5 leaders are as good as people give them

credit for. And no leaders—no matter how long or how well they've led—are above the laws of leadership. The laws are like gravity. They apply to you whether or not you believe in them.

If you become a Level 5 leader, never forget that like everyone else, you started at the bottom as a positional leader. You had to work to build relationships. You had to prove your productivity. And investing in the lives of others came about only with effort. Be confident, but also be humble. If you've become successful, it's only because a lot of other people helped you all along the way.

3. Being on the Pinnacle Can Make You Lose Focus

When leaders reach Level 5, the number of opportunities they receive becomes extraordinary. Everyone wants to hear what such leaders have to say. But many of these opportunities are really little more than distractions. They won't help the leader's organization or cause.

In *Good to Great*, Jim Collins tells a story that illustrates how this can happen. The example he gives is of former Chrysler chairman Lee Iacocca. Collins writes:

Lee Iacocca, for example, saved Chrysler from the brink of catastrophe, performing one of the most celebrated (and deservedly so) turnarounds in American business history. Chrysler rose to the height of 2.9 times the market at a point about halfway through his tenure. Then, however, he diverted his attention to making himself one of the most celebrated CEOs in American business history. *Investor's Business Daily* and the *Wall Street Journal* chronicled how Iacocca appeared regularly on talk shows like the *Today* show and *Larry King Live*, personally starred in over eighty commercials, entertained the idea of running for president of the United States (quoted at one point, "Running Chrysler has been a bigger job than running the country.... I could handle the national economy in six months"), and widely promoted his autobiography. The book, *Iacocca*, sold seven million copies and elevated him to rock star status.... Iacocca's personal stock soared, but in the second half of his tenure, Chrysler's stock fell 31 percent behind the general market.¹

If leaders who reach the Pinnacle want to make the most of their time there, they must remain focused on their vision and purpose and continue leading at the highest level.

I'm sorry to admit that I've occasionally lost focus in my own leadership. It happened to me at EQUIP several years ago. During the first eight years of the company's existence, we focused on training one million leaders internationally. We called it the Million Leaders Mandate. It

consumed our attention, and we put all our resources to work making it happen. When we reached our goal, we celebrated. I gave each staff member, leadership trainer, and major donor a ring in appreciation for their help. But then, we lost focus. We continued to train leaders, but we experienced a letdown. I wasn't focused on a new goal, so neither was the team. That was a big mistake, and it meant that we didn't use the momentum we had built to keep moving forward at our previous pace. The good news is that the leaders of EQUIP huddled together, identified our next big mountain, and refocused our energies once again to make the climb.

No matter where you are in your leadership journey, never forget that what got you to where you are won't get you to the next level.

No matter where you are in your leadership journey, never forget that what got you to where you are won't get you to the next level. Each step forward requires focus and a willingness to keep learning, adapting, strategizing, and working. You don't stay on top without focus, humility, and hard work.

Best Behaviors on Level 5

How to Use the Pinnacle as a Platform to Do Something Greater Than Yourself

Leadership should always be about others, not about the leader. That's true at every level, and it's especially important on Level 5 because having people follow out of deep respect is the height of leadership. Pinnacle leaders have a lot of horsepower, and they need to make good use of it while they're on top to do more than help themselves. Here are my suggestions:

1. Make Room for Others at the Top

One of the most important things any Level 5 leader can do is make room at the top for other leaders. Most leaders make it their goal to cultivate *followers*. But gathering followers doesn't create room for other leaders. As a Pinnacle leader, you must create that room. That begins on Level 4 when you start developing leaders. If you do that continually and promote good leaders whenever you can, you create a cycle of positive change in the organization that creates room for leaders. That may seem counterintuitive. Wouldn't having more leaders create less room? No. And here's why: when you develop a leader who develops other leaders, you create more room at the top because you increase the size and power of the entire organization. Every time you develop good leaders and help find a place for them to lead and make an impact, they gather more good people to them. As a result, the organization grows (along with its potential) and it needs more good leaders. This process creates a cycle of expansion and a kind of momentum toward the top for other leaders that helps to propel the organization forward.

Developing leaders from the Pinnacle level requires great skill and intentionality. It is not easy to develop leaders. It's even more difficult to develop leaders who will devote themselves to developing other leaders instead of just leading. As I studied leaders who had only followers versus leaders who developed leaders, I began to notice some subtle but clear differences. Here are the characteristics of a Level 5 leader who develops leaders:

The Leader's Desire—Being Succeeded Instead of Needed

Early in my leadership career I loved it when people needed me. And it was music to my ears when they told me so. I loved hearing things such as “We couldn’t make it without you. What would we do if you were gone? You’re the only leader that really understands us.” Sadly, I believed them!

The reality is that no one is indispensable. Worse, allowing others to become dependent does little more than satisfy a leader’s ego. It is a very limiting leadership style that has a very short life span.

“The ultimate leader is one who is willing to develop people to the point that they eventually surpass him or her in knowledge and ability.”

—Fred A. Manske Jr.

The first step in developing leaders is to have a desire to develop people so that they can succeed without you. Leadership author and former FedEx executive Fred A. Manske Jr., observed, “The ultimate leader is one who is willing to develop people to the point that they eventually surpass him or her in knowledge and ability.” On the Pinnacle level, that should always be your goal.

The Leader's Focus—Working on People's Strengths Instead of Weaknesses

Some leaders take a counseling approach to developing people. By that I mean that they focus on what the person is doing poorly or wrong, and they focus their attention on helping them make corrections in those areas. In fact, when I began my career, I spent a lot of time counseling people. But to my great frustration, I saw little improvement in the people I worked with. To be fair, I really wasn't a good counselor. But I also had a eureka moment when I figured out the main reason we weren't making progress. I was focused on people's weaknesses. That's no way to develop people.

If you want to develop people, you must help them discover and build upon their strengths. That's where people have the most potential to grow. Helping to develop their strengths is the only way to help leaders become world-class.

The Leader's Attitude—Giving Away Power Instead of Hoarding It

Did you play follow the leader as a kid? The goal of the game was to hold onto your place in the front of the line as long as possible. The kids who won were most aggressive at trying to do something no one else could imitate. As a Level 5 leader, you need to be as aggressive about giving away power to other leaders as you were at hoarding it when you were a kid. That requires an abundance attitude, where your mind-set is “Let’s Lead Together.” You must become a world-class empowerer. As Lynne Joy McFarland asserted in the book *21st Century Leadership: Dialogue with 100 Top Leaders*, “The empowerment leadership model shifts away from ‘position power’ to ‘people power’ where all people are given leadership roles so they can contribute to their fullest capacity.”

“The empowerment leadership model shifts away from ‘position power’ to ‘people power’ where all people are given leadership roles so they can contribute to their fullest capacity.”

—Lynne Joy McFarland

The Leader's Perspective—Seeing Potential Leaders As They Could Be Instead of As They Are

One of the keys to developing leaders—at any level—is seeing people not as they are or as others see them, but as they could be. Having a hand in closing the gap between how someone is and the fulfillment of their potential is what motivates Level 5 leaders to raise up other leaders to Level 4. Seeing *what is* takes very little talent. Seeing *what could be*—and helping to make it reality—takes vision, imagination, skill, and commitment. That's what a Pinnacle leader needs to bring to the table.

The Leader's Impact—Knowing It Takes a Level 5 Leader to Develop a Level 4 Leader

Leading and developing leaders is not easy. Leaders with high potential will only follow leaders who are ahead of them—in ability, experience, or both. Someone who is a 9 in leadership won't follow a 5. For that reason, Pinnacle leaders cannot delegate the leadership development process of potential leaders to others who are less talented than those being mentored. It simply doesn't work. If there are potential Level 4 or Level 5 leaders in your organization and you're a Level 5 leader, you must dedicate the time and effort to mentoring them. Otherwise they will go elsewhere to find a Level 5 leader who is willing to do it. The best potential leaders will not remain in the organization unless you go to them where they are, extend your hand, and help them to climb up to your level.

2. Continually Mentor Potential Level 5 Leaders

I've been teaching and writing on the subject of leadership for three and a half decades, and in that time I've had the privilege of working with a lot of organizations. Each of them has been unique with questions, needs, and conditions unlike any other. However, all of them have had one thing in common. They needed more and better leaders! Not once has anyone in an organization said, "We have too many leaders. And the ones we have are better than we want. Can you help us get rid of some?"

Recently I attended an interview between my friend Bill Hybels and former General Electric CEO Jack Welch. Bill was asking Welch questions about succession (a subject I'll address specifically in a moment). Welch said that a few years before he exited General Electric, he made a list of potential successors. The list included three categories: leaders on the inside track, leaders with potential, and long shots—and he named several people.

As he spoke, I began to wonder how he was able to choose from the inside-track leaders, but before I could go very far in my thinking, Welch amazed me by mentioning that his successor had come from the long-shot category. And that got me thinking about the importance of mentoring. I came to these conclusions:

1. You have to have a lot of good leaders to select the best leaders.
2. You must give your best to all potential Level 5 leaders because you may be surprised by who finishes the strongest.

No matter what your leadership potential may be, you should strive to work your way up to Level 4 so that you can invest in others. But if you reach Level 5, you have a much greater responsibility. No one other than a Level 5 leader can raise up other Level 5 leaders. If you make it to the Pinnacle, give your best potential leaders your best and never stop mentoring them.

3. Create an Inner Circle That Will Keep You Grounded

When leaders reach Level 4, their inner circle makes them better. The Law of the Inner Circle says that those closest to leaders determine their potential. Inner circle members help leaders take their organization to a higher level. That's still true on Level 5, but the inner circle must also fulfill another function: it must keep the leader grounded. As I've already explained, it's very easy for leaders to begin believing their own press on Level 5. A good inner circle can help leaders on the Pinnacle level to avoid that pitfall.

Jim Collins, in *How the Mighty Fall*, writes about the erosion of healthy team dynamics that can occur in highly successful organizations. "There is a marked decline in the quality and amount of dialogue and debate; there is a shift toward either consensus or dictatorial management rather than a process of argument and disagreement followed by unified commitment to execute decisions." When those things occur, the leader and the organization are headed for trouble.

On Level 5, a good inner circle will allow leaders to be themselves, but inner circle members will also tell them the truth about themselves. These things keep the journey enjoyable, prevent loneliness, and keep leaders from developing hubris. And here's the good news. The people in your inner circle can become your favorite people—like family.

4. Do Things for the Organization That Only Level 5 Leaders Can Do

Being on Level 5 allows a leader to see and do things that cannot be done from any other place in leadership. Some of those things are obvious. If you're the top leader in your organization, you need to guide it. You need to be a good model to everyone in the organization by valuing people, continuing to grow, practicing the golden rule, being authentic, exhibiting good values, and living out the right priorities.

Other things may be less obvious and very specific to your situation and organization. You may be able to create a groundbreaking product or service. You may be able to champion a value or cause that no one else could as effectively. You may be able to help people improve their lives. You may be able to impact your community in a unique way. You may have relationships with people who can help you to do something important. All the work you've done and all the influence you've gained over the years just might be in your hands so that you can do something bigger with it. You have to keep your eyes, ears, and heart open to the possibilities. The success you have hasn't been given to you for only yourself. Level 5 leaders have a platform to lead and persuade. Whenever possible, use it to pass on those things that have helped you. Leadership is influence. Leverage it to add value to others.

5. Plan for Your Succession

In the mid-1980s, I had the privilege of spending a few days with management expert Peter Drucker. A group of leaders got a chance to sit with him, listen, take notes, and ask questions. I learned many wonderful things from Drucker, but there was one question he asked that challenged me more than anything else. During the session, he asked each one of us, “Who is going to replace you?”

Prior to that time, I had never asked myself that question. When Drucker asked it, I had no answer. But I walked away from my time with him determined to live in such a way that I would be able to answer it. And from that day forward, I dedicated myself to developing the top leaders in my sphere of influence and helping them to be ready to lead on as high a level as possible.

Leaving a successor is the last great gift a leader can give an organization. Leadership-transition difficulties are far too common, and like the passing of the baton in a relay race, a leadership transition must be planned and executed well. Success is dependent upon the leader with the baton handing it off to the next leader when both of them are running at maximum speed. Writer Lorin Woolfe says, “The ultimate test for a leader is not whether he or she makes smart decisions and takes decisive action, but whether he or she teaches others to be leaders and builds an organization that can sustain its success even when he or she is not around.” True leaders put ego aside and strive to create successors who go beyond them. And they plan to hand off the baton of leadership in stride when they are still running at their peak. If a leader has already begun to slow down, the baton is being handed off too late. No leader should hurt the organization’s momentum by staying too long just for his or her own gratification. The number one problem in organizations led by Level 5 leaders is that they stay too long. So if you’re a Level 5 leader who runs an organization, plan your succession and leave *before* you feel you have to.

6. Leave a Positive Legacy

Someone once asked Billy Graham what the most surprising thing about life was. “The brevity of it,” he replied. Now that I’ve entered my sixties, I would have to agree with him. When you’re young, you can’t wait to get somewhere in life—to achieve success, climb the ladder, make an impact. If you have a type-A personality, you move fast and try to conquer as much ground as you can. But as you age, you realize there’s much more to life than success. You want to make a difference. And if you think about it early enough, you have the opportunity to leave a positive legacy. That’s what I desire to do. I hope you do as well.

Someone once asked Billy Graham what the most surprising thing about life was. “The brevity of it,” he replied.

One of the keys to arriving at the end of our lives without regret is doing the work of creating a lasting legacy. If you are a Level 5 leader, I want to encourage you to use the influence you have now to create a better world. How? First, recognize that what you do daily, over time, becomes your legacy. Whether it’s spending quality time with your family every day, saving money and investing every month, speaking kind and encouraging words to others each day—these actions result in a legacy of positive impact.

Second, decide now what you want your legacy to be. How do you want to be remembered? What would you like people to say about you at your funeral? Do you have a vision for the positive impact you want to leave behind you? Do you know what you can invest in potential leaders who will want to help you build it?

Finally, understand that a legacy is the sum of your whole life, not just snippets. If you have failed, that’s okay. Has your life taken a path that is

less than ideal? Put it behind you. Set off in the right direction and begin to change the way you live starting today. Fulfill your mission and vision for your life. Do it now before it is too late to change.

Don't let yourself get to the final days of your life wondering what could have been. Decide today what your life will be, and then take action each and every day to live your dreams and leave your legacy!

The Laws of Leadership at the Pinnacle Level

As you consider the different aspects of Level 5, please be aware of how the following laws of leadership come into play:

The Law of Respect *People Naturally Follow Leaders Stronger Than Themselves*

When I wrote the overview of the 5 Levels of Leadership in the first chapter of this book, I used the word *respect* to describe Level 5. On the Pinnacle, leaders have led so well for so long that they have become larger than life, and people are influenced by their reputation even before there is any direct contact between leaders and their followers. Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “Every great institution is the lengthened shadow of a single man.” That sentiment is a good description of Level 5 leaders. Their presence makes an impact.

**“Every great institution is
the lengthened shadow of a
single man.”**

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

It’s true that leaders gain respect on every level. They earn it by showing worthiness for the chance to lead on Level 1, developing relationships on Level 2, creating a productive team on Level 3, and developing people on Level 4. But on Level 5 the respect they’ve earned begins to compound. Everyone wants to follow a true Level 5 leader.

The Law of Intuition *Leaders Evaluate Everything with a Leadership Bias*

Everybody is intuitive. We all have strong intuition in the areas of our giftedness. What Level 5 leaders possess in abundance is leadership intuition, and as a result, they see everything with a leadership bias. Good leaders learn to trust what Emerson called the “blessed impulse.” That’s the hunch that informs you that something is right. Level 5 leaders learn to trust those instincts and act upon them.

Of all the laws of leadership that I teach, the Law of Intuition is the most difficult. Why? Because most people have a difficult time teaching in the areas where they are intuitive. Intuition is the ability to experience immediate insight without rational thought. If you can perform leadership tasks, knowing they’re right but not having examined them with rational thought, it’s difficult to explain why you did what you did.

The more naturally gifted you are in leadership, the stronger your leadership intuition is likely to be. Learn to trust it. And if your gifting in leadership isn’t high, don’t lose hope. While it’s true that your leadership intuition will never be as high as that of a natural leader, you can still develop leadership intuition based on leadership experience and reflective thinking on your failures and successes.

The Law of Timing *When to Lead Is as Important as What to Do and Where to Go*

Closely related to the Law of Intuition is the Law of Timing, because timing is also largely instinctive. Knowing what to do can be relatively easy for an effective leader at Level 3. Knowing the right timing can be much more difficult. Why? There are so many intangible factors. Often a hunch is all we have to rely on to make a timing decision, and that can be difficult to explain. People are apt to listen to hard facts and respect the point of view of the person who expresses them. Intuition doesn't carry as much weight—unless you have a proven track record of right assessments to back it up.

Leaders on Level 5 have so much experience and credibility that others listen to their hunches when it comes to timing. If you're not yet on Level 5, then be aware that others may not trust your advice when it comes to timing. But don't despair. Listen to your intuition, take note of when it's wrong or right, and develop a track record that will bring you the credibility you desire.

The Law of Legacy *A Leader's Lasting Value Is Measured by Succession*

I've already discussed the importance of legacy on Level 5, so I don't need to say a lot here. Allow me to leave you with this thought: The goal in life is not to live forever. The goal in life is to create something that does. The best way to do that as a Level 5 leader is to invest what you have in the lives of others.

The goal in life is not to live forever. The goal in life is to create something that does.

The Law of Explosive Growth *To Add Growth, Lead Followers— To Multiply, Lead Leaders*

Every time you develop a potential leader to Level 4, you change your organization for the better and increase its potential. Why? Because...

When you develop a follower, you gain a follower.

When you develop a leader, you gain a leader and all his followers.

When you develop a Level 4 leader, you gain a leader who creates other leaders, and you gain all the leaders and all the followers that they lead.

That is why Level 5 leaders are so powerful and why their organizations have unlimited potential!

Help Others Move Up to Levels 4 and 5

Create Crucible Moments for the Leaders You Develop

At this point in previous sections of the book, I discussed the beliefs that would help you to move up to the next level of leadership. However, when you're on the Pinnacle level, there is no higher place in leadership. So what am I going to do in this section? Teach you how to help *others* to move up to the higher levels of leadership. Once you reach Level 5, your focus shouldn't be on advancing yourself anyway; it should be on helping *others* move up as high as they can go.

What is the secret of learning to lead? Leading. That's like saying that you learn to drive a car by driving a car. Or that you learn to cook by cooking. All are true. As novelist Mark Twain once said drily, "I know a man who grabbed a cat by the tail and learned 40 percent more about cats than the man who didn't." This may sound like a catch-22, like the old lament that you can't get a job without first having experience, yet you can't get experience without first having a job. That's where you come in.

As a mentor, you can give the inexperienced leaders leadership experiences that make them better. A little experience goes a lot further than a lot of theory. You've probably heard the saying, "When a person with money meets a person with experience, the person with experience usually gets the money and the person with the money gets the experience." As an experienced leader, you can identify potential leaders, you can figure out what kinds of experiences they need, and you can help to provide them in a controlled environment where their failures and fumbles won't completely take them out of the game of leadership.

Can you identify the experiences that taught you invaluable leadership lessons and shaped you as a person and leader? I certainly can. These are crucible moments. While I was writing *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, I was surprised to discover that I could remember a specific experience for each law that cemented it in my leadership consciousness. For example, the Law of Victory had become a reality to me in 1970 when I led my organization to reach a goal that nearly everyone believed was impossible. The Law of the Inner Circle became clear to me on my fortieth birthday when I had to admit to myself that I was not as successful as I had hoped to be, and if I was going to accomplish all that I desired to, I needed to develop an inner circle of other leaders to work alongside me.

The key incidents in your life—crucible moments—have shaped you. They've created breakthroughs for you. And the leadership experiences you've had—both good and bad—have made you the leader you are today. The same will be true for those you lead and

develop. Why not help others experience as many positive breakthroughs as possible while they are under your care?

I recently read an article by Robert J. Thomas in the *MIT Sloan Management Review* that confirms my observations on leadership development. Thomas argues that organizations that do a good job developing leaders use crucible experiences as “a kind of superconcentrated form of leadership development.” He writes,

Crucibles can occur on and off the job. Some take the form of reversal—a death in the family, a divorce, the loss of a job. Others involve a suspension, an in-between period that people go through while in graduate school, boot camp, unemployment—even jail. A third form is the crucible of new territory, in which the individual is thrust into a new social role or asked to take on an overseas assignment in an unfamiliar country.²

Thomas goes on to describe two very dissimilar organizations that orchestrate and manage crucible experiences to help their leaders develop and grow: the Mormon Church and the Hells Angels. Thomas asserts,

Both organizations are large, durable, complex, multiunit, multinational entities that have grown rapidly in the past three decades. Both have closed borders and engage in selective recruitment of new members, and they rarely admit converts into the top leadership ranks. Yet neither suffers from a weak leadership gene pool. Each group uses a particular activity as a crucible experience for leader development.

For the Mormon Church, the most visible crucible is the missionary experience, a test of faith, identity and leadership talent that also serves as the principal growth engine for church membership. For the Hells Angels, it takes the form of the motorcycle “run”—an event remarkable in its functional similarity to that of a missionary tour of duty. A brief analysis of these organizationally instigated crucibles shows how they contribute to experience-based leader development.³

Thomas also points out, less dramatically, that Toyota, Boeing, General Electric, and MIT also take an experiential approach to leadership development.

If you want to make the most of your influence on Level 5, then you need to create crucible moments that will enable your best leaders to reach their leadership potential. Here’s how I suggest you go about doing it.

1. Identify and Create the Crucial Leadership Lessons They Must Learn

Begin by identifying the essential qualities and skills any good leader must possess. This will be your blueprint for introducing key experiences and testing potential leaders as they become ready. Here is a list I developed after my fortieth birthday when I realized I needed to dedicate myself to developing my inner circle of leaders:

Integrity	Problem-Solving
Vision	Communication
Influence	Creativity
Passion	Teamwork
Servanthood	Attitude
Confidence	Self-Discipline

Once I had settled on the list, I began to look for opportunities to put leaders in situations where they could learn experience-based lessons in those areas. For example, whenever there was a problem in the organization, I didn't solve it myself. Instead, I sent one of the leaders I was developing to try to figure it out. Afterward, we'd discuss how he or she solved the problem and what he or she learned. To help their communication, when leaders were ready, I'd give them an opportunity to speak: to various groups, to the leaders, or to the entire organization. Afterward we'd talk about what went wrong and what went right, and what they could do the next time to improve. If I wanted to help them develop their influence and improve their teamwork, I'd ask them to recruit a team of volunteers for an event or a program and work with that team to follow through. You get the idea. When you lead an organization, you can't be focused on just fulfilling the vision or getting work done. Every challenge, problem, opportunity, or initiative is a chance for you to pair potential leaders to a leadership development experience that will change who they are. Try to think in those terms every day.

2. Look for Unexpected Crucible Moments They Can Learn From

People don't learn things just because we want them to. Level 5 leaders understand that teachable moments often come as the result of "levers" in their lives. Change occurs in people's lives when they...

Hurt enough that they have to (Pain and Adversity),
Learn enough that they want to (Education and Experience), or
Receive enough that they are able to (Support and Equipping).

Wise leaders look for moments that fall into those three categories. Some can be created, but many simply occur. Good leaders help the people they are mentoring to learn from them and make the most of them by explaining the experience and asking the right questions.

For example, when people describe a loss in their life, I do more than just sympathize with them. I ask them to tell me what they've learned from it. That's the only way in life to turn a loss into a gain. The greater the loss, the greater the potential lesson and crucible opportunity for leadership development. All of us experience far more than we understand. Your job as a Level 5 leader is to help the high-level people you are developing to make sense out of what they experience and find value in it.

3. Use Your Own Crucible Moments As Guidelines to Teach Others

Every leader needs to draw upon his or her own crucible experiences and breakthroughs as material to help the next generation of leaders lead. To do that, you must have examined those experiences and identified the lessons you've learned from them. It's very likely that the experiences and lessons that allowed you to break through the leadership lids in your life will help others break through theirs.

The experiences and lessons that allowed you to break through the leadership lids in your life will help others break through theirs.

My recommendation is that you set aside time with pen and paper (or computer) to identify your own crucible moments. Then figure out how they might be able to help the people you're developing. Here are the categories I used to analyze my leadership crucible experiences:

Ground Breakers

These are experiences that encourage people to start developing a leadership quality or discipline. For example, in 1972 when someone challenged me to articulate a concrete personal development plan that I was using to grow—and I couldn't—I made a commitment to adopt a personal growth plan and follow it daily.

Ice Breakers

These experiences help leaders to move forward after a period of stagnation. For example, in 1980 I made the difficult decision to leave the organization I had been with for my entire career to work in a different one that I believed would afford me more opportunities to reach my potential.

Cloud Breakers

These experiences lift leaders higher, allowing them to see things as they could be. As a pastor of a small church, I began to visit large churches and interview their leaders. This gave me insight into a much larger world outside of my own limited experience.

Tie Breakers

These experiences allow people to make a decision that will determine their leadership direction. In 1995 I left an organization that I had led successfully so that I could start and lead a company of my own that had unlimited potential.

Heart Breakers

These experience cause leaders to stop and evaluate where they are and what they are doing. I had a heart attack in 1998. It changed my entire perspective on life, family, work, and leadership. I turned my attention to my health, and I planned how I would purposely live my days.

Record Breakers

These experiences are exhilarating, as they allow leaders to break through their leadership lids. When EQUIP reached its million-leader goal—which had seemed nearly impossible when we set it—I realized that the team and I were capable of more than we imagined if we worked together.

The purpose of reflecting on and listing your leadership breakthroughs is to share them with other potential leaders. Why do coaches have past successful players come back to the team and tell stories of past victories? Why do companies elevate past leaders who built the organization, making them legends that live beyond their years of service? Why does the Church remember heroes of the faith? Why do we study great leaders from history? For that matter, why do I share so many of my own stories? Leaders do these things because they hope that the stories will inspire another generation of leaders to reach its potential.

I want to encourage you to identify your breakthrough experiences and tell them as stories to the leaders you desire to develop. At the same time, I have to warn you: some people will call you arrogant or egocentric when you tell them. Don't let that deter you. I know of no better way to communicate important truths to others. People have been using stories to teach life's lessons for as long as human beings have been walking the earth. Tell yours and help the next generation to take its place as leaders.

4. Expose Them to Other People and Organizations That Will Impact Them

One of the best ways I found to instill leadership qualities and skills into my developing leaders was to ask them to interview good leaders. Asking questions and looking for ways to develop a certain quality is a wonderful way for a person to grow. First, they have to keep their eyes open for good leaders and well-led organizations, which begins to develop a leadership awareness in them. Second, they have to take the initiative (and sometimes be persuasive) to get the interview. Third, they have to prepare for the interview, which causes them to go deeper in their thinking about leadership. Fourth, the experience of the interview itself puts them in another leader's world and exposes them to another culture that helps them to grow. And finally, analyzing the interview and talking about it with the person who gave them the assignment helps to make the lessons concrete—especially if they are required to implement and teach what they've learned. Many a time after I asked my developing leaders to do an interview, they came back and said, "I thought that this leadership quality was strong in my life until I witnessed it in their life. I've got a long way to go."

I learned the value of experiences with great leaders and well-led organizations from my father, Melvin Maxwell. Dad introduced me to Norman Vincent Peale when I was in the seventh grade. Dr. Peale was an excellent communicator with a positive attitude. He made a strong impression on me to maintain a positive attitude. Dad also introduced me to E. Stanley Jones when I was in high school. This giant of the Christian faith was a missionary, a writer, and the founder of a renewal movement. These and other experiences at the initiative of my father marked my life as a very young person.

I've tried to emulate my father in a similar way both with my family and the leaders in my organizations. For example, when my son Joel was sixteen, Margaret and I arranged for him to meet Mother Teresa in India. Joel's most prized possession is a picture of the two of them together. And during the 1990s when my church needed to expand its vision to be challenged to grow, I took one hundred of the leaders to South Korea to visit what was then the largest church in the world. It changed their entire perspective.

Leaders on Level 5 have access to leadership, organizations, opportunities, and experiences that your emerging leaders don't. Make the most of them for their benefit. Even if you are not yet on the Pinnacle level, you still have access that your leaders don't. Share it. You can give your leaders experiences that will impact them for the rest of their lives and that may continue to create leadership ripples in future generations. Don't squander that opportunity.

As a Pinnacle level leader, you never know how great the impact will be each time you develop a Level 4 leader. Consider this. In ancient Greece, there was a leader named Socrates. No doubt you've heard of him. You may be surprised to know that even though he was an important philosopher, one who is still influential today, Socrates never wrote

anything. However, one of the people he mentored did. That leader's name was Plato. Unlike his mentor, Plato founded his own academy, where he taught and mentored other leaders and thinkers. One of those young leaders was a man named Aristotle, perhaps the most influential today of all the thinkers and philosophers of ancient Greece.

When Aristotle was a young man, he was approached by Philip of Macedonia, who was looking for a tutor for his son, who was thirteen. That boy was Alexander, who became one of the greatest generals and rulers in the history of the Western world. We know him today as Alexander the Great. Experts disagree about how long Aristotle mentored young Alexander, some saying as little as a year and others as long as eight. But it seems clear that the student of Plato had a profound impact on his young charge.

It's said that Alexander once asked Aristotle, "How many is one?" The question was very simple, yet the boy was no fool, so Aristotle wondered how he should respond. Should his answer be philosophical? Mathematical? Theological? Dramaturgical?

"I'll give you an answer tomorrow," the teacher replied.

The next day, Aristotle gave him an answer: "One can be a great many." In other words, one can make a huge impact—especially when that one is a leader! And in Alexander's case, one did make a great impact. Before age thirty, Alexander had conquered the Western world.

Every time you develop a leader, you make a difference in the world. And if you develop leaders who take what they've learned and use it to develop other leaders, there's no telling what kind of an impact you'll have or how long that impact will last.

[Guide to Being Your Best at Level 5](#)

As you reflect on the upsides, downsides, best behaviors, and beliefs related to the Pinnacle level of leadership, use the following guidelines to help you grow as a leader and develop others to become Level 4 leaders.

1. **Remain Humble and Teachable:** The greatest potential internal danger of working your way up to Level 5 is thinking you've arrived and you have all the answers. That can lead to an arrogance that has the potential to derail you and your organization. The best way to guard against that is to remain teachable. To help you develop and maintain that attitude, do three things:
 - Write a credo for learning that you will follow every day; it should describe the attitude and actions you will embrace to remain teachable.
 - Find one or more people who are ahead of you in leadership that you can meet with periodically to learn from.
 - Dedicate yourself to a hobby, task, or physical activity that you deem worth your time but will also challenge you greatly and humble you.

These three activities should help you to remember that you haven't arrived and that you still have much to learn.

2. **Maintain Your Core Focus:** If you've made it to the Pinnacle level of leadership, you possess a primary skill set—a sweet spot or strength zone—that got you there. Don't allow yourself to be distracted from using it. Identify that core strength and write out a plan for making the most of it in the coming years.
3. **Create the Right Inner Circle to Keep You Grounded:** All successful leaders need an inner circle of people who will work

alongside them to achieve the vision, help them to enjoy the journey, and keep them grounded. Who are the people who will fulfill these roles in your life? Identify them and invite them into your life and leadership. My inner circle has become one of my greatest joys in life. Here is what I ask them to do:

- Love me unconditionally.
- Represent me according to my values.
- Watch my back.
- Complement my weaknesses.
- Continue to grow.
- Fulfill their responsibilities with excellence.
- Be honest with me.
- Tell me what I need to hear, not what I want to hear.
- Help carry the weight, not be an extra weight.
- Work together as a team.
- Add value to me.
- Enjoy the journey with me.

The people in my inner circle give me these things, and in return I give them my loyalty, love, and protection; I reward them financially; I develop them in leadership; I give them opportunities; and I share my blessings.

4. **Do What Only You Can Do:** There are always a handful of things that only the top leaders can do for their organization, department, or team. What are yours? Have you dedicated time to thinking that through? If not, do it now. And make sure you make them a high priority.
5. **Create a Supercharged Leadership Development Environment:** One of the most important factors in creating a Level 5 organization is developing and maintaining an environment where leaders are constantly being developed. If you lead an organization, you must take responsibility for creating it. Strategize ways to create that environment and to promote leadership development at every level of

the organization. And be sure to release your best leaders to spend time developing others. It must not be an extra; it must be part of their core responsibilities.

6. **Create Room at the Top:** Take a look at your organizational chart. Are there openings available for talented leaders who desire to move up? Take a look at the leaders who are near the top of the chart. Of what caliber are they? How long have they been with the organization? How long are they likely to stay? Are they so firmly entrenched that the talented leaders below them in the organization have little hope of advancing? If there are no openings and the leaders you have aren't going anywhere, then there is no room at the top for other potential leaders. How can you create some? What new challenges can you give your existing top leaders to open up their current positions to others? What kinds of expansion or types of initiatives could your organization tackle that would require additional leaders? If you don't create room at the top for developing leaders, you will waste much of your potential horsepower, and you will eventually start to lose your up-and-coming talent.
7. **Develop Your Top Leaders:** Level 5 leaders need to dedicate themselves to developing the top leaders in their organization. Anyone who has the potential to lead as well as you do (or even better) should be on your radar for one-on-one mentoring. Begin with the best of the best. If you're not setting aside time every week to work with these leaders, begin doing so today. And make sure you use the crucible moments to develop them by doing the following:
 - Identify the lessons all good leaders need to learn.
 - Find ways to teach each of those lessons.
 - Teach from your own crucible moments.
 - Expose them to people who will positively impact them.
 - Capitalize on unexpected crucible moments.
8. **Plan Your Succession:** As I already mentioned, Peter Drucker is the person who got me to thinking about succession in my organization. Prior to his asking about it, I honestly hadn't given it much thought.

What about you? Have you thought about who would be able to step into your leadership position if you were no longer in it? If you have developed a lot of Level 4 leaders, then begin focusing on the few who have the best potential to succeed you. If you haven't been developing high-caliber leaders, then start there. Begin to help your Level 3 leaders move up to Level 4.

9. **Plan Your Legacy:** It's been said that Alfred Nobel read his own obituary, which had been mistakenly published in the newspaper, and that prompted him to change his focus from manufacturing explosives to rewarding scientists and statesmen who advanced the cause of peace and development. He recognized that he wanted to create a positive legacy during his time on earth. What legacy do you want to leave? What will the end result be of your leadership efforts and career? Don't wait for someone else to determine what your life stood for. Identify it while you're still able to affect it, and start doing whatever you must to try to fulfill your legacy.
10. **Use Your Leadership Success as a Platform for Something Greater:** If you are a Pinnacle leader, then people respect you outside of your organization and industry, and you have a reputation that gives you a high degree of credibility. How will you use it? What opportunities do you have to contribute to causes greater than your own? Give that some thought, and then leverage your ability for the benefit of others outside of your direct sphere of influence.

Portrait of a Level 5 Leader

Coach John Wooden

My favorite birthday of all time was February 20, 2003. That was the day I got to meet and have lunch with one of my heroes—not a general or politician or movie star. I got time with a teacher named John Wooden, who happened to be the most successful and well-known college basketball coach in the world. He taught young men at UCLA to play basketball and—more important—how to live a successful life. He was a Level 5 leader through and through.

My admiration and respect for John Wooden began when I was just a kid. You see, basketball was my first love. I'll never forget the day in fourth grade when I attended a high school varsity basketball game. It enthralled me. For the next dozen years, I played basketball just about every day. And because I was a great fan of the game, I knew about Wooden. How could I not! During his tenure with the UCLA Bruins, Wooden won 620 games in twenty-seven seasons. His teams won ten NCAA titles during his last twelve seasons, including seven in a row from 1967 to 1973. At one point, his teams had a record winning streak of 88 consecutive games. They had four perfect 30-0 seasons.¹ They also won 38 straight games in NCAA tournaments and a record 98 straight home-game wins at Pauley Pavilion. John Wooden was named NCAA College Basketball's Coach of the Year in 1964, 1967, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, and 1973. In 1967 he was named the Henry Iba Award USBWA College Basketball Coach of the Year. In 1972, he received *Sports Illustrated* magazine's Sportsman of the Year award. He was named to the Basketball Hall of Fame as a coach in 1973, becoming the first to be honored as both a player and a coach.² When I got the chance to actually meet him in person, I was beside myself. I'd admired the man for almost forty years! How often do you get the chance to meet one of your greatest heroes? And for it to happen on my birthday simply made it sweeter.

A Day with Coach

My day with Coach Wooden started at his favorite restaurant. For the first thirty minutes over lunch, we chatted and got acquainted. Coach was a delight and very easy to talk to. Before long, I opened up a notebook I had brought with me and requested, “Mr. Wooden, would you mind if I asked you some questions?” I had spent several hours preparing for my meeting, since there were many things I wanted to learn from him. After graciously agreeing to answer my questions, he patiently did so for the next three hours, starting at the restaurant and finishing at his home nearby.

John Wooden was more than a teacher and coach. He was a homespun philosopher. His thoughts and theories have been recorded in dozens of books. But reading about him and knowing his quotes couldn't hold a candle to hearing from the man himself. Coach exuded an inner dignity that made me feel worthy and humble at the same time. The wisdom of his words was amplified by the extraordinary character he displayed in his life. I didn't just meet the coach; I experienced him.

As Coach spoke, I carefully wrote notes, and his ideas had extra credibility to me because I could feel his concern for me and desire to be helpful. Integrity, respect, and kindness pervaded everything he said. His wisdom was the result of his having lived by his principles for ninety-three years. Even more striking, everything he did seemed effortless.

During our conversation, Coach showed me a card that was important to him. He said that his father had given it to him when he was twelve. (That would have been in 1922!) Coach said that he read it every day, and he always did his best to live what it said. On the card was written:

Making the Most of One's Self

Be true to yourself.
Make each day your masterpiece.
Help others.
Drink deeply from good books.
Make friendship a fine art.
Build shelter against a rainy day.

Pray for guidance and give thanks for your blessings every day.

I believe the people who knew him would agree that he succeeded in following his father's advice, and his efforts made an extraordinary impact on the lives of many people. That day, as I left John Wooden, I realized that I had been in the presence of an extraordinary man—a true Level 5 leader.

I was fortunate to get the chance to meet John Wooden. I was even more fortunate that for the next seven years I had the privilege of meeting with him several more times and continuing to learn from him—for while he had made a great impression on me from afar, he made an even stronger one up close. In fact, when I teach the 5 Levels of Leadership and I am asked to give an example of a Level 5 leader, John Wooden is the person I most often talk about, because I think that by studying his life anyone can learn great leadership lessons. And as the closing thought in this book, I'd like to show you how John Wooden's life exemplified the 5 Levels of Leadership.

Level 1 Position—People Follow You Because They Have To

John Wooden coached basketball for thirty years. Like all leaders, he started by receiving a leadership position and got the opportunity to make the most of it. Many coaches rely very heavily on their positions. Their attitude is *I'm the coach; you're the player. Do it my way.* That's not always the best approach to take, but there are moments when it's appropriate. And Coach used his position when needed, though he did it with a soft touch.

For example, Coach Wooden's practices were not long, but he demanded the full attention of every player each time they practiced. If a player lost focus and slacked off, Coach would kick him out of practice.

Coach Wooden told me once that the bench was the greatest power a coach had in getting the best out of his players. If they failed to play the game his way, he would use his position as coach to put them on the bench and not allow them to play in the game. That happened to Sidney Wicks, a very gifted basketball player at UCLA. The first day that Sidney joined the team and practiced with them, everyone knew that he was the most talented player on the team. However, he also came to the program with a very selfish attitude. He wanted to play the game his way and not do what Coach Wooden required.

Coach said that Sidney spent a lot of time sitting on the bench his first year on the team. That frustrated Sidney, because he wasn't playing as much as he wanted to. Coach told me Sidney would say, "Why can't I play more? You know I'm the best player on the team!" Coach would reply, "Yes Sidney, you're the best player on the team, but the team doesn't play their best when you're in the game."

Being the coach of the team gave Wooden authority, and with someone like Sidney, he had to use his authority—at least in the beginning. When needed, Coach didn't hesitate to use his position. But like all great leaders, he realized the limitations of positional leadership and did all he could to increase his influence with his players. Position may get a leader compliance from players, but it won't give championships. For his team to do better, Coach knew he had to function at a higher level of leadership, which he did.

**Position may get a leader
compliance from players,
but it won't give
championships.**

Level 2 Permission—People Follow You Because They Want To

One of John Wooden's heroes was Mother Teresa. He often quoted her, saying, "A life not lived for others is not a life." Coach also lived those words. He built strong relationships with his players, and he always did what was right for them. For example, Wooden's first college coaching job was at Indiana State in 1947, after his World War II service in the U.S. Navy. That first year, his basketball team won the Indiana Collegiate Conference title. As a result, they received an invitation to the National Association of Intercollegiate Basketball (NAIB) National Tournament in Kansas City. But Wooden declined the invitation. Why? At that time, the NAIB had a policy that banned African-Americans from playing in the tournament, and Coach was not willing to exclude Clarence Walker, one of his players who was black, from playing. However, the next year when Coach again led Indiana State to the conference title, he accepted the invitation for the same tournament after learning that the organization had reversed its policy banning African-American players. Wooden coached his team to the tournament final, where his players lost to Louisville. (That was the only championship game his teams ever lost during Coach's career.) And Clarence Walker became the first African-American player in postseason tournament play.³

Throughout his long career, Coach's relationships with all of his players were special. And after his career as a coach was completed, he maintained his close ties to the men he had once led on the court. Every time I visited him, our conversation was interrupted by a phone call from one of his former players checking to see how he was doing. And every time we rode in a car together, he would ask to stop at the post office so that he could mail letters he'd written in response to people who wrote to him or asked him to autograph something. More than once he told me, "If, as a leader, you listen to them, then they'll listen to you." He understood that leaders listen, learn, and then they lead.

"If, as a leader, you listen to them, then they'll listen to

you.”
—John Wooden

After he died, I had the privilege of attending Coach John Wooden’s memorial service at UCLA’s Pauley Pavilion on June 26, 2010. His pastor, Dudley Rutherford, said,

During the last week of his life, I told Coach, “Do you remember all those autographs you signed?” And he said, “Yes.” (It was at this moment where we didn’t know how much longer he was going to be with us.) I said, “Coach, all those people are praying for you right now. All that love you gave, that kindness you showed, those people are all praying for you this very moment.” And he smiled. Coach would be humbled today by all the attention he’s receiving, but we really didn’t have a choice, now did we? Because we were compelled to gather here today to celebrate his life. I was thinking about how Coach would always generously greet and sign his signature... all the autographs that he gave. And I’m wondering today, just show of hands: How many of you have in your possession, at your house, your home, you have something he signed to you? Raise your hand if you have something Coach signed.

I looked around the arena as thousands of hands were lifted. I would estimate that 80 percent of the people in attendance raised their hands. It was a reflection of Coach’s kindness and his willingness to make others feel special.

Coach sure made me feel special. I was especially honored when he asked me to write a foreword for his book *A Game Plan for Life*. What a privilege! It was my chance to do something for someone who had done so much for me. Likewise, I was delighted when Coach offered to write a foreword for my next book, *Sometimes You Win, Sometimes You Learn*. With the assistance of Don Yeager, his co-writer, it was one of the last things Coach wrote before his death.

Coach Wooden had such a great personal touch. Each time I visited him, after we said our good-byes, I would take the elevator down from his condo

and walk outside to the visitor's parking area. As I reached my car I would turn around and look up toward the balcony of his unit. And there would be Coach, watching me leave and waving good-bye to me. That will always be my fondest memory of him—warmly connecting as any good Level 2 leader would.

Level 3 Production—People Follow You Because of What You Have Done for the Organization

Leaders on Level 3 produce, and that can certainly be said of John Wooden. As both a player and a coach, he was a winner. He learned to shoot baskets on a hoop his father had forged himself. He took his high school basketball team to the Indiana state championship three years, winning it once. He was a three-time All-American at Purdue, leading his team to two Big Ten titles and a national championship. And he was inducted into the Naismith Memorial Hall of Fame as a player long before his induction as a coach.

Coach was a great athlete who could play many sports. He won basketball championships as a player, but his single greatest athletic feat might have occurred on a golf course. *Golf Digest* lists John Wooden as one of only four people to hit both a double eagle and a hole in one in the same round of golf. That feat was accomplished in 1947 at the South Bend Country Club in South Bend, Indiana.

Wooden started his career as a high school coach and an English teacher. His first year coaching basketball, his team had a losing record. That's significant because it was the only time *in his entire coaching career* that he had a losing record! In his eleven years coaching high school players, his record was 218-42.⁴

After coaching the 1947–48 high school season, Wooden became the head coach at UCLA. He had originally pursued the head coaching position at the University of Minnesota, since he and his wife, Nell, wanted to remain in the Midwest. And the Golden Gophers actually offered him the position, but he didn't hear about it until he had accepted the job at UCLA. And since he had given the California university his word, he declined Minnesota's offer.

Coach Wooden turned around UCLA's basketball program in one season. Prior to his arrival, they had experienced a losing season. His first year as UCLA's coach, the team won the Pacific Coast Conference (PCC) Southern Division Championship with a 22-7 record. It was the most wins in a season for UCLA since their basketball program had begun in 1919.⁵ The rest of Wooden's professional career has become legendary. A career record of 885-203 (.813 winning percentage). Ten national championships. Four

undefeated seasons. Named NCAA Coach of the Year seven times.⁶ And in 2009, he was named by the *Sporting News* as the greatest coach of all time in any sport.⁷

Since he had experienced such a productive career as a leader, I wondered what he missed most about coaching. So I asked him. His answer surprised me: “What I miss the most are the practices, not the games.” He explained, “I wanted to win every single game I ever played in or coached. But, I understood that ultimately the winning or losing may not be under my control. What was under my control was how I prepared myself and our team. I judged my success, my ‘winning,’ on that. It just made more sense.” Coach summed up: “Winning games, titles, and championships isn’t all it’s cracked up to be, but getting there, the journey, is a lot more than it’s cracked up to be.” That’s great perspective from a great leader who always produced on Level 3.

Level 4 People Development—People Follow You Because of What You Have Done for Them

Coach Wooden said, “Success is peace of mind which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you did your best to become the best that you are capable of becoming.” That’s what Level 4 leaders want for themselves and those they lead: to reach their potential.

**“Success is peace of mind
which is a direct result of
self-satisfaction in knowing
you did your best to become
the best that you are
capable of becoming.”**

—John Wooden

As well as any leader I’ve ever studied, Coach selected the most talented people he could find and then developed them to become the best they could be. The list of players on his UCLA teams is a Who’s Who of great players: Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Bill Walton, Sidney Wicks, Walt Hazzard, Gail Goodrich, Keith Wilkes, Curtis Rowe, Marques Johnson, Dave Meyers, and Lucius Allen. Yet Coach was more proud of his players’ accomplishments in life than their achievements on a basketball court. His face would light up as he talked about the men who fulfilled leadership responsibilities in education, government, religion, and business. These were the people he developed. Time and again, his players said that Coach’s desire was to use basketball to teach them how to live and lead, not to win championships.

How did Coach Wooden succeed so effectively on Level 4? Here is my take on it.

He Was Successful in Analyzing and Selecting Players

Coach always picked players who would not only play basketball well but also be good team members, good students, and good citizens. He did that by analyzing four areas:

- **Transcripts:** Coach wanted good students on his team. He believed their primary goal in entering college was to receive a good education, not to play basketball. He searched for and found true student-athletes.
- **Family Life:** Coach often said that a person's priorities should be family, faith, and friends. And regarding putting family ahead of faith, he would say with a twinkle in his eye, "God understands." By that I think he meant that you learn a lot about people's characters from how they treat their families. For example, he told me about a recruiting trip where he and an assistant visited the top high school prospect in the country. Coach had the scholarship papers with him to give to the young man if the visit went well. It didn't. During their time together, the boy spoke disrespectfully several times to his mom. Coach left without offering the scholarship. Afterward, the assistant expressed his surprise. Coach replied, "Any player that doesn't respect his mother won't respect his coach."
- **Composite Evaluation from Coaches:** Coach used to say, "If you can see a player only once, it's better to have never seen him." To get a clear perspective of players he was interested in, he would ask five coaches who opposed that player's team, "Who was the best player you coached against this year?" And then he would also talk to the head coach of that player. Only after all that would he consider evaluating him for a scholarship offer.
- **Quickness:** Leaders always need to consider what single characteristic is most important (after character) for the people on their team. Basketball is a game of quickness, so Coach chose that athletic skill over any other. That is how he was able to win his first national championship with a team where every starter was six foot five or shorter. His goal was to have the quickest players on the court so that they would have the turnover advantage. He reasoned that if his team could cause five or more turnovers than their opponent during a game,

it would give them five additional attempts to score, leading to a five-or-six-point advantage. That would often mean the difference between winning and losing a game.

Like all good leaders, Coach Wooden had a clear picture of who he wanted on his team. As a result, he recruited the best players—people who would have potential to be developed and win championships.

His Teaching Was Conducive to Player Development

As I've already stated, you can't win without good players. But if you have good players, you still may not win. To have a chance, you must develop them. At that, John Wooden was world-class. And his method was so simple, anyone can follow it:

1. **Explanation**—*Tell them* what you want them to know and do.
2. **Demonstration**—*Show them* what you want them to know and do.
3. **Initiation**—Let them *show you* that they know what to do.
4. **Correction**—Ask them to *change* what they are doing incorrectly.
5. **Repetition**—Ask them to do it right *over and over* again.

After that, Coach would let the results speak for themselves. He used to say, "If you prepare properly, you may be outscored, but you will never lose. You always win when you make the full effort to do the best of which you're capable."

**"You always win when you
make the full effort to do the
best of which you're
capable."
—John Wooden**

He Developed Values and Qualities in Players to Help Them Experience True Success

I first became aware of Coach Wooden's Pyramid of Success in the 1970s when I was a young aspiring leader. He began developing it in the mid-1930s and finalized it in 1948.⁸ That was when he began teaching it to his players. It gave him a concrete way of teaching them what he considered important. He taught it to others until he died.

When I discovered the pyramid in a magazine, I cut it out and taped it onto my filing cabinet so that I could review it every day. I realized that within the pyramid were qualities and values that I needed to embrace and possess. I pass it on to you. (See pyramid on the next page.)

Coach Wooden considered the values he taught to be much more important than basketball.



The Pyramid of Success is protected by John Wooden Legacy, LLC. All rights reserved.

Level 5 Pinnacle—People Follow You Because of Who You Are and What You Represent

I have no doubt that Coach Wooden reached the Pinnacle level of leadership. There is evidence of it everywhere. Since 1977, the most coveted player of the year award in basketball has been the John R. Wooden Award. It is basketball's equivalent of football's Heisman Trophy, with the winner announced during a ceremony held at the Los Angeles Athletic Club. Two annual men's basketball events called the John R. Wooden Classic and the John R. Wooden Tradition are held in Wooden's honor. And on July 23, 2003, John Wooden went to the White House where the president of the United States presented him with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor.

Further evidence of the respect Coach Wooden has received from others could be seen at his memorial service at UCLA's Pauley Pavilion. Thousands of people attended, including many of his former players. Wooden was most proud of their accomplishments after they left basketball, and their individual successes are a testament to his ability to develop leaders.

During the ceremony, spotlights emphasized Coach's life and accomplishments. A light shone on his seat in the arena where he had watched the Bruins play after he had retired. That seat has now been retired, and no one else will ever sit there again. A light shone on the basketball court so that everyone would notice the names of Nell and John Wooden, for whom the court was named. Lights were shone on the ten National Championship banners to remind everyone of his coaching accomplishments, which will never be repeated in men's college basketball.

Yet, in spite of all the accomplishments and awards, the depth of Wooden's leadership can be best measured by his character. Pastor Dudley Rutherford echoed this at Coach's memorial service when he said,

I told his family at his private funeral that his greatness lies not in what he did; his greatness lies not in what he taught. His greatness lies in who he was; his character, his values, his convictions, his faith. And although he battled some health issues during the last couple of years of his life, he never once contracted the malignancy

of pride. No physician ever diagnosed him as having the syndrome of selfishness. EKG revealed no trace of ego, and no MRI ever showed the slightest taint of prejudice. Morally, he had a clean bill of health. Spiritually, he was a humble man who had put his faith and trust and belief in God and in God's one and only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And although Coach was never boisterous about his faith—he was never obnoxious about his faith; he never pushed it on anybody—he simply lived day by day trusting, walking, living, believing in the one who was the Savior and his Lord.

During the service, broadcaster Dick Enberg described his last visit with John Wooden. As Enberg stood up to leave, Coach had smiled and pointed to his forehead. Enberg described how he walked over and kissed Coach's forehead, saying, "It was like kissing God." Coach loved a quote attributed to Socrates: "I pray thee, O God, that I may be beautiful within." That was John Wooden's prayer, and I believe God answered it.

At the close of the memorial service the people who attended did not exit quickly. They had spent two hours honoring a wonderful leader, and afterward they just wanted to stay and soak up the atmosphere. I believe many were thinking, *I want to live and die like he did*. I know I was.

Many times people don't find out how wonderful a leader was until he dies. They go to the funeral or memorial service, and they are surprised to discover how many other lives were impacted by the person. In the case of Coach, we didn't have to wait to find that out. Players from four decades of teams had received the benefit of his leadership, and so did the people they have led after their days on the court. And millions more had watched from afar as he led teams to victory. I wish I were more like him: giver, grower, teacher, coach, leader, and friend. He was wise, honest, principled, disciplined, humble, humorous, courageous, and faithful. He was a Level 5 leader. The world needs more like him.

Notes

You Can Have a Leadership Game Plan for Your Life

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Level 1: Position

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