

Maxwell's 5 Levels of Leadership/Influence

1. Position - This is the most basic level of leadership. You have a title and that's it. People follow because they have to. In this level, titles and hierarchies matter a lot. You will only be able to lead based on what that title enables you to lead with. Your authority only goes as far as the title and people will only follow you as far as your title allows and they feel that they have no choice but to follow you. They may not necessarily want to follow you but they have to. They may disagree with what you want to do, but they still have to follow you. An example of this would be a first level manager in a company. People that you are managing will do just enough to please you. You are only leading them in name and your leverage is only what authority has been given to you from above. In this level of leadership, you do not have much leverage on your followers—they are simply that—followers.

2. Permission - This is when people begin to follow you because you establish good working relationships. People will want to follow you because they want to. You have rapport. You do things together. They love being with you and following you. In this level of leadership, charisma is the driving factor of the leader. This type of leadership may be easily found among groups of friends and family. This is the true beginning of influence. You can begin to really grow as a person and organization when people follow you voluntarily.

3. Production - People begin to produce and follow you because of what they see you doing for the organization. People like what you do and also contribute themselves. If you are a performer and deliver results, then people will know that you are not just dallying around. You are serious about what you do and what you can give to the organization. And if you have consistently proven your mettle as a leader in the organization, then people will follow you, even revere you, because of what you have done for the organization. In the case of Lee Iacocca, he managed to turn Chrysler around when it was on the verge of bankruptcy. For that reason, employees were willing to follow his lead until his retirement.

4. People Development - At this point in leadership, you have others follow you because of what you've done for them personally. From a focus on results in the organization, a leader on this level invests on people and helps them develop themselves while furthering the interests of the organization. You've poured into other people and they are growing in leadership themselves. While on the surface, this may seem that people only want to follow a leader who can give them their whims and wants.

5. Personhood - This is the pinnacle of leadership and occurs when people recognize a leader's identity and what he stands for and they follow you based on who you are. John Maxwell says that this level is reserved for people who have spent years growing others and their organization. Very few people make it to this level. They recognize the leader as somebody who embodies principles and values. It means that the organizational values have been aligned with that of the leader's and that of the followers and optimum results can be achieved without compromising any aspect of the organization and the relationships of the leader and the followers.

Leadership and the ability to influence others is a must for the person who wants to succeed in life. Your ability to have successful relationships, a successful job or business and your overall satisfaction with life will have something to do with your ability to influence others and yourself.

21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership

John Maxwell

“True leadership cannot be awarded, appointed or assigned. It comes only from influence and that can’t be mandated. It must be earned.” John C. Maxwell

Ideas to Keep

- Strengthen your organization by developing leaders instead of followers.
- Lead from your own personal integrity.
- No matter how many followers you have, try to connect with them individually.
- Make each action accomplish more than one goal.
- People follow the leader first, then they follow the leader's plan.
- If you intend to change course, give your organization's leaders time to accept the shift and to begin to build consensus with their followers.
- Sometimes your best use of power is to give it away.
- Real leaders accept nothing less than victory.
- Leadership requires sacrifice all along the way.
- For the good of the organization, prepare other leaders to take your place.

What You Will Learn

You will learn: 1) How to use basic principles of leadership; and 2) How to build your organization.

Recommendation

Frequent motivational author John C. Maxwell, a former pastor, squarely based these 21 laws of leadership on enduring values. These guidelines are meant to inspire, not innovate, as they offer techniques to make leading by principle a practical reality. Maxwell’s straightforward, insightful rules are well worth the time you will spend reading them.

To attain true leadership, heed these principles:

1. “The Law of the Lid: Leadership Ability Determines a Person’s Level of Effectiveness” –

Brothers Dick and Maurice McDonald had a talent for the restaurant business. As American culture became dependent on cars, they developed methods to serve food to customers on the run. They eventually streamlined their business, and primarily sold hamburgers. People in the restaurant business traveled to their hamburger joint to learn their efficient methods. They came as close as they could to living the American Dream - without making it. The McDonald brothers failed when they attempted to franchise their idea. Why? Because they lacked overarching leadership ability. Their partner, Ray Kroc, had the vision and skill to make McDonald’s a marketplace phenomenon. Dedication to success is important, and so is talent and intelligence, but without leadership ability, you’ll only get so far.

2. “The Law of Influence: The True Measure of Leadership Is Influence – Nothing More, Nothing Less” – True leadership cannot be bestowed, it must be earned. In 1996, a London *Daily Mail* poll showed that the public considered Mother Teresa and Princess Diana to be the most caring two people in the world, though neither held political office. People listened to them, and they used their influence to accomplish great things. Abraham Lincoln started with the rank of captain, but by the time the war was over, he was a private. What happened? He was a casualty of the Law of Influence. Leading and managing are two different tasks, but the idea that good managers make good leaders is a common misconception. Leaders influence people while managers focus on running smooth operations. Entrepreneurs are not necessarily leaders. Even innovators may lack the ability to build organizations. Another misconception is that being first, being given a leadership job, or having great knowledge makes you a leader. Only hard work and dedication can do that.

3. “The Law of Process: Leadership Develops Daily, Not in a Day” – Theodore Roosevelt helped create a world power, won a Nobel Peace Prize, and became president of the United States. But today you wouldn't even know his name if he hadn't known the Law of Process. If you cannot identify the subjects you're ignorant about, you won't know what you need to learn. Once you figure that out, you can begin to develop your leadership skills by filling in the gaps in your knowledge. As your knowledge grows, so will your leadership ability. As you absorb leadership lessons, leading will become second nature. Real success comes from building your enterprise day by day.

4. “The Law of Navigation: Anyone Can Steer the Ship, But It Takes a Leader to Chart the Course” – Using a fail-safe compass, Scott led his team of adventurers to the end of the earth - and to inglorious deaths. They would have lived if only he, their leader, had known the Law of Navigation. Leadership requires planning and forethought. Consider what you are asking others to follow you into doing. Preparedness is the main secret of this law. Decide what you're going to do, and tell key staff members your goals. Allow time for them to accept the course you've proposed. Be prepared for problems, but always highlight their successes. Each day, review the course you've set.

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

Original 1st edition chapter 5 - **“The Law of E.F. Hutton: When the Real Leader Speaks, People Listen”** – The person with the title, the one running the meeting, may not be the real leader. True leadership depends on influence. The man or woman to whom people listen is the actual leader. Real leaders have strength of character, build good relationships and know a lot about their work. They have strong intuition and plain, raw talent.

6. “The Law of Solid Ground: Trust Is the Foundation of Leadership” – If only Robert McNamara had known the Law of Solid Ground, the war in Vietnam-and everything that happened at home because of it-might have turned out differently. The trust of your followers is your most valuable asset as a leader. People want to believe in your character. If you make a mistake and don't acknowledge it, you will breed mistrust.

7. “The Law of Respect: People Naturally Follow Leaders Stronger than Themselves” –

The odds were stacked against her in just about every possible way, but thousands and thousands of people called her their leader. Why? Because they could not escape the power of the Law of Respect. Strong people look for strong leaders, based on respect and depth of character. Harriet Tubman, an African-American abolitionist, was very short, she lacked two front teeth and she never dressed well. Despite her appearance, people respected her enormously. In time, some of the country’s most important people invited her into their homes to seek her counsel.

8. “The Law of Intuition: Leaders Evaluate Everything with a Leadership Bias” –

Intuition is a difficult quality to define. You develop intuition over time, through experience, but you must be ready to implement it in a heartbeat. Intuition enables leaders to read their circumstances, other people and available resources, and to integrate that understanding so they can act specifically within a broader context. Intuition offers a creative way to connect problems with solutions by viewing every situation through the lens of leadership. Apple’s Steve Jobs is an excellent intuitive leader. He has an uncanny ability to present innovations that capture consumers’ imagination. He views every technology, every partnership and every employee as a resource he can use as he leads his company into new markets.

9. “The Law of Magnetism: Who You Are Is Who You Attract” –

How did the Confederate army-understaffed and under equipped - stand up so long to the powerful Union army? The Confederates had better generals. Why did they have better generals? The Law of Magnetism makes it clear. Generally the people you attract will have qualities that are similar to yours. They will generally share your attitudes, values, abilities and life experiences. If you’re not attracting the people you want, examine your leadership skills to find any areas that need improvement.

10. “The Law of Connection: Leaders Touch a Heart Before They Ask for a Hand” –

As the new leader, John knew that the most influential person in the organization could torpedo his leadership. So what did he do? He reached out using the Law of Connection. To communicate your message, you need to connect with people on an emotional level. Even when you face a room full of people, remember that they are individuals; connect with them as separate people. Some of the greatest military leaders made it their business to connect individually with their troops. Robert E. Lee spent time around the campfires with his men on nights before big battles. General Norman Schwarzkopf said in his autobiography that one Christmas during the Persian Gulf War, he “must have shaken 4,000 hands.” By taking the trouble to connect with their soldiers individually, these leaders ensured that they had their followers’ support.

11. “The Law of the Inner Circle: A Leader’s Potential Is Determined by Those Closest to Him” –

Lance Armstrong is hailed as the greatest cyclist who ever lived. People credit his toughness. They credit his brutal training. What they miss is the Law of the Inner Circle. To make your organization more effective, seek strong leadership potential among the people who form your inner circle. Don’t devote your time to trying to convince or inspire people who have a negative attitude. Invest your energy in those who share your vision. Populate your inner circle with individuals who boost morale and help make your load lighter.

12. “The Law of Empowerment: Only Secure Leaders Give Power to Others” –

Henry Ford had an incredible vision. He is considered an icon of American business for revolutionizing the

automobile industry. The cars he manufactured changed modern life. So what caused him to stumble so badly that his son feared Ford Motor Company would go out of business? He was so personally insecure that he could not keep himself from undermining the other executives at the Ford Motor Company. He would empower subordinates only to cripple their authority later. He was held captive by the Law of Empowerment.

Worries about job security usually prevent leaders from empowering other people, but the ability to develop other leaders makes you invaluable to your organization. Abraham Lincoln named his political rivals and critics to his cabinet because he wanted the benefit of advice from leaders as strong or stronger than he was. When you empower others, you lift them up and, in the process, you elevate yourself.

13. “The Law of the Picture: People Do What People See” – Easy Company withstood the German advance at the Battle of the Bulge and dashed Hitler’s last hope for stopping the Allies’ advance. They were able to do it because their leader embraced the Law of the Picture.

Original 1st edition chapter 13 - **“The Law of Reproduction: It Takes a Leader to Raise Up a Leader”** – Some leaders are naturally gifted. Others rise to the occasion in response to crisis. However, the vast majority of leaders are inspired and mentored by other leaders. The best mentors for potential leaders are experienced leaders. You can only give to others what you already possess. Many leaders don’t see the value of generating other leaders, and may try to hold other people down at lower ranks. Be careful; the only way to limit or demote others is to lower yourself. Raising new leaders is essential for the full development of your organization. The more leaders your company has, the stronger it is, but that requires careful nurturing. As Ross Perot once said: “Leaders don’t flock. You have to find them one at a time.”

14. “The Law of Buy-In: People Buy into the Leader, then the Vision” – They freed their nation by passively protesting, even when it cost them their lives by the thousands. What would inspire them to do such a thing? The Law of Buy-In. Mahatma Gandhi was one of the greatest leaders of all time. He led his native India to independence. He advocated nonviolence as the most effective weapon against oppression. Convincing people of this idea was terribly difficult, and yet millions followed him. Why? Because they believed in him as a leader, so they adopted his vision and his plan. Many people think vision comes first, but it doesn’t. When followers are making up their minds, the leader comes first. Build your credibility as a leader and then work on persuading others to share your vision.

15. “The Law of Victory: Leaders Find a Way for the Team to Win” – What saved England from the Blitz, broke apartheid’s back in South Africa, and won the Chicago Bulls multiple world championships? In all three cases the answer is the same. Their leaders lived by the Law of Victory. Winston Churchill spoke out against the Nazis as early as 1932, but those who led England at that time decided to pursue a reconciliatory path. When Churchill became Prime Minister in 1940, he plainly stated his position against Nazism. He made it clear that he intended to lead England to victory and that defeating Hitler was the only acceptable outcome. Despite incredible odds, Churchill did not give up until the Allies were victorious. Even a leader who is dedicated to victory must realize that winning is usually a team endeavor. Improving the team’s play leads to victory. Achieving victory requires a cohesive vision, a variety of skills and a dedicated leader exhorting his team to leave it all on the field.

16. “The Law of the Big Mo: Momentum Is a Leader’s Best Friend” – The two-minute film was meant to show off the power of the company’s animation technology. What it did was engage the power of the Big Mo leading to billions of dollars in revenue. To go anywhere, you must be in motion. Ongoing momentum makes it easier to overcome challenges and obstacles when they occur. A leader must generate momentum, but once it starts, it is hard to stop. Momentum inspires followers to perform.

17. “The Law of Priorities: Leaders Understand that Activity Is Not Necessarily Accomplishment” – They called him the wizard. His priorities were so focused that if you give him a date and time, he can tell you exactly what drill his players were performing and why! It won him ten championships. What can the Law of Priorities do for you? First analyze your obligations. Identify those areas where your strengths are greatest and, as much as possible, delegate the rest. Understand where your greatest passions reside, because they provide your motivation. Being active doesn’t necessarily mean you are accomplishing the right things, so setting priorities is crucial. Ideally, each action you execute will satisfy more than one priority. To prioritize, determine what you absolutely must do, what activity generates the largest gain and “what brings the greatest reward.” To maximize your effort, focus on the most productive areas.

18. “The Law of Sacrifice: A Leader Must Give Up to Go Up” – What would you give up for the people who follow you? This leader gave his life. Why? Because he understood the power of the Law of Sacrifice. Sometimes you have to be willing to give something up so you can move ahead. You may be forced to take one step back in order to take two steps forward. Often that means working around the clock without compensation or appreciation. Sometimes the sacrifice is even greater. When Lee Iacocca took over Chrysler, he couldn’t stop the company’s downward trend toward bankruptcy without drastic action. As a last resort, he asked the federal government to bail out the company. He opened himself and Chrysler up to attack and ridicule. To set an example, he reduced his yearly salary to one dollar. He asked Chrysler’s executives to sacrifice as well. Because of that mutual sacrifice, they turned Chrysler around together. Getting where you’re going will require sacrifice. Staying there requires even more sacrifice.

19. “The Law of Timing: When to Lead Is as Important as What to Do and Where to Go” – Leaders at every level dropped the ball: the mayor, the governor, the cabinet secretary, and the president. Not one of them understood the potential devastation that can come when a leader violates the Law of Timing. So often, timing has a tremendous impact on the outcome of a battle. Georgia Governor Jimmy Carter was elected president in 1976 because voters identified with him as a Washington outsider. It was “the right time” in U.S. history for an outsider to win. The country was wary, disillusioned by Vietnam and Watergate. Chances are that Carter would not have been elected at any other time, but timing favored the underdog in 1976.

20. “The Law of Explosive Growth: To Add Growth, Lead Followers – To Multiply, Lead Leaders” – Is it possible to train more than a million people around the globe? It is if you use leader’s math. That’s the secret of the Law of Explosive Growth. Leaders who develop other leaders multiply their own potential and activate the law of explosive growth. John Schnatter, founder of Papa John’s Pizza, explains, “It’s my job to build the company.” His COO, Wade Oney, adds, “The key is to develop leaders. You do that by building up people.” You can groom

leaders one by one, but for faster growth you can also enlist leaders who will bring their followers along, multiplying your growth.

21. “The Law of Legacy: A Leader’s Lasting Value Is Measured by Succession” – What will people say at your funeral? The things *they say* tomorrow depend on how you live today using the Law of Legacy. In 1997, Coca-Cola’s CEO Roberto Goizueta died unexpectedly. This kind of crisis is often hugely destabilizing, but Goizueta had prepared for his company’s welfare in the event of his absence. As a result, Coca-Cola remained strong. By growing leaders, you amplify your company’s potential today and provide for its sustained success in the future.

The 3 Questions Every Leader Must Ask
John Maxwell - World Leadership Forum México



Maxwell explained with authenticity why he is so interested and passionate about leadership: he realized in 1976 that everything rises and falls thanks to leadership (businesses, governments, education, and religion). “I’ve spent my life teaching leadership, writing about leadership, spending time with the greatest leaders in the world, asking leadership questions. My whole life has been dedicated to leadership,” he confirmed.

One major lesson he has learn along the way is that it isn’t about telling but about asking the right questions. In the following discover three of the essential questions to ask in order be a great leader.

“We think of leadership as telling, but great leaders become great by what they ask, not what they say. It is the questions that will make you a good leader.” Maxwell challenged the audience to take stock of how they are doing as leaders and insisted that they ask themselves the following three questions:

Question 1: Am I investing in myself as a leader?

Although Maxwell pointed out that asking this question may sound a little selfish, a little strange for leaders, people who should always be focusing their efforts on others, he assures that it is the most essential question to ask. Why? “You can’t give what you don’t have. All great leaders are continually learning. If you have stopped learning you should stop leading.”

Maxwell explained that a common organizational issue comes from when the leader becomes a lid: he or she stops growing and as a result the organization and the people also come to a halt. Therefore, it is essential for leaders to have a personal growth plan. "Growth is not automatic, you have to grow intentionally," Maxwell confirmed.

So what can you do to help yourself and those around you grow? Create the right environment, Maxwell suggested, one where you aren't the smartest person in the room and are constantly challenged. It is a good thing if you spend the majority of your time outside your comfort zone.

Question #2: Am I genuinely interested in other people?

It is far too common for leaders to love leading people but not the people they lead. Maxwell warned that in the world today there are many people in leadership positions who love power and giving orders rather than truly being interested and caring for people. He suggested that in every leader, in any part of the world, there are two things that hold true and are a part of a leader's DNA:

- 1) They see **more** than others see, they have a big picture view of what is going on. This isn't about intelligence, it is about comprehension.
- 2) They see more and they see **before**. Maxwell suggested that true leaders have an advantage over others: they have a head start and have the ability to get on the journey before the normal person.

So what does this have to do with caring about people? Although a leader may have the advantage of knowing more and before (meaning they can win every time), true leaders **choose** to slow down and take people with them. "Leaders don't win races!" They get off the top, find their followers, and walk slowly through the crowd.

Question #3: Am I doing what I love and am I loving what I do?

Don't lead for the perks, for the financial reward. Maxwell assured the crowd that money is overrated and has only two functions: to give you possibilities (to travel, to live well) and to do good things with it.

"If you don't love what you do you won't have the passion, and without passion you don't have the energy to continually enjoy your people and your work."

Maxwell closed with the following thought, one that every leader must truly consider:

"I want to make a difference with people who want to make a difference at a time when it makes a difference."

What about you?

Asking for Change



People rarely do things for your reasons. They are motivated by their own hopes, aims, and aspirations. A leader's goal is not to sell her vision to the team, expecting them to buy into something external to them. Rather, the responsibility of the leader is to show how her vision connects with the needs and desires inside of each teammate. In this way, the vision is not so much sold as shared.

Instead of putting others in their place, we need to put ourselves in their place, exchanging our perspective for theirs. How does this happen? By asking good questions. However, before we can know what to ask, we have to understand some basic principles about how people behave.

Time-Honored People Principles

People consider themselves before others.

People certainly are capable of acting altruistically on behalf of others, but the default driver of human behavior is self-interest.

People follow emotions more than logic.

“When dealing with people, remember you are not dealing with creatures of logic, but with creatures of emotions, creatures bristled with prejudice and motivated by pride and vanity.” ~ Dale Carnegie

People value their opinions more than those of others.

If we're honest, we often hold onto an idea, not because it's brilliant, but simply because it's *ours*.

People see things based on who they are.

We see the world, not as it is, but as we are. The lens through which people view life is shaped by their past experiences, present mood, and prevailing attitude.

People will consider changing their perspective only when they feel understood.

When denied voice or input into the process of change, people will be far more resistant to transition.

Questions Leaders Should Ask About the People They Lead

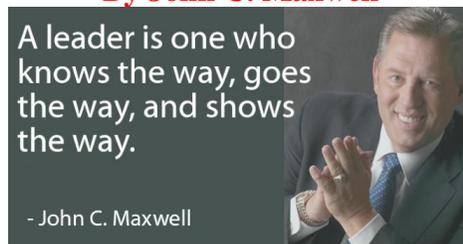
In light of these fundamental truths about human nature, a leader cannot expect each person on the team to be motivated by an identical set of concerns. So, instead of taking a one-size-fits-all approach to persuading others to change, a wise leader customizes communication by paying attention to the uniqueness of each person.

1. *What is their passion?* This determines what they will do.
2. *What is their giftedness?* This determines what they can do.
3. *What is their temperament?* This determines their perspective and patterns of behavior.
4. *What are their values?* This determines their convictions and priorities.
5. *What is their position?* This determines their territory and thinking.
6. *What is our relationship?* This determines their willingness to change.

Only after a leader has asked these questions, and has carefully considered their answers, is she able to lead people successfully - differently, but successfully.

My #1 Question for the People Around Me

By John C. Maxwell



What's the big deal? What I mean is, what's the big problem that stands between you and success? Is it a person? A situation? Or is it something inside of you? Maybe an attitude or a fear? A doubt or a belief?

For me, what stood between me and my goals was usually something internal. Sure, there were problems and people who made my journey challenging. But my biggest problem was usually staring at me in the mirror. Leading yourself is the most important — and the most difficult — aspect of leadership.

I believe there is a key to leading yourself past the obstacles you encounter: Asking Questions. Why do I think something so simple can make such a big difference? Because of what it does inside of you.

The simple act of asking the right questions of the right people can provide crucial information, offer clarity and help you make better decisions. That process begins with the questions you ask yourself. It continues with the questions you ask others. When you ask the right questions of people on your team, it not only gives the above benefits, it can also improve your connection with them and demonstrate your openness and teachability.

Today, I'll talk about the question that comes out of my mouth a dozen or more times every day:

“What Do You Think?”

When I ask people what they think, at different times I do it for different reasons. Some of those are...

Gathering Information

Sometimes the question is as straightforward as it sounds. I simply want good information. Often I receive that from my inner circle, whom I value very highly. Every person is not only talented and capable, but also a good thinker. Often I ask what they think because I can learn from them. They are like an extension of me.

I believe that leaders see more than others see and see things before others do. Having leadership gifting is often like having a head start in a race. But obviously leaders don't see everything. By asking people on my team to tell me what they think, I can often gather additional information that gives me a better idea of what's going on. One of my jobs as a leader is to piece these bits of information together into a complete picture so I can make good decisions.

Confirming My Intuition

Often I have a strong sense that something is true, but cannot explain why. It comes out of a strong sense of intuition. We are all intuitive in our areas of strength; mine is most acute in leadership situations. If you think you know something, but you're not sure why, what can you do to validate your belief? Ask someone you trust. To verify that what I'm sensing is correct, I'll ask leaders I respect what they think. Their answers often put words to my feelings and confirm my intuition, giving me greater certainty as I plan or make decisions.

Assessing Someone's Judgment or Leadership

When new people join my team, I often ask what they think. For example, if we're in a meeting, I'll ask what they observed and get their opinion on what happened. It helps me learn if they read the room right. Or if we're strategizing, I'll ask how they think we should proceed. This is the fastest way to assess people's thinking and observation abilities.

Teaching How I Think

Let me say one more thing about asking people what they think about an idea or subject. When I ask the question, I always tell people *why* I've asked it, because that is one of the best ways to teach people. *Why* is a great tool for connecting and equipping.

Processing a Decision

Sometimes people need a number of different perspectives in order to discover the best choice. And sometimes they need time and reflection to process a decision. That has been true for me and for members of my team. Sometimes they have needed to move me along and convince me of a decision they believe in. Sometimes it's the other way around, and I need to give them time to come around. The give and take is very healthy.

Asking the question “What do you think?” has often allowed me to lead my organization better than I would have if I had relied only on myself. More than once, members of my team have saved me from making a bad or stupid decision because they saw things I didn't see, drew from experience I didn't have, or shared wisdom they possessed that I lacked. Their thinking has elevated my ability, and for that I am very grateful.

7 Habits of Highly Effective People

Powerful Lessons in Personal Change

by Stephen R. Covey

Ideas to Keep

- Focus on developing character, not personality.
- You are what you habitually do, so adopt productive habits.
- Excellence is a habit, not an aptitude.
- You are free because you can determine how you respond to circumstances.
- Choose sound principles — integrity, dignity, quality, service, patience, perseverance, caring, courage — and endeavor to live by them.
- Write a personal mission statement to clarify your principles and set your goals.
- Think of what you want people to say about you at your funeral; try to deserve it.
- Build trust in your relationships.
- Balance the attention you give to each of your roles. Allot your time to attend fairly to each of your responsibilities and relationships.
- Understand that you have the ability to improve your habits and your life.

What You Will Learn

You will learn: 1) Seven approaches that effective people take to attain fulfillment; and 2) How to build your character and shape your life more deliberately.

Recommendation

Stephen R. Covey managed to repackage an ethical and moral tradition thousands of years in development and make it meaningful to a late twentieth century, secular audience. Most of what you find in this book you will find in Aristotle, Cicero, Benedict, Tillotson and their heirs. Covey adds a few references to psychology, a twentieth century science, and many to Viktor Frankl, a sage of the Holocaust. Covey wraps the mix in a distinctively American can-do program of easy-looking steps calling, mostly, for self-discipline. The result is a quite worthwhile, useful manual for self-improvement.

Seven Habits

The seven habits of highly effective people are:

1. They take initiative. (“Be Proactive”)
2. They focus on goals. (“Begin with the End in Mind”)
3. They set priorities. (“Put First Things First”)
4. They only win when others win. (“Think Win/Win”)
5. They communicate. (“Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood”)
6. They cooperate. (“Synergize”)
7. They reflect on and repair their deficiencies. (“Sharpen the Saw”)

Much of the business success literature of recent decades focused on developing a good personality. This emphasis is misplaced. Developing a sound character is more important and more productive. Your personality can emerge naturally when your character is rooted in and formed by principles. Forcing yourself to display a personality that is inconsistent with your character is like wearing a mask. It is deceptive, manipulative and

ultimately destructive.

To develop a sound character, you need a sound paradigm, a solid new way of seeing things. Before the theory of germs established a new paradigm, for example, surgeons didn't wash their hands. When patients died of infections, no one understood why. Sterile operating rooms came about as the result of a new paradigm, a new way of seeing how disease worked.

Today, many people have a deterministic paradigm. They believe that their genetic make-up determines how they will act, or that their parents' failures permanently weakened their own chances and formed them irremediably, or that their environment or experience have curtailed their freedom to change. In fact, determinism is a paradigm.

To forge a strong character, abandon determinism and accept a paradigm of freedom. This new paradigm allows you to see that you can change, that character is a habit, and that a habit is what you do consistently. Act consistently in a new way and you will form and become a new character.

Certain basic principles and values make people more effective. They are fairness, equity, integrity, honesty, human dignity and worth, excellence, a spirit of service, patience, perseverance, nurturance, caring, courage, encouragement and the can-do attitude that recognizes boundless potential. The person whose character grows from these classic principles is a leader who, having mastered him or her self, can inspire and help others. Character is habit. As Aristotle said, we are what we habitually do. To develop the habit of acting on these principles you must:

- Know — Understand what you want to do and why you want to do it.
- Develop skills — Become able to do it.
- Desire — You must want and will yourself to do it.

The most important work is the inner work. When you master your interior self, you will master what is outside of you. Many people mistakenly concentrate on production, on making a measurable, visible difference in the world outside. They neglect production capability, the source of power that makes production possible. They are like the fellow who runs several hours a day and boasts of the extra years he'll live, but neglects to notice that he is spending all of his extra time running. He may gain extra years but he will not be able to do anything more with them, and the time he spends running might better be spent developing deeper relationships with his spouse, family and friends.

Habit 1: "Be Proactive"

Highly effective people take the initiative. They are proactive. They do not impose limits on themselves that prevent them from acting. They recognize that they have the freedom to determine the kind of character they will have because they can decide how they will act. They may not be able to control their circumstances, but they can decide whether to use those circumstances or be abused by them. They live by the "principles of personal vision."

Viktor Frankl was a prisoner in a Nazi concentration camp. His entire family, except for one sister, was murdered in the camps. As horrific as his circumstances were, Frankl recognized that he was free, because he could decide how he would think and act in the midst of the horror. Even when he was a starving prisoner, he visualized himself lecturing in a classroom, telling students about the horror and what he learned from it. His mental discipline made him stronger than the camp guards. He inspired fellow prisoners and even some of the guards themselves. Frankl was pro-active. He took the initiative and accepted responsibility for his fate. He recognized that fate was his to decide. He did not have the power to walk away from the camp, but he had the power to master it.

Begin to be pro-active by speaking the language of initiative and responsibility:

- Not, I can't do anything — But, let's think about some possibilities.
- Not, that's just me — But, I can change the way I am.
- Not, he drives me up the wall — But, I can choose how I'll let him affect me.
- Not, I can't or I have to — But, I will decide and I will choose.

Proactive people operate in the realm of the possible. They see what they can do, and do it. By taking responsibility and acting, they expand the realm of the possible. They get stronger as time passes. They become able to do more and more. They begin by committing to change something interior, and may eventually change the world around them.

Habit 2: “Begin with the End in Mind”

Think carefully about your goals. Many people spend a lifetime pursuing a goal that proves meaningless, unsatisfying or destructive. You see them on the covers of tabloid magazines, rich, famous, busted for drugs or watching their marriages fall apart. Power, money and fame were the goals that they wanted and achieved, but at what price? Effectiveness is not just a matter of reaching a goal but rather of achieving the right goal. Imagine yourself sitting in the back of the room at your funeral. Imagine what people could honestly say about you based on the way you are now. Do you like what you hear? Is that how you want to be remembered? If not, change it. Take hold of your life. Implement “personal leadership.”

Begin by drafting a personal mission statement that outlines your goals and describes the kind of person you want to be. Think carefully about this mission statement. Examine yourself. See yourself as you really are. Are you self-centered? A workaholic? Money grubbing? Decide what you need to change and what you want to become. Write the statement. Make a commitment to yourself. Keep that commitment.

Habit 3: “Put First Things First”

You have the power to change who you are, but that means changing how you act. Never let your most important priorities fall victim to the least important. Many people spend their time reacting to urgent circumstances and emergencies, and never invest the necessary effort to develop the ability to prevent emergencies, to exercise “personal management.” They confuse the important with the urgent. The urgent is easy to see. The important is harder to discern. Emphasize planning, avoiding pitfalls, developing relationships, cultivating

opportunities and getting adequate recreation. Don't think about cramming a lot of business into your schedule, but rather about making sure that you spend the necessary time on important things. Think of your various roles as a spouse, a parent, a manager, a community volunteer. Give each role an appropriate allotment of time on your schedule. Do not rob Peter to pay Paul; make sure each role gets its due.

Habit 4: "Think Win/Win"

In marriage, business or other relationships, exercise "interpersonal leadership" to make both parties winners. Two wins make everyone better off; two losses place everyone in a worse situation. A win/lose relationship creates a victor and leaves someone injured. Highly effective people strive for win/win transactions, which make it profitable for everyone to cooperate because all the parties are better off in the end. Any other kind of transaction is destructive, because it produces losers and, therefore, enemies and bad feelings, such as animosity, defeat and hostility. Highly effective people become highly effective by multiplying their allies, not their enemies. A good alliance is win/win.

Habit 5: "Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood"

Communication is a two-way street. To develop win/win relationships, find out what the other parties want, and what winning means to them. Don't assume you know. Listen. Always try to understand what the other people want and need before you begin to outline your own objectives. Do not object, argue or oppose what you hear. Listen carefully, and think about it. Try to put yourself in the other party's shoes. Good lawyers make it a practice to write the strongest possible case they can from their opponent's point of view.

Only when they understand the best possible arguments for the opposition do they begin to draft the case from their client's point of view. This tactic is equally valuable in personal relationships or business arrangements. Always understand what the other party needs and wants, and why. Then, when you outline your own objectives, put them in terms that respond directly to the other party's goals. That is acting upon the "principles of empathetic communication."

Habit 6: "Synergize"

Cooperation multiplies the power of one. In fact, "creative cooperation" may yield a force greater than the sum of the parts just as an arch can support a greater weight than two pillars can hold. The arch multiplies the power of both pillars. The buzzword to describe this kind of relationship is "synergy," which means bringing together a whole that is greater than the sum of the parts. Effective synergy depends on communication. Many people make synergy impossible by reacting from scripts. They don't listen, reflect and respond but, instead, they hear and react reflexively. Their reactions may be defensive, authoritarian or passive. They may oppose or they may go along — but they do not actively cooperate. Cooperation and communication are the two legs of a synergistic relationship. Listen, reflect, respond and cooperate.

Habit 7: "Sharpen the Saw"

"In an old yarn, a man is sawing a log. The work is going slowly and the man is exhausted. The more he saws, the less he cuts. A passerby watches for a while and suggests that the

man should take a break to sharpen the saw. But the man says he can't stop to sharpen the saw because he is too busy sawing! A dull saw makes the work tiresome, tedious and unproductive. Highly effective people take the time they need to sharpen their tools, which are, in fact, their bodies, souls, mind and hearts. It's time for "self-renewal." Effective people take care of their bodies with a program of exercise that combines endurance, flexibility and strength. It's easy to plan such a program, and you don't have to join a gym to implement it. Effective people care for their souls with prayer and meditation, if they are inclined to a religiously-grounded spirituality, or perhaps by reading great literature or listening to great music. Never neglect this spiritual dimension; it provides the energy for the rest of your life.

Mental repair may mean changing your habits, such as the habit of watching television. Television watching encourages passive absorption of values, attitudes and dispositions that dull the mind. Read, work puzzles, do math or engage in some challenging activity to keep your mind alert, active and engaged. The heart refers to emotions, which depend greatly on others. Work to develop your heart, your emotional connections and your engagement with other people. Communicate, listen and be undemanding. In everything you do, try to make others better off and put them first. By doing so, you'll transform yourself into a highly effective person.