

Lesson

The 5 Levels of Leadership

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Leadership is influence.

Level 1 **Position**

_____ — People follow you because they have to.

Your influence will not extend beyond the lines of your job description. The longer you stay here, the higher the turnover and the lower the morale.

Level 2 **Permission**

_____ — People follow you because they want to.

People will follow you beyond your stated authority. This level allows work to be fun. Caution: Staying too long at this level without rising to the third level will cause highly motivated people to become restless.

Level 3 **Production**

_____ — People follow you because of what you have done for the organization.

This is where success is first realized by most people. Those who follow you like you and what you are doing. A leader at this level makes things happen. And most problems are solved through the benefit of positive momentum.

Level 4 **People Development**

_____ — People follow you because of what you have done for them.

This is where sustained growth occurs. Your ability and commitment to developing leaders will ensure ongoing growth for the organization and the people. The people are *bigger, better, and stronger* because of your investment in their life.

Level 5 **Personhood**

_____ — People follow you because of who you are and what you represent.

This step is reserved for leaders who have spent years growing people and organizations. Few make it. Those who grow to this level have an extraordinary impact.

Observations:

1. As you grow to a new level, you cannot _____ the principles of the preceding levels.
2. You can be at different levels with different people, but overall, you are primarily at one level.
3. Moving to the next level isn't automatic, (a function of putting in your time); it takes _____ effort.
4. When you change organizations, you are not guaranteed in the new organization the same level you had where you were.
5. There is a _____ of growth within each level, and the higher you grow, the greater the range.
6. The higher you go, the more personal sacrifice is required.
7. A great leader _____ stops growing.

Key Questions:

1. What level of leadership are you on with most people?
2. Do you sense your influence increasing or decreasing?
(with those above and below you)
3. Are you willing to pay the price to grow as a leader? (How?)

Level 3 Production

"Results" – People follow you because of what you have accomplished.

This is where most people first realize success—those who follow you like you and what you are doing. A leader at this level makes things happen. And most problems are solved through the benefit of positive momentum.

1. Which comes first, high morale or high productivity? Then, how do you personally manage the tension?
2. "All great leaders are productive. However, it is possible to be a producer and not a leader." What does this mean to you?
3. "Prioritize the things that yield the high return." This is easier said than done. What disciplines are required of you to consistently focus on the priorities? When you think of highly productive leaders, do you think it's more about giftedness or discipline? Why?

4. We know there are results from human efforts, and there are results from God's power. Ultimately, spiritual leadership is the integration of the two elements. There is often a very subtle and nearly indiscernible line between the two. How do you know the difference, navigate the difference, and know that your results matter?

Level 4 People Development

"Reproduction" – People follow you because of what you have done for them.

This is where sustained growth occurs. Your ability and commitment to developing other leaders will ensure ongoing growth for the organization and the people. The people are "bigger, better, and stronger" because of your investment.

1. Your character matters as a leader. You reproduce who you are, not what you do. So how are you tempted to violate integrity as a leader? How do you strengthen and sustain your integrity as a leader?

2. Why and how does insecurity usually prevent or at least diminish your ability to develop others as leaders?

3. Why is a simple game plan important when it comes to developing people? Can you give an example of one?

4. What makes you feel empowered as a leader? How do you empower others as leaders?

Level 5 Pinnacle

"Respect" – People follow you because of who you are and what you represent.

Though few leaders achieve level 5, it is a great target to aim at. Personally, I think every man (husband/father) has a shot at being a level 5 leader in his own home.

1. This level is largely about legacy; it is still practical, but what you do from levels 1-4 for a long time determines level 5. You will have time later in the year to go more in-depth but more "off the top" what would you like your legacy to be? Have you thought about it? How do you want to be remembered? What do you want to leave behind? What will your mark be?

2. John lists several things that would greatly contribute to your legacy—valuing people, continuing to grow, practicing the golden rule, being authentic, exhibiting good values, and living out the right priorities.

Which of these jumps out as something you want to work on starting now?

Extra Resource

Moving Up the 5 Levels

Growing as A Leader

I. Moving from Non-Leader to Leader Level 1 — **POSITION LEADERSHIP**

The Bible teaches us in I Timothy 3:1 that leadership is a worthy aspiration. The scripture also goes on to immediately list the high character standards for those who accept this responsibility. Our motives are quickly checked as we see God's expectations of a spiritual leader. So you want to be a leader...good. But first, reflect on why and what you believe God wants you to do.

A. Examine your motives

1. Why do you want to be a spiritual leader?
2. Are you willing to pay the price?

The following is a common list of *price tags* that leaders will pay when serving God and people:

- a. pressure
- b. criticism
- c. loneliness
- d. long hours
- e. difficult decisions
- f. personal sacrifice
- g. commitment to growth

3. What do you hope the rewards will be?

B. Clearly identify your strengths and weaknesses.

What are your productive strengths, and what are your destructive weaknesses?

C. Name three people who you think are great leaders. Then, make a list of their qualities and learn from them.

D. Know your job and do it well.

E. Take the initiative to do more than is expected and accept responsibility.

II. Moving from Level 1— Position Leadership to Level 2 — PERMISSION LEADERSHIP

A. Pray every day for God's heart for people.

It isn't enough to say, "I like people," even if you mean it. You must have God's heart. You will "see" life differently when you look through God's eyes. This is truly a life-changing prayer.

B. Listen more than you talk and learn to ask excellent questions.

We communicate how much we care by how much we listen and how much we are on the other person's agenda compared to our own. Leaders who are good with people practice asking good questions to learn more about the person to serve them better. The questions are often very simple, but the answers reveal much when you listen carefully between the lines. The point is not to ask questions just to ask questions but always ask with a specific purpose in mind. For example:

1. How is your family doing?
2. (Ask about their background.) Then, tell me your "story."
3. Are you enjoying your work this week?
4. What is the toughest thing you are dealing with right now?
5. What is the best thing you have recently learned?
6. How are you growing in your Christian faith?
7. Are you feeling close or distant from God these days?

C. Practice the three steps to relational charisma.

All growing leaders, at one time or another, surrender to their own perceived or real lack of charisma. Charisma is unfortunately characterized by that mystical, almost magic-like personality that only a few are given by God. The truth of the matter is that, yes, only a few are given those extraordinary gifts of charisma, but everyone can develop the basics of charisma on an interpersonal level. The following steps to charisma (on an interpersonal level, not necessarily on a public platform) are more than achievable even by average leaders. The good news is that as these are developed and practiced with consistency, excellence, and intention, the leader won't stay average for long.

1. Be more interested in making people feel good about themselves than making people feel good about you.

In other words, when you walk into a room, whether there are two people or two hundred people, your focus is not worrying about what they think of you, but your only interest is helping the people feel good about themselves. By sincere compliments, authentic encouragement, careful listening, and brief nuggets to help them grow, you will find people "lining up" to be near you.

Obviously, that is not the goal. But the role of a leader is to influence as many people as possible according to the gifts that God has given them. This will unquestionably help maximize your potential. This is difficult for insecure people because they can't move past what others think of them. But for the leader who finds their security in Christ, this is pure joy.

2. Learn people's names quickly.
3. Smile and live enthusiastically (with passion) and stay positive!
4. Learn to see life through others' eyes. (perspective)
5. Help those around you become more successful.

D. Commit yourself to being an encourager.

A "multitude of leadership sins" can be corrected by simply being an encourager if you commit yourself to encourage specifically and sincerely.

E. Avoid the three top relationship killers:

1. A controlling nature

There is a great deal of difference between being a leader who is in control and being a controlling leader. The former exercises control for the benefit of the people and carries the authority as a responsibility, not an entitlement to lord over others. Unfortunately, the controlling person controls for the wrong motives, often out of insecurity or sometimes simply out of selfishness to get their own way.

2. A critical nature

People run from critical people, and it's very difficult to lead from behind! As noted earlier, encouragement is essential to lead people. The opposite of

encouraging is criticism. It only takes one, even a well-intended criticism, to undue about ten praises or encouragements.

3. A crabby nature

When people can't trust the consistency of your attitude or mood, they simply cannot trust you. And if they cannot trust you, then they cannot follow you. You know how you feel about moody, crabby, cranky people; leaders are held to even higher standards.

F. Learn to quickly and easily say, "I'm sorry."

Learning to accept responsibility for mistakes and acknowledge them is a foundational people skill for every leader. Whether you blew a project, or hurt someone's feelings, speak up and say, "I'm sorry," "I did that," "I messed that up," or "I hurt you." "Will you forgive me?" As a result, people will respect you much more in the long run.

G. Seek to understand rather than to win.

No one ever wins an argument. On the contrary, arguments result in a "lose-lose" scenario. That is why the "win-win" principle is so important. Therefore, a leader must spend less time being defensive and trying to prove a point and more time seeking to understand others' points of view.

H. Quickly share credit and praise.

It's amazing how much we can accomplish when it doesn't matter who gets the recognition. Share both publicly and privately, both in written form and verbally.

III. Moving from Level Two — Permission Leadership to Level Three — PRODUCTION LEADERSHIP

It is very important not to skip Level Two (permission) and jump to Level Three (production).

The temptation is greatest for talented people with a significant amount of drive as well as under pressure to "make things happen" in short amounts of time.

For a short time, a talented leader who can get the job done but has poor relationships will be tolerated and perhaps even praised for productivity. But sooner or later, the lack of people skills which will result in poor relationships will catch up with them.

Unresolved conflict that results in a big problem that is nearly impossible to resolve because so much "bad blood" has gone under the bridge. Even if a major people conflict never arose, which is highly unlikely, there comes a time in every person's life, a season if you will, in which productivity decreases. Perhaps a personal issue, perhaps fatigue — but whatever the case, without solid relationships to fall back on, the leader is set for a major fall. So be productive but never neglect those relationships.

- A. Develop a personal life mission statement.
- B. Learn when to say no and when to say yes.
- C. Possess a firm grasp of the 80/20 principle.
20 percent of the effort produces 80 percent of the results when priorities are right.
- D. Possess a firm grasp of a problem-solving model.
- E. Learn from your mistakes.
- F. Pay now and play later.
Cultivate a willingness to do what is necessary before that which is enjoyed. Too often, leaders are sidetracked by what they enjoy doing rather than tending to what they are responsible to accomplish.
- G. Pay attention to and understand the nuances of timing.
- H. Develop accountability for results — begin with yourself.
- I. Cultivate a tenacious, near ruthlessness for doing what produces results and nothing else.

IV. Moving from Level 3 — Production Leadership to Level 4 — PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT LEADERSHIP

This begins to tap into the heart of leadership. The earlier levels are more apprenticeship levels because until you begin to reproduce yourself, you have not yet fully realized the essence of leadership. This is also where the greatest joy and rewards of a leader are experienced. There is nothing quite like seeing someone's life change for the better because of your love, care, guidance, challenge, and influence.

- A. Seek out a special time of prayer over you for empowerment by an anointed leader who has great credibility with people.

This is not as mystical as it perhaps sounds, but nonetheless very important. A certain element is missing in all of us that prevents a maximum lasting impact on

people. Perhaps it is our sinful nature or just individual human shortcomings. In any case, the power of the Holy Spirit on a leader's life is necessary to move successfully into this level of leadership. It is also necessary to stay and grow at this level. A leader certainly can pray for him or herself for this blessing, but Christian history teaches us that there is something special about the empowering prayer of an anointed leader.

B. Interview three spiritual leaders who have proven credibility, integrity, and influence. Ask them:

1. What is the most significant leadership lesson you have ever learned?
2. Why do people follow you?
3. What is the key to developing people?

C. Spend a day alone with God and review your motives, integrity level, and personal walk with God.

Clear a day and take nothing but a Bible and a notepad. Spend the day in meditation upon God and reflection on yourself. Invest long periods of prayer seeking God's face about the condition of your heart and respond by journaling God's answers and your insights. The goal is to do a "gut check" and refocus yourself as a servant leader. God cannot bless you long-term as a people developer if your personal agenda comes before the people you are pouring yourself into.

D. Make sure your "house" is in order before attempting to reproduce yourself into other people. Then, do whatever it takes to make and keep your marriage and family strong.

I Timothy 3:12 reminds us that if we cannot manage our own house well, then we have no business assuming the spiritual responsibility for other people. This does not mean that leaders must be perfect, we are all sinners saved by grace, but it does mean that leaders live by a higher standard than others. And this higher standard requires our homes to be loving, nurturing environments that glorify God and set a good example for others to follow. If a leader influences thousands but loses his family, he has lost everything.

E. Develop around you a team of prayer partners.

F. Gather a core team around you and invest yourself in them. Teach them leadership!!

- G.** Invest more time leading, planning, thinking, praying, dreaming, and developing and less time doing.
This is the place in leadership when your "to-do" list becomes shorter, but your responsibilities become greater. This is the principle of leadership inversion, where you are "doing" less but accomplishing more. This is true leadership...influence. It is obvious that at this level, a leader's future potential is determined by the people he brings around him.
- H.** Dedicate yourself to living a life worthy of others following — model well.
- I.** Encourage often and empower freely.

V. Moving from Level 4 — People Development Leadership to Level 5 — PERSONHOOD LEADERSHIP

This level cannot be sought, earned, or received simply by outlasting everyone else! It comes ultimately from the sovereign hand of God. God's hand is revealed through talents, abilities, natural energy levels, opportunity, relationships, and timing. As these merge with God's kingdom plan, certain leaders are raised to a level beyond themselves.

It is wise, however, to make ourselves available to God should He have big plans! In other words, do not think this level impossible, just impossible by your own human means.

One other note on this level, I believe you can reach this level with your own family. The important issue is to never stop growing in your leadership development. Do everything possible to grow in your influence, and let God take care of the rest.

Characteristics at this level:

- 1.** Followers are sacrificial and loyal.
- 2.** Level five leaders have mentored and empowered many effective leaders.
- 3.** Public authority is granted to others by level five leaders.
- 4.** Success of new leaders is measured against the success of level five leaders.
- 5.** Leadership is destiny for level five leaders.