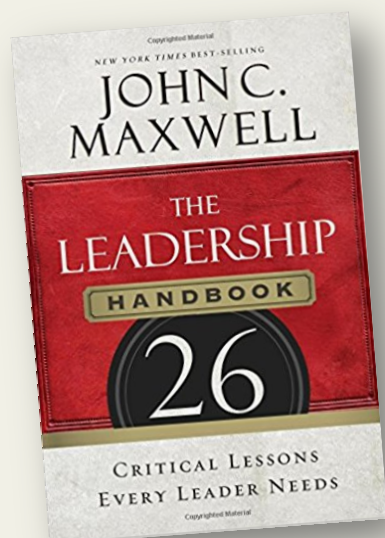


# The Leadership Handbook:

## 26 Critical Lessons Every Leader Needs

John C. Maxwell



*Taking  
people to  
the top  
is what good  
leaders do.  
-Maxwell*

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22. For Everything You Gain, You Give Up Something
23. Those Who Start the Journey with You Seldom Finish With You
24. Few Leaders Are Successful Unless a Lot of People Want Them to Be
25. You Only Get Answers to the Questions You Ask
26. People Will Summarize Your Life in One Sentence—Pick It Now

### Overview

By interweaving personal narratives that recount his experiences as a leader, Maxwell shares 26 of the lessons he has learned throughout his career. He utilizes succinct chapters for each lesson that end with application exercises to solidify the learning.



### About the Author

John Maxwell is an American author, motivational speaker and pastor. His passion is leadership as demonstrated by the many books he has published on the topic.

## Chapter 1: If It's Lonely at the Top, You're Not Doing Something Right

After years of trying to distance himself from his followers, Maxwell came to understand that a good leader does not journey alone. There is risk in this kind of leadership, and a certain amount of vulnerability, but in the long run it is worth the reward. He learned that successful leaders do not become that way on their own; many help them along the way. Likewise, the most successful leaders take people to "the top" with them while realizing that they are in constant flux, and are not always at "the top".



Maxwell lays out four pieces of advice for those lonely leaders who distance themselves from their people:

1. Avoid positional thinking: Building relationships will get you further than trying to "use" your title to get what you want.
2. Realize the downsides of success and failure: If you think in these dichotomies you are likely to create unhealthy distance from others.
3. Understand that you are in the people business: Successfully leading others means caring for them.
4. Buy into the law of significance: It is by working together, as a team, that leaders are successful.

### Questions to ask yourself:

- Are you better at the science or art of leadership?
- Why do you want to be at the top?
- How big is your dream?

### Editor's review:

- If Maxwell suggests avoiding positional thinking why is the title of this chapter, and much of the language used in the chapter, positional?

## Chapter 2: The Toughest Person to Lead Is Always Yourself

In order to be a successful leader, Maxwell reminds us that we must be in control of ourselves so that we do not disqualify ourselves. We are often our own worst enemies because we don't see ourselves as we see others. We must be honest with ourselves and closely examine our strengths and weaknesses. We are also often harder on others than we are on ourselves; we let ourselves "off the hook" too many times before demanding that we change.

"Good leaders don't belittle people- they enlarge them."

### Questions to ask yourself:

How clearly do you see yourself?

Where do you need to grow?

How well do you take advice?

Maxwell's advice for leading yourself is:

1. Learn followership: If you have experienced being lead, you will have a better ability to be a leader.
2. Develop self-discipline: "When we do what we should no matter how we feel about it."
3. Practice patience: Being a great leader takes time in order to develop relationships and bring others along with you to fulfill your vision.
4. Seek accountability: Successful leaders seek and accept advice. They also enlist the help of a few trusted teammates to help hold themselves accountable.

**Editor's review:** It is very interesting that often people say "you are harder on yourself than anyone else" because here Maxwell says quite the opposite: that you are harder on others than you are on yourself. I find it curious that he does not take a minute to acknowledge this colloquialism and discuss how it compares to what he believes.

## Chapter 3: Defining Moments Define your Leadership

Maxwell asserts that defining moments show the world –and ourselves– our true colours. Often defining moments come as a surprise and in times of crisis such as when facing a personal failure, in the midst of suffering, or when taking a stand on something we feel is important. Handled well, a defining moment can prove a leader's worth; handled poorly and it can be at the cost of the leader's credibility. A defining moment will change you and define you. According to Maxwell, defining moments can be groundbreakers, heart breakers, cloud breakers and chart breakers.

Although you never know when a defining moment will occur, Maxwell has tips to prepare for and manage them when they do come:

- Reflect on defining moments from the past: Look back on how you have handled defining moments in your past, reflect on these and consider your strengths and shortfalls.
- Prepare for defining moments in the future: Ensure that you have major decisions and life choices managed daily so that when a crisis does arise you can focus solely on it.
- Make the most of defining moments in the present: Defining moments are opportunities for risk and "It is in moments of risk that the greatest leaders are often born."

- Questions to ask yourself:**
1. What is your track record?
  2. How are you managing your decisions?
  3. How prepared are you for future defining moments?

**Editor's review:** Including "Make the most of defining moments in the present" in the list of ways to prepare for a defining moment seems to be an organizational error. I know that Maxwell wanted more than just two points in his list of how to prepare for a defining moment, but I would argue that making the most of the present is not advice on how to prepare for an event in the future.



**When being criticized:**  
-avoid being defensive  
-find the truth  
-make positive changes  
-take the high road

### Questions to ask yourself:

- What are your deficiencies?
- How secure are you as a leader?
- How can you properly process criticism?

### Editor's Review:

- Maxwell's last piece of advice in this chapter "forget yourself" suggests that we not worry what others are saying about us. This is good advice, but it seems to conflict his earlier advice of listening to criticism and learning from it.

## Chapter 4: When You Get Kicked in the Rear, You Know You're out in Front

Choosing the path of a leader means accepting praise along with criticism, and learning to handle criticism constructively. Maxwell affirms that you can handle criticism gracefully by doing the following things:

1. Know yourself—this is a reality issue: You need to reflect on your flaws.
2. Change yourself—this is a responsibility issue: A good leader is able to determine if the criticism is constructive and changes their behavior accordingly.
3. Accept yourself—this is a maturity issue: Work within your strength zone, and you will be able to change for the better.
4. Forget yourself—this is a security issue: Be yourself, do not obsess over what others think of you.



## Chapter 5: Never Work a Day in Your Life

Here we are reminded that if you love what you do, you will be successful. Maxwell confirms through personal accounts that passion breeds success and explains how passion is more powerful than the following:

1. Talent- Talent without passion is never enough for us to reach our potential.
2. Opportunity- Opportunities open doors, but it is passion that sustains us when the going gets tough.
3. Knowledge- Obtaining diplomas through formal education may help, but are not the sole solution to success.
4. A great team- A great team with a passionless leader will lose its motivation and become weak.

What is your true passion?

Questions to ask yourself:

How can you follow your passion?

How much passion do you have for your current work?

**FOLLOW YOUR PASSION**



**Editor's review:** I was raised to be of the mindset that if you wanted to pursue your dreams you needed to have a realistic 'fallback'. Are 'pursuing your dream' and 'following your passion' one in the same? And if so, I wonder what Maxwell has to say about all those individuals who followed their passions and came up empty handed?

**"When a person doesn't have passion, everything is a 'have to' and nothing is a 'want to'."**

**Questions to ask yourself:**

1. Do you need a 'listening audit'?
2. Who doesn't feel listened to?
3. What people have you neglected to seek out?



**Editor's review:**

Sometimes I find that the headings speak for themselves and Maxwell is just filling space by further explaining them. Then again, I guess that part of writing a book is finding words to fill the pages.

## Chapter 6: The Best Leaders are Listeners

Leaders sometimes fall into the habit of talking more than they listen- this is a terrible fault. Maxwell recalls that we must do more than hear others, we must truly listen and that it helps us as leaders in the following ways:

1. Understanding people precedes leading them: In order to lead others you must connect with others. This is done by listening and understanding to their hopes and dreams.
2. Listening is the best way to learn: "When we fail to listen, we shut off much of our learning potential."
3. Listening can keep problems from escalating: A good leader will pay attention to small issues before they become big problems. As leaders ascend into higher roles they are further from what is being said, which makes it even more important to listen in.
4. Listening establishes trust: The key to establishing trust, convincing others and achieving goals is to listen, understand and show respect.
5. Listening can improve the organization: Organizations that improve do so because their leaders have listened and made changes accordingly.



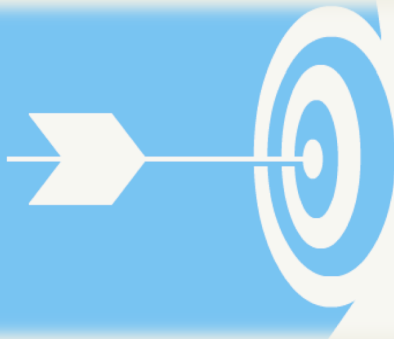


## Chapter 7: Get in the Zone and Stay There

Finding your strength zone and focusing on developing is the key message in this chapter. Maxwell suggests putting your energy into further developing your strength zone rather than focusing your energy into strengthening your weaknesses. Focusing on your weaknesses will only lead to being average whereas if you develop your strengths you will excel. But how do you find your strength zone? Here are his suggestions:

1. Ask, "What am I doing well?": Ask this rather than asking "What am I doing right". The first question will help you do develop, the latter is a matter of morals, and you should always do "What is right".
2. Get specific: You will have more luck developing a specific talent than focusing too broadly.
3. Listen for what others praise: Listen to what others say to find your specific strength zone.
4. Check out the competition: If someone is doing something better than you could, don't compete, instead focus your attention elsewhere.

**"SUCCESS IS:  
KNOWING YOUR  
PURPOSE IN LIFE,  
GROWING TO  
YOUR MAXIMUM  
POTENTIAL, AND  
SOWING SEEDS  
THAT BENEFIT  
OTHERS."**



**Keep yourself grounded in reality by asking:**

1. **What is reality in this situation?**
2. **Can I identify each issue?**
3. **Can the issues be fixed?**
4. **What are the options?**
5. **Am I willing to follow the game plan?**
6. **Will my leadership team follow the game plan?**

**Questions to ask yourself:**

Have you identified your strength zone?

Is your job utilizing your strengths?

Are you leading team members into their strength zones?

**Editor's Review:**

This chapter and chapter five seem to have the same message: find your strength/follow your passion and you will succeed. I think these two themes could have easily been rolled into one chapter.

## Chapter 8: A Leader's First Responsibility is to Define Reality

In order to be a successful leader you need to face reality; good leaders are both visionaries and realistic. Maxwell admits that being too optimistic at times has hurt the organizations he has run. As such he has come up with four practices that he follows to define reality:

1. Admit your weakness: If you, like Maxwell, are often unrealistic the first step to fixing the problem is admitting you have it.
2. Embrace realistic people: Work closely with teammates whose strength is seeing reality.
3. Ask for honesty from others: Ask for honest feedback and be sure to take it well. If you get defensive you will not get honest feedback in the future.
4. Invite 'fresh eyes' to check up on you: Employ outside consultants to help you see the issues that you have become blind to.

**Editor's review:** In this chapter, Maxwell assumes that all leaders have the same weakness: being unrealistic. This may not be the case. I wonder if Maxwell should have included a chapter for those leaders who are sometimes too realistic and lack vision and optimism?

**Questions to ask yourself:**

1. What kind of thinker are you?
2. Who speaks truth in your life?
3. Where do you need a reality check?

**"All leaders have two common characteristics: first, they are going somewhere; second, they are able to persuade other people to go with them."**

**Questions to ask yourself:**

1. Are your people following you?
2. How do you keep score?
3. Do you believe in your people?

## Chapter 9: To See How the Leader Is Doing, Look at the People

Maxwell makes the comparison of how leaders affect their followers to how family history affects our health: "When leaders are healthy, the people they lead tend to be healthy. When leaders are unhealthy, so are their followers." To find out how you are doing as a leader ask yourself:

1. Are the people following? Being a leader does not automatically mean that people will follow you, you must put your people first and build relationships in order for that to happen.
2. Are the people changing? In order to make progress, the followers need to be willing to change based on the leader's vision and goals. A leader does this by inspiring confidence in the followers.
3. Are the people growing? Change is one thing, but encouraging continual change leads to growth. A good leader does more than help followers develop skills; they help them to become better people.
4. Are the people succeeding? In order to achieve personal success a great leader knows it means helping their followers to succeed.



**Editor's review:** Maxwell repeats himself over and over when it comes to the fact that a great leader needs to earn trust by developing relationships. Repetition can be a good tool for solidifying learning, but we are only on chapter nine and it has already become monotonous.

## Chapter 10: Don't Send Your Ducks to Eagle School

The premise of this chapter is that you cannot force someone who is not motivated to be motivated, and similarly you cannot force someone to change who is not willing to do so. In other words you cannot turn "ducks" into "eagles". Maxwell says:

1. If you send ducks to eagle school, you will frustrate the ducks: What he means by this is that you cannot force someone out of their comfort zone. You should value the 'ducks' for their skillsets.
2. If you send ducks to eagle school, you will frustrate the eagles: People who want to move forward and succeed will be frustrated by those who hold them back.
3. If you send ducks to eagle school, you will frustrate yourself: Sometimes leaders make the mistake of putting too much energy into trying to train people to soar when they want to swim; essentially, find each person's strength zone and help them succeed at what they are good at. Do not force someone to be something they are not.



**Questions to ask yourself:**

1. Who have you put in the wrong place?
2. Do you need to free some eagles to soar and ducks to swim?
3. Do you know what potential leaders look like?

**Editor's review:** I actually really appreciated the hard, truthful advice in this chapter. As a leader you need to realize who has the potential to be great, where to put your energy and where not to put your energy. It's sad but true that not everyone you mentor will have what it takes to be an eagle.

## Chapter 11: Keep Your Mind on the Main Thing

If you stretch yourself too thin you will get nowhere. Here Maxwell explains why it is important to find the most important thing that will produce the best return for your organization and focus on it.

He suggests making five decisions to help you focus:

1. Be determined to not know everything: The key to being a great leader is realizing you do not know everything. Hiring an assistant to help you will let you focus on the most important things, while they know and do the rest.
2. Be determined to not know everything first: A good leader does not have the time to know everything that goes on in an organization, utilize an assistant for this. Also, problems should be dealt with at the appropriate level- not every issue should be handled by the leader.
3. Be determined to let someone represent you: As the leader you do not need to be the only person to accomplish things, learn to delegate. This requires trust and that amount of trust should not be granted haphazardly.
4. Be determined to stay in your area of strengths and not to work on your weaknesses: Simply put, focus on what you are good at.
5. Be determined to take charge of what takes your time and attention: Be in charge of your own schedule, do not let others be in charge of your time.

Find the main thing by considering:

- What gives you the greatest return?
- What is most rewarding?
- What is required of you?

Questions to ask yourself:

1. What kinds of things occupy your time?
2. Are you focused on strengths?
3. Are you stuck in the middle?

**Editor's review:** Although this occurs throughout the entirety of the book, I would like to take a minute and acknowledge how well Maxwell utilizes personal narrative and other forms of stories to solidify his points. These excerpts make his message all the more poignant.

**“Every leader is busy. The question for every leader is not, will my calendar be full? The question is, who will fill my calendar?”**

Questions to ask yourself:

1. What is your attitude toward mistakes?
2. Are you owning up to your mistakes?
3. Are you getting the best ideas from your subordinates?

**Editor's review:** Once again Maxwell is falling into the trap of repetition, this time in regards to “knowing your weaknesses”. There is no doubt it is important advice, but does it need to be said over and over again?

## Chapter 12: Your Biggest Mistake Is Not Asking What Mistake You're Making

Mistakes are part of leadership. Maxwell points out that when he was younger he believed that if he did everything just right he would make no mistakes. Yet he learned that part of leading is owning up to your mistakes and correcting them by doing these five things:

1. Admit your own mistakes and weaknesses: You must know yourself and admit your shortcomings rather than spend time trying to pretend to be perfect.
2. Accept mistakes as the price of progress: You need to accept that you will make mistakes, confront your mistakes, and not take them personally.
3. Insist on learning from your mistakes: “People can either run from mistakes and hurt themselves, or they learn from them and help themselves.”
4. Ask yourself and others, “What are we missing?”: This forces people to look beyond what is obvious and think differently about the situation.
5. Give the people around you permission to push back: Accept advice, both positive and negative, from the people in your inner circle and give them the permission to give that advice. It is better to know what could change to improve before it is too late.



## Chapter 13: Don't Manage Your Time—Manage Your Life

No matter who you are, everyone gets twenty-four hours every day. No one can buy more time, so we must learn to use our time wisely by learning to manage ourselves. Maxwell feels that those people who do not manage themselves well are guilty of making these mistakes:

1. They undervalue their uniqueness by doing what others want them to do: It is important to be firm in what you will and will not commit to in order to remain in charge of your time and not let others dictate how you use it.
2. They ruin their effectiveness by doing unimportant things: Maxwell has developed a point scale which he lays out to determine the importance of tasks and asserts that leaders should always be planning ahead at least one month in advance.
3. They reduce their potential by doing things without coaching or training: Training, coaching and mentoring helps to improve productivity so a good leader will utilize these to improve themselves and their followers.

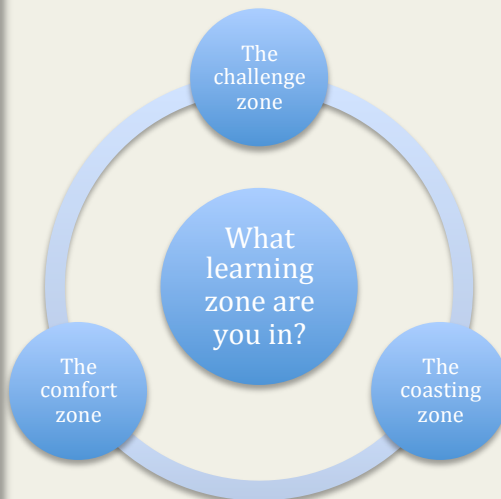


“I still find each day too short...  
For all the thoughts  
I want to think,  
For all the walks  
I want to take,  
For all the books  
I want to read,  
For all the friends  
I want to see.”  
- John Burroughs

### Questions to ask yourself:

1. Are you squandering your time?
2. Are you getting help where you need it?
3. How do you decide how to spend your time?

**Editor's review:** I realize it was not the intention of Maxwell to make his readers feel guilty for a lack of time/life management; but after reading this chapter, rather than feeling empowered, I feel disheartened with how I manage myself/my time.



### Questions to ask yourself:

1. Do you have destination disease?
2. What is your plan?
3. Are you creating a growth environment?

## Chapter 14: Keep Learning to Keep Leading

Personal growth through continual learning is an important part of being a good leader. Maxwell's advice on how to go about this includes:

1. Invest in yourself first: If you invest in your own personal growth it will positively affect the growth of your followers.
2. Be a continual learner: Do not fall into the trap of believing you are done learning. Learn everyday: read daily, listen daily, think daily, and file daily.
3. Create a growth environment for the people you lead: Develop a culture within your organization where growth is encouraged and motivation is high.

**Editor's Review:** Maxwell's point that we should "file" everyday is great advice not to be overlooked! In my career as a teacher, the colleagues that I admire the most have well-developed filing systems for preserving their thoughts and resources in order to improve their teaching for future years.



## Chapter 15: Leaders Distinguish Themselves During Tough Times

Maxwell asserts that many decisions made by the leader of an organization could be made by anyone with common sense, but it is those tough decisions where a great leader shines. To determine when you are facing a tough decision and need to have your best foot forward pay attention to these three factors:

1. The tough call demands risks: Making a decision in a sticky situation often involves putting yourself on the line.
2. A tough call brings with it an inward battle: You must settle the moral dilemma inside of you before being able to handle the external issue.
3. A tough call will distinguish you as a leader: It is how you act and react within those difficult times that prove your leadership qualities.

### Questions to ask yourself

- Have you made the tough calls in the past?
- Are you prepared to win the battle within?
- Are you playing it too safe as a leader?

### Editor's Review

- How is the message in this chapter different than the message in chapter three "Defining moments define your leadership"?

"Many people don't receive positive feedback...Often it is quite the opposite; they feel devalued."



## Chapter 16: People Quit People, Not Companies

Often followers leave a job or organization because of poor leadership. Maxwell believes there are four reasons followers quit their leaders:

1. People quit people who devalue them: If followers do not receive positive feedback or appreciation and are belittled they will not want to stay.
2. People quit people who are untrustworthy: People lose trust in their leaders when they are inconsistent, seek personal gain, withhold information, lie or are close-minded. To build trust leaders should communicate openly, maintain integrity, demonstrate respect, focus on shared goals and act morally.
3. People quit people who are incompetent: If the leader is incompetent, followers will be concerned about their leader making mistakes. This causes them to find someone else to work for.

### Questions to ask yourself:

1. Can your people rely on you?
2. What is your attitude toward your people?
3. Do you express appreciation?

### Editor's review:

I appreciated how Maxwell did not just point out the issues of why 'people quit people' but also suggested solutions, such as how leaders can build trust and show that they value their followers.

### Maxwell's Recipe for Retention

- Take responsibility for your relationship with others
- When people do leave, conduct an exit interview
- Put a high value on those who work with you
- Place credibility at the top of your priority list
- Maintain positive emotional health in order to create a positive work environment
- Continue to seek personal growth

## Chapter 17: Experience Is Not the Best Teacher

Some leaders learn from the experiences they have had, while others do not. Experience in and of itself is not the key; the key is learning from your experiences by reflecting on them and evaluating them. In order to gain insight from your experiences Maxwell says:

1. We all experience more than we understand: We will often be overwhelmed by our experiences so ask yourself every day “what did I learn today” and reflect on what you can grasp.
2. Our attitude toward unplanned and unpleasant experiences determines our growth: Do not despise the curve-balls that life throws at you, enjoy them.
3. Lack of experience is costly: Lack of experience can lead to many mistakes.
4. Experience is also costly: Part of gaining experience is making mistakes.
5. Not evaluating and learning from experience is more costly: Yes, part of gaining experience is making mistakes but then you must reflect on those mistakes and learn from them.
6. Evaluated experience lifts a person above the crowd: Reflect on your experiences and learn from them. Do this and it will set you apart.



### Questions to ask yourself:

1. How often do you pause to reflect on your experiences?
2. How do you record what you've learned?
3. How do you evaluate your year?

**Editor's review:** I would argue that the message within this chapter directly negates the title of the chapter. Maxwell is asserting that experience is in fact the best teacher, because when you reflect on your experiences you learn from them. I think the title should have been “Experience Is the Best Teacher If You Reflect” or something similar.

**“Good planning always costs less than good reacting”**

**–Wayne Schmidt**

### Questions to ask yourself:

1. Are your meetings structured?
2. Have you connected with the key influencers?
3. What is your plan for the next big change?

**Editor's review:** Having a meeting before the meeting is good advice! I wonder how often this occurs before the meetings I am privy to?

### Maxwell's advice:

- If you can't have the meeting before the meeting, don't have the meeting.
- If you do have the meeting before the meeting, but it doesn't go well, don't have the meeting.
- If you have the meeting before the meeting and it goes as well as you hoped, then have the meeting!

## Chapter 18: The Secret to a Good Meeting is the Meeting Before the Meeting

Meetings often fail because the agenda is not clear or because someone hijacks the meeting. The key to a successful meeting is to have a meeting with key contributors prior to the actual meeting. The reasons for this are:

1. It helps you to receive buy-in: Bringing the most influential people up to speed before the actual meeting will make things go more smoothly.
2. It helps followers to gain perspective: By being intentional with the message you deliver you can help others see things from your point of view.
3. It helps to increase your influence: By investing time into people you will develop relationships, which will increase your influence.
4. It helps you develop trust: In order to influence change you need to built trust from those you are asking to change.
5. It helps you avoid being blindsided: By having the meeting before the meeting, things may be brought up that give new insight so you can avoid making mistakes.





**"If you climb without connecting, you may gain authority, but you won't have many friends."**

**Questions to ask yourself:**

1. What is your natural inclination? Climber or connector?
2. How can you become a better connector?
3. How can you become a better climber?

**Editor's review:** Here Maxwell repeats again how important it is to build relationships as a leader, but this time he puts a different spin on it by helping his readers to see the pitfalls of being self-centered.

**Chapter 20: The Choices You Make, Make You**

The power to choose is something we should not take lightly. You need to be true to yourself and make the best decision that you know to make in each situation. Maxwell has decided these three decisions have helped to guide him:

1. Set standards for yourself that are higher than what others might set for you: Keep improving, do not let yourself slack off.
2. Helping people is more important than making them happy: Sometimes what is best for the organization will cause people to leave their comfort zones, but it helps everyone in the long run.
3. Focus on the present: Do not dwell on the past; on lost opportunities or on your regrets- it is a waste of time. Focus on what you can control: the present!

**Chapter 19: Be a Connector, Not Just a Climber**

Leadership is not a race to the top. It is not simply about climbing the ladder or having a fancy title; leadership is about connecting with people. Leaders are naturally either climbers or connectors, Maxwell points out the differences:

1. Climbers think vertical—connectors think horizontal
2. Climbers focus on position—connectors focus on relationships
3. Climbers value competition—connectors value cooperation
4. Climbers seek power—connectors seek partnerships
5. Climbers build their image—connectors build consensus
6. Climbers want to stand apart—connectors want to stand together

**"If you want to know who people are, don't look at their resumes...Just watch what choices they make."**

**"We don't always get what we want, but we do always get what we choose."**



**Questions to ask yourself:**

1. What major choices have changed your life?
2. What key choices have you made (or will make) to guide your leadership?
3. Are you prepared to make difficult choices?

**Editor's review:** I really liked Maxwell's point that as a leader your job isn't to make everyone happy, it's to help people and to promote success in your organization. I have been on the follower/receiving end of some of those decisions and have left feeling bitter but now I realize I need to step back and see the bigger picture.

## Chapter 21: Influence Should Be Loaned but Never Given

In this chapter, Maxwell writes of how he believes influence has three purposes: to speak up for those who don't have influence, to speak to those who do have influence, and to be passed on to others. He warns of leaders "giving away" their influence to people who are not planning to use it wisely. Instead he suggests "loaning" your influence and following these guidelines:

1. Not everyone should receive the loan of your influence: Before you give your influence ensure that you know the person, their reason for using your influence and that they have some way of repaying the loan.
2. Hold those who receive the loan of your influence accountable: Do not assume that they are using your influence appropriately or following through on what they said they would do, check up on them and your "investment".
3. Have expectations to see a good return on your loan: If they are not utilizing your influence to become a better leader you can decide to put your time and energy into someone else instead.

### Questions to ask yourself:

1. Are there people you need to speak up for?
2. What do you expect in return for your influence?
3. Do you need to increase your level of influence with others?

**Editor's review:** At first it seemed as though this chapter was really only beneficial for those leaders who have influence to pass on to others, but Maxwell redeems himself in his "Application Exercises" section by pointing out ways in which new leaders can increase their level of influence with others.



### Questions to ask yourself:

What trades have you made?

What additional trades do you need to make?

What will you trade for the betterment of your people?

**Editor's review:** Thinking back to Maxwell's own advice in chapter one "Avoid positional thinking" I realize that often Maxwell does not take his own advice. Much of the wording in this book is positional ie: "getting to the next level". On another note, it seems out of place that he throws in a lesson pertaining to God in this chapter. Yes he is a minister, but up until this point he has presented his lessons in a way that could apply to anyone. By giving advice specifically pertaining to Christians, he may be 'turning off' some of his readership.

## Chapter 22: For Everything You Gain, You Give Up Something

As a leader, if you want to get to the next level of your career you must risk what you currently have to get there. But the question is "what are you willing to trade-off to get to where you are trying to go? Maxwell has these ten lessons to guide you:

1. Trade affirmation for accomplishment
2. Trade security for significance
3. Trade financial gain for future potential
4. Trade immediate pleasure for personal growth
5. Trade exploration for focus
6. Trade quantity of life for quality of life
7. Trade acceptable for excellent
8. Trade addition for multiplication
9. Trade the first half for the second half
10. Trade your work for God for a walk with God

### Questions to ask yourself:

1. What is your reaction to people's leaving the team?
2. Have you been waiting too long for people to go to the next level?
3. Where are the next key players coming from?

### Editor's review:

Maybe it is because I am in a different profession, but I have never been under the impression that who I start my journey with is who I will end it with. As a teacher I meet new students, parents and staff every year.

## Chapter 23: Those Who Start the Journey with You Seldom Finish With You

The people who start out on your team will likely not always be there. Maxwell learned this and also came to understand some of the reasons for this. It could be that your passion and theirs are not the same, that although they are friends with you they may not make the best professional colleagues, or that they may be the right fit for your team now but not always. Along the way, Maxwell made some mistakes he intends for us to learn from:

1. Don't wait for people you shouldn't wait for: Do not put an individual above the organization if it will not benefit the organization.
2. Don't feel guilty if you lose a key player: If someone on your team leaves, it often is not on account of your leadership skills. It is best not to force someone to stay if they do not want to be there.
3. Don't feel that people cannot be replaced: There are many capable potential team members out there. Be prepared with substitutes in mind if a key player does leave.
4. Learn to appreciate each teammate no matter how short their time with you: Some people stay for several years, others are only there for a season. Recognize everybody's contributions regardless of how long they stay.

**"As a leader, you will never get ahead until your people are behind you."**



**"People appreciate working for someone who appreciates them."**

## Chapter 24: Few Leaders Are Successful Unless a Lot of People Want Them to Be

Leaders are successful when they are supported by their teammates and when mentors help them. Maxwell points out that there are several kinds of people who help leaders: time relievers, gift complimenters, team players, creative thinkers, door closers, people developers, servant leaders, mind stretchers, relational networkers, spiritual mentors and unconditional lovers. The key point is to practice gratitude towards those who help you.

### Questions to ask yourself:

- Who supports you?
- How do you say thank you?
- Who are your mentors?

### Editor's review:

- Within the chapter, Maxwell touches on the fact that some people who helped him never knew him and some who knew him did not know they helped him. I did not find this information very pertinent and feel it could have been left out.



## Chapter 25: You Only Get Answers to the Questions You Ask

When Maxwell was a young leader he discovered that it was better to ask questions than to continue pretending to know what he was doing. He asserts that you should start by asking yourself these ten questions:

1. Am I investing in myself?
2. Am I genuinely interested in others?
3. Am I doing what I love and loving what I do?
4. Am I investing time with the right people?
5. Am I staying in my strength zone?
6. Am I taking others to a higher level?
7. Am I taking care of today?
8. Am I taking time to think?
9. Am I developing other leaders?
10. Am I pleasing God?



### Questions to ask yourself :

(If you haven't had enough yet!)

1. Is your ego getting in the way of your growth?
2. What questions do you need to ask yourself?

**"When you know the right questions and go to the right people, you will get the right answers!"**

**Editor's review:** This chapter began with how aspiring leaders should ask questions to gain insight, but soon became more about self-reflection. I think that it would have been more helpful for Maxwell to give advice on how to ask questions in a way that would help you get the information you need.

## Chapter 26: People Will Summarize Your Life in One Sentence—Pick It Now

When you are gone, what legacy will you leave behind? If you desire to leave a positive legacy Maxwell suggests that you consider the following:

1. Choose today the legacy you want to leave others: Be intentional with the legacy you leave, take responsibility for identifying what it will be.
2. Live today the legacy you want to leave: You must act on making your legacy occur through daily decisions and actions.
3. Appreciate today the value of a good legacy: As a leader you can help the next generation through the legacy you leave.



### Questions to ask yourself:

1. How important has a legacy been to you?
2. What do you want your legacy to be?
3. Are you living that legacy today?



### Editor's review:

This chapter was a powerful one. The idea of being intentional with the legacy I leave behind is an important final take away!

### Leadership Is

- The willingness to put oneself at risk.
- The passion to make a difference with others.
- Being dissatisfied with the current reality.
- Taking responsibility while others are making excuses.
- Seeing the possibilities in a situation while others are seeing the limitations.
- The readiness to stand out in a crowd.
- An open mind and an open heart.
- The ability to submerge your ego for the sake of what is best.
- Evoking in others the capacity to dream.
- Inspiring others with a vision of what they can contribute.
- The power of one harnessing the power of many.
- Your heart speaking to the heart of others.
- The integration of heart, head, and soul.
- The capacity to care, and in caring, to liberate the ideas, energy, and capacities of others.
- The dream made reality.

**Leadership is, above all, courageous.** -Maxwell

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