

THE 21 IRREFUTABLE



LAW
OF
LEADERSHIP

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

Become a powerful leader by following in the footsteps of other great leaders.

What exactly does a great leader look like? Well, they come in all shapes, colors, and sizes – but in this MYNDSET to John C. Maxwell's The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership, you'll learn the core principles that all great leaders live by. No leader follows every rule perfectly, and neither will you. But by cultivating several of these principles, you'll be well on your way to becoming a standout leader.

In this MYNDSET, you'll learn

- ✓ what it takes to get other people to believe in your vision;
- ✓ how to ensure you're adding value for others; and
- ✓ what you need to give up in order to lead.



The following applications are now being studied, either clinically or via community / citizen science

THE LAW OF INFLUENCE AND THE LAW OF EMPOWERMENT

In 1832, a tall, gangly young man called Abraham Lincoln gathered a group of volunteers to fight in a militia in the Black Hawk War. There was just one problem: Lincoln knew absolutely nothing about being a soldier. He had no knowledge of tactics – in fact, he'd never served in the military.

During his time in the militia, Lincoln's level of influence actually decreased. He began as a captain and ended as a mere private. Afterward, he spent time in the Illinois state legislature and the US House of Representatives with mediocre results.

Yet we know that Lincoln eventually grew enormously influential, led the Union to victory in the Civil War, and is today one of the most popular US presidents of all time. So, what changed?

The Law of Influence states that the truest measure of leadership is, well, influence. Leaders may not always look powerful, impressive, or charismatic – and they may not always have been born great. But the one thing they must have is influence.

So, how can you gain influence for yourself? Well, there are several key skills you can focus on. One central factor is character – who are you on the inside? Although this may seem like an intangible, wishy-washy concept, your followers (if you're lucky enough to have some) will have a surprisingly good gauge on your depth of character. The more able they are to sense that character – the real you – the more likely they'll be to keep following.

Another way to obtain influence is by building up your own personal bank of knowledge. Lincoln never attended college, but if you've read any of his speeches, you'll know that he was an incredibly learned man.

Lincoln embodied not only the Law of Influence but also the Law of Empowerment. This is the law that says secure leaders are willing to give power to others.

Lincoln was well known for his willingness to cede power and authority. Just look at how he selected his cabinet. Many so-called leaders choose to surround themselves with like-minded yes-men. But not Lincoln. Instead, he deliberately chose cabinet members who would challenge him and bring diverse arguments to the table. To him, that was more important than being personally comfortable.

Lincoln's dedication to the Law of Empowerment was also evident when it came to his attitude toward choosing military generals. Lincoln chose his generals himself and wrote to them personally. When they performed well, he gave them credit. And when they performed poorly, Lincoln took the blame. The Union generals succeeded because Lincoln stood strong and secure in his leadership.

What made Lincoln's use of the Law of Empowerment so successful was his belief in others. If you believe in another person, they'll find it difficult not to believe in themselves too.

So a good question to ask yourself is, Do you believe in the people around you? And there's an easy way to find out. Make a list of the people closest to you. Then rate each person's potential on a scale of one to ten. Remember, you're rating their potential here – not their current ability. If all of their numbers are low, then perhaps there's a lesson to learn: your belief in other people is probably not very high.

Now, for each person on the list, take some time to write down their greatest strengths – and imagine how they might be able to leverage those strengths to achieve something spectacular. What could they become if they really made the most of their gifts? And what could you do to help them succeed?

THE LAW OF PROCESS AND THE LAW OF MAGNETISM

A French ambassador was visiting President Theodore Roosevelt. The pair were walking through the woods. Eventually, they came to a stream that they would have to cross in order to continue their journey. Without saying a word, Roosevelt stripped off his clothes and waited expectantly for the ambassador to do the same. How else would they swim over to the other side?

This behavior was normal for Roosevelt. He was a vigorous, active man who exemplified a few of the 21 rules of leadership, including the Law of Process and the Law of Magnetism.

Today, we might remember Roosevelt as being a bit of a tough guy. But, contrary to what you might think, he was actually born small and sickly. He was thin, suffered from severe asthma, and had poor eyesight. In fact, it wasn't certain whether he would survive into adulthood.

But around the age of 12, Roosevelt began to live by the Law of Process. This law dictates that leadership isn't built in a day. Instead, it develops over the course of a lifetime through concerted and continued effort. Roosevelt began to increase his physical strength by working out with weights, hiking, ice-skating, hunting, rowing, boxing, and horseback-riding. It was a journey that took time – and which built him into the strong figurehead we picture today.

Likewise, Roosevelt didn't ascend to the presidency immediately. He spent time as a New York City police commissioner, a big-game hunter, and a cowboy. Roosevelt retained a lifelong commitment to growth; even on the day of his death, a book was found stashed beneath his pillow.

In addition to following the Law of Process, Roosevelt embodied the Law of Magnetism – he attracted a specific type of follower that matched his own persona. During the Spanish-American war, Roosevelt personally charged up San Juan Hill with his cavalry unit, the Rough Riders. The volunteers he recruited were specific types of people: wealthy aristocrats from the Northeast and cowboys from the Wild West. This made perfect sense because Roosevelt was both a Harvard-educated New Yorker and a big-game hunter who had traversed the Dakotas.

Effective leaders are always on the lookout for the right people. And often, they attract people who are similar to them. This was exactly the case with Roosevelt.

So, how do you tackle both these laws yourself? First, let's look at the Law of Process. Consider what your personal plan for growth is. You might have a vague idea already, but it's worth writing out a specific plan. Consider exactly which books you'll read over the coming months, the conferences you'll attend, the lectures you'll listen to. Be specific about selecting materials and setting aside time on your calendar for them.

For the Law of Magnetism, try writing down the qualities you'd like to see in your followers. Then, put a check mark next to the qualities you possess and a cross next to the ones you lack. If you see lots of crosses instead of checks, you'll know why you haven't attracted the type of followers you want! To increase your chances of attracting the right kind of people, you can follow up on this exercise by identifying mentors – maybe a professional coach or a respected colleague – who will help you grow in the specific areas where you're weakest.



THE LAW OF RESPECT AND THE LAW OF ADDITION

You're probably familiar with the name "Moses" – the prophet who authored the Torah and split the Red Sea to lead the Israelites to safety.

But perhaps you're less familiar with someone else who went by the nickname "Moses." This "Moses" was actually a woman – small in stature, with dark skin and two missing front teeth. Her name was Harriet Tubman.

In the decade between 1850 and 1860, Tubman made 19 trips from the American South to the North, leading enslaved Black people to freedom with the help of sympathizers along the way. During summers and winters, Tubman scraped together a living as a domestic servant. Then, in the spring and fall, she used her small savings to make trips to the South to rescue as many people as she could. And in all this time, Tubman never lost a single passenger because she refused to let people give up. By the start of the Civil War, she had helped more people escape from slavery than any other American in history.

Tubman embodied the Law of Respect, which says that people naturally follow leaders who are stronger than themselves. She had immense influence – and not just among enslaved people. Influential Northerners, both Black and white, would also ask her to speak at rallies and at their homes.

But how was Tubman able to command so much respect given how strongly the deck was stacked against her? After all, she was uneducated and formerly enslaved, and she lived in a country that didn't respect Black people or women.

Well, great leaders can gain respect in a number of ways. One key way is by demonstrating their own respect for other people – if you show respect toward others, you'll gain their respect in return. Another way you can earn respect is by exhibiting courage. Few could match Harriet Tubman's unwavering determination. For her, the choice to save enslaved Black people was binary: succeed, or die trying.

But Tubman also followed another law of great leadership: The Law of Addition, which is all about serving other people. The best leaders are less interested in their own power and position and are instead focused on positive impact. Their motive is not to win awards or accolades, but to improve people's lives. Tubman risked everything to serve her people.

And that's because she truly valued them. When you value other people, you naturally add value to their lives. It sounds simple, and it is. You should always be demonstrating to your followers that you care – even if it's through small actions, like taking five minutes out of a busy day to say hello.

You also add value to other people's lives by increasing your own value. Learn skills so that you can teach them. Acquire opportunities so you can give them out. Evaluate and reflect on your experiences so you can provide wisdom.

Finally, consider your overall attitude: Is it geared toward helping others? Think of situations where you're required to serve other people's needs. Do you ever become impatient, resentful, or indignant? If so, think about what needs to change. Ask yourself how you regularly perform small acts of service for your followers without seeking recognition – and without feeling resentment.



THE LAW OF SACRIFICE AND THE LAW OF BUY-IN

Life in Montgomery, Alabama, was relatively peaceful for Martin Luther King, Jr. In 1954, he accepted his first pastorate. Then, a year later, he and his wife, Coretta Scott, welcomed their first child into the world.

However, they were only able to enjoy their newly established family life for another month before the peace was shattered. In December 1955, Rosa Parks was arrested after she refused to give up her seat to a white bus passenger. Immediately, King and other Black leaders rallied together to protest Parks's arrest and the transit system's racist policies. What started out as a one-day boycott quickly transitioned into a continued boycott coordinated by their newly formed organization. It was called the Montgomery Improvement Association, or MIA, and King was unanimously elected leader.

He led the MIA for the next year, negotiating with city leaders and advocating for the fair treatment of Black Americans. The organization achieved a major victory in 1956 when the US Supreme Court struck down the laws that allowed segregated seating on buses. However, King didn't escape without paying a steep personal cost. Soon after the boycott began, the police arrested King for a minor traffic violation. Following that, a bomb was thrown onto his property, he was indicted on a bogus charge, and every day and night, King and his wife received death threats and outpourings of obscenities over the phone.

King ultimately received the Nobel Peace Prize for his courageous efforts in the US civil rights movement. But he sacrificed a lot for that success. He was jailed and arrested, stoned and stabbed, bombed and bombarded. Ultimately, he lost his life when he was assassinated in 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee.

King embodies the Law of Sacrifice to the extreme. Leaders have to be willing to give up a lot in order to succeed. They need to put others ahead of themselves and do what's best for the group as a whole.

Sacrifices are necessary throughout the entirety of a leader's career – not just the very beginning. Too often, people think their sacrifice is over when they do something like move to a different city or take a pay cut in the pursuit of a better position. But sacrifice is an ongoing cost; it's not a one-time payment. And the higher the level of leadership, the higher the payment.

Even after MLK was assassinated, his followers kept his dream alive. And that's because King was also a master of the Law of Buy-In. This principle dictates that people first "buy in" to the leader – and subsequently to their vision. In other words, people follow leaders first and embrace their causes afterward.

So, as a leader, you need to get people to buy into you. Consider what the buy-in is for the people you already lead. Make a list of your key followers, and rate each person's buy-in on a scale of one to ten. Then, think about how you can increase your buy-in with them. Could you be more honest and authentic? Could you give them better tools with which to do their jobs? Could you help them achieve their personal goals? Develop a unique strategy with each person, put it into action, and watch your credibility rise.



THE LAW OF VICTORY AND THE LAW OF TIMING

During World War II, Europe was on the brink of collapse. Hitler and his Nazi army had steamrolled countries like Poland, France, and Belgium and threatened to remake them in his image. However, there were a few leaders who weren't going to accept Hitler's machinations without a fight. One of them was Winston Churchill, the British prime minister and a masterful practitioner of the Law of Victory.

Churchill made the word "victory" – his rallying cry – practically synonymous with his name. In his first speech after becoming prime minister, he said, "You ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word: victory – victory at all costs." Churchill was far from being all talk. He deployed troops in the Mediterranean, allied with Soviet leader Stalin despite his hatred of communism, and carefully worked on developing a relationship with the American president and ally Franklin Delano Roosevelt – another great leader.

The Law of Victory is about performing under peak pressure, and there are three components to doing this well. The first is unity of vision. Groups must share a vision in order to succeed. During the war, the British army and citizens were united in their dedication to Churchill's cause.

Another factor in achieving victory is diversity of skills. You can't have a football team, for example, that consists only of quarterbacks – just as you can't have an army made up of only generals. Ensure that your group, team, or organization has the diversity it needs to flourish.

Finally, to perform well, you need a leader who is dedicated to raising their followers to their full potential. Leaders must provide the motivation, empowerment, and support that a team needs to thrive. Churchill did this through his famous speeches broadcast over the radio, which raised the collective spirit and prevented morale from collapsing. A good question to ask yourself is, Are you as committed to the success of your team as Churchill was? If the answer is no, you may run into problems along the way. Remember, think victory – and you'll inspire your team to be victorious.

The final law that Churchill followed religiously was The Law of Timing, because doing even the right things at the wrong time can spell disaster. In addition to being a master of the Law of Victory, Churchill was skilled in the Law of Timing. In fact, his victory depended on it. If Churchill had made an error in timing – said the wrong words in the wrong speech, or acted rashly when he should have been cautious – the war could have very well been lost.

When leading, it's important to think about both the timing and rightness of your actions. It can help to review your recent successes and failures, and to analyze the effects of your timing on each. Were the failures caused by the wrong action or the wrong timing? Would your initiatives have been more successful if they had been launched either earlier or later? What factors were working against them? What were the market or industry conditions at the time? Exploring these questions can help you understand your own relationship to timing and thereby improve it.



FINAL

SUMMARY

“No one leader can perfectly obey or embody every single rule of leadership. But leadership skills are absolutely necessary in order to successfully run an organization, grow a company, or make an impact on the world. By challenging yourself to improve in each of the key dimensions of leadership, you’ll make great strides in increasing your people skills, gaining followers, and transforming your vision into reality.

Actionable advice:

Rethink your priorities.

Prioritizing enables – in fact, requires – leaders to think ahead and see how each of their actions contributes to their larger vision. So make certain that every action you take in pursuit of your goal is something only you can do. If something you’re doing can be done 80 percent as well by someone else, delegate it! Also, make sure you’re always doing what brings you the greatest reward. Never sacrifice the things you love, whether it’s playing golf or spending time with your children.

