

The Levels of Leadership

John C. Maxwell in his book, *Developing the Leader Within You* lists five levels of leadership. What follows are some basic items on this topic.

Level 1: Position

This is the basic entry level of leadership. The only influence you have is that which comes with a title. A person may be “in control” because he has been appointed to a position. In that position he may have authority. But real leadership is more than having authority; it is more than having technical training and following the proper procedures. Real leadership is being the person others will gladly and confidently follow. A real leader knows the difference between being the boss and being a leader, as illustrated by the following:

- The boss drives his workers; the leader coaches them.
- The boss depends upon authority; the leader on goodwill.
- The boss inspires fear; the leader inspires enthusiasm.
- The boss says “I”; the leader, “we.”
- The boss fixes the blame for the breakdown; the leader fixes the breakdown.
- The boss knows how to get it done; the leader shows how.
- The boss says “go”; the leader says “let’s go!”

Listed below are some characteristics that must be exhibited at this level with excellence before advancement to the next level is possible:

- Know your job description thoroughly.
- Be aware of the history of the organization.
- Related the organization’s history to the people of the organization (in other words, be a team player).
- Do your job with consistent excellence.
- Do more than expected.
- Offer creative ideas for change and improvement.

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 don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care. It flourishes with a meaningful relationship, not more regulations. A person on the permission’ level will lead by interrelationships. Relationships involve a process that provides the glue and much of the staying power for long-term, consistent production. The agenda is not

the pecking order but people development. On this level, time, energy, and focus are placed on the individual's needs and desires.

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

People who are unable to build solid, lasting relationships will soon discover that they are unable to sustain long, effective leadership.

Listed below are some characteristics that must be exhibited at this level with excellence before advancement to the next level is possible:

- Possess a genuine love for people.
- Make those who work with you more successful.
- See through other people's eyes.
- Love people more than procedures.
- Do "win-win" or don't do it.
- Include others in your journey.
- Deal wisely with difficult people.

Level 3: Production

On this level things begin to happen, good things. Needs are being met. Problems are fixed with very little effort. Goals are being realized. Accompanying this growth is the "big mo" – momentum. Leading and influencing others is fun. Problems are solved with minimum effort. Fresh statistics are shared on a regular basis with the people who undergird the growth of the organization.

People follow because of what you have done for the organization. This is where success is sensed by most people. They like you and what you are doing.

This is the major difference between levels 2 and 3. On the "relationship" level, people get together just to get together. There is no other objective. On the "results" level, people come together, but they love to get together to accomplish something. In other words, they are results-oriented.

Listed below are some characteristics that must be exhibited at this level with excellence before advancement to the next level is possible:

- Initiate and accept responsibility for growth.
- Develop and follow a statement of purpose.
- Make your job description and energy an integral part of the statement of purpose.

- Develop accountability for results, beginning with yourself.
- Know and do the things that give a high return.
- Communicate the strategy and vision of the organization.
- Become a change-agent and understand timing.
- Make the difficult decisions that will make a difference.

Level 4: People Development

A leader is great, not because of his or her power, but because of his or her ability to empower others. Success without a successor is failure. A leader's main responsibility is developing others to do the work.

People follow because of what you have done for them. Loyalty to the leader reaches its highest peak when the follower has personally grown through mentorship of the leader.

The core of leaders who surround you should all be people you have personally touched or helped in some way. When that happens, love and loyalty will be exhibited by those closest to you and by those who are touched by your key leaders.

This is where long-range growth occurs. Your commitment to developing leaders will insure ongoing growth to the organization and to people. Do whatever you can to achieve and stay on this level.

Some principles for people development follow below:

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

Listed below are some characteristics that must be exhibited at this level with excellence before advancement to the next level is possible:

- Realize that people are your most valuable asset.
- Place a priority on developing people.
- Be a model for others to follow.
- Pour your leadership efforts into the top 20 percent of your people.
- Expose key leaders to growth opportunities.
- Be able to attract other winners/produces to the common goal.
- Surround yourself with an inner core that complements your leadership.

Level 5: Personhood

At this level people follow 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 do are bigger than life.

Listed below are some characteristics that must be exhibited at this level with excellence before advancement to the next level is possible:

- Your followers are loyal and sacrificial.
- You have spent years mentoring and molding leaders.
- You have become a statesman/consultant, and are sought out by others.
- Your greatest joy comes from watching others grow and develop.
- You transcend the organization.