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Executive Summary: "The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership" - John Maxwell ::

Not so much a book review, but an 'Executive Summary', a condensing of key ideas... Leadership consultant and former pastor John Maxwell offers twenty one "laws" distilled from his experience as a self-confessed "expert leader"..

Leadership consultant and former pastor John Maxwell offers twenty one "laws" distilled from his experience as a self-confessed "expert leader."

1. The Law of the lid.

Your leadership is like a lid or a ceiling on your organisation. Your church or business will not rise beyond the level your leadership allows. That's why when a corporation or team needs to be fixed, they fire the leader.

2. The Law of Influence.

Leadership is simply about influencing people. Nothing more, nothing less. The true test of a leader is to ask him to create positive change in an organisation. If you cannot create change, you cannot lead. Being a leader is not about being first, or being an entrepreneur, or being the most knowledgeable, or being a manager. Being a leader is not just

These are book reviews relating to ministry. Some of the older reviews that relate to more time-sensitive issues have been retired to the Archive section, and can be perused there.

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holding a leadership position. ("It's not the position that makes a leader, but the leader who makes a position.") Positional leadership especially does not work in volunteer organisations. The very essence of all power to influence lies in getting the other person to participate. "He who thinks he leads, but has no followers, is only taking a walk."

3. The Law of Process.

Leadership is learned over time. And it can be learned. People skills, emotional strength, vision, momentum, and timing are all areas that can and should be learned. Leaders are always learners.

4. The Law of Navigation.

Anyone can steer the ship, but it takes a leader to chart the course. Vision is defined as the ability to see the whole trip before leaving the dock. A leader will also see obstacles before others do. A leader sees more, sees farther, and sees before others. A navigator (leader) listens – he finds out about grassroots level reactions. Navigators balance optimism with realism. Preparation is the key to good navigation. "It's not the size of the project, it's the size of the leader that counts."

5. The Law of E.F. Hutton.

Hutton was America's most influential stock market analyst. When he spoke, everyone listened. When real leaders speak, people automatically listen. Conversely, in any group or church, you can identify the real leaders by looking for those who people listen to. According to Margaret Thatcher, "being in power is like being a lady – if you have to tell people you are, you aren't." (p45) Tips for a Positional leader – like a newly appointed minister – who wants to become a REAL leader... look for the existing real leaders and work to have influence there. Factors involved in being accepted as a new real

leader include character, building key relationships, information, intuition, experience, past success. and ability.

6. The Law of Solid Ground.

Trust is the foundation for all effective leadership. When it comes to leadership, there are no shortcuts. Building trust requires competence, connection and character.

7. The Law of Respect.

People naturally follow people stronger than themselves. Even natural leaders tend to fall in behind those who they sense have a higher "leadership quotient" than themselves.

8. The Law of Intuition.

Leaders evaluate everything with a Leadership bias. Leaders see trends, resources and problems, and can read people.

9. The Law of Magnetism.

Leaders attract people like themselves. Who you are is who you attract. (Mmmm... I thought like poles were meant to repel!) Handy hint: "Staff" your weaknesses. If you only attract followers, your organisation will be weak. Work to attract leaders rather than followers if you want to build a truly strong organisation.

10. The Law of Connection.

You must touch the heart before you ask people to follow. Communicate on the level of emotion first to make a personal connection.

11. The Law of the Inner Circle.

A leader's potential is determined by those closest to him. "The leader finds greatness in the group, and helps the members find it in themselves." (p113)

12. The Law of Empowerment.

Only secure leaders give power to others. Mark Twain said, "Great things can

happen when you don't care who gets the credit." (p127). Another point to ponder... "Great leaders gain authority by giving it away."

13. The Law of Reproduction.

It takes a leader to raise up a leader. Followers can't do it, and neither can institutional programs "It takes one to know one, to show one, to grow one." The potential of an organisation depends on the growth of its leadership.

14. The Law of Buy-In.

People buy in to the leader first, then the vision. If they don't like the leader but like the vision, they get a new leader. If they don't like the leader or the vision, they get a new leader. If they don't like the vision but like the leader, they get a new vision.

15. The Law of Victory.

Leaders find a way for the team to win. "You can't win WITHOUT good athletes, but you CAN lose with them." p162). Unity of vision, diversity of skills plus a leader are needed for a win.

16. The Law of Momentum.

You can't steer a ship that isn't moving forward. It takes a leader to create forward motion.

17. The Law of Priorities.

Activity is not necessarily accomplishment. We need to learn the difference. "A leader is the one who climbs the tallest tree, surveys the entire situation, and yells "Wrong Jungle!" (p176) If you are a leader, you must learn the three "Rs"... a) what's Required b) what gives the greatest Return c) what brings the greatest Reward.

18. The Law of Sacrifice.

A leader must give up to go up. Successful leaders must maintain an

attitude of sacrifice to turn around an organisation. One sacrifice seldom brings success. As he worked to turn around the Chrysler Corporation, Lee Iacocca slashed his own salary to \$1 per year."When you become a leader, you lose the right to think about yourself."

19. The Law of Timing.

When to lead is as important as what to do and where to go. Only the right action at the right time will bring success.

20. The Law of Explosive Growth.

To add growth, lead followers. To multiply growth, lead leaders. "It is my job to build the people who are going to build the company."

21. The Law of Legacy.

A leader's lasting value is measured by succession. "Leadership is the one thing you can't delegate. You either exercise it – or abdicate it."

REFLECTIONS

This is a book with some valuable practical insights. John Maxwell, a former senior pastor and now a management consultant, has spent much of his working life reading and researching the essential features of leadership. But don't be misled – while Maxwell offers practical insights, there is very little biblical material involved. This is a book that sits on the shelves of Christian bookshops only by virtue of Maxwell's publishing connections.

Australians will find some features of the book irritating. We don't share the American "leadership culture", and Maxwell's personal reminiscences about his leadership triumphs will leave most readers cold. For example... "As I mentioned in previous chapters, I sometimes teach leadership outside the United States. Over the years I've held

conferences in Australia, Brazil, Canada, Indonesia, Korea, New Zealand, Nigeria and South Africa. In addition, my books have been translated into more than twenty languages, and my tapes are distributed to countries all around the globe. So I know my leadership principles have travelled far."

You'll also need to be prepared for endless illustrations drawn from the worlds of American pro football and basketball. If NBA and NFL coaching tales leave you cold, maybe the stories of American civil war heroes and corporate mavens will ease the pain – though I doubt it

Overall, though, this is a book with a stack of useful insights into the process of leadership, which may even help you do it better.

Phil Campbell

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