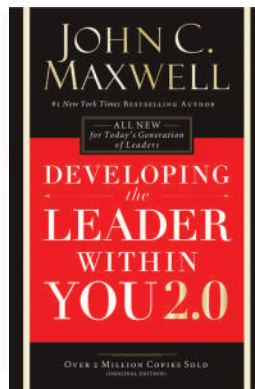




DEVELOPING THE LEADER WITHIN YOU 2.0
BY JOHN C MAXWELL



THE BOOK

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INTRODUCTION

Title and seniority do not make leaders. Neither does birthright. True leaders know that when opportunity comes, it is too late to prepare. They develop the leaders within themselves so they can step up when the moment is right.

First released in 1993, John C. Maxwell's book *Developing the Leader Within You* transformed the way leaders see themselves. The lessons shared can be applied to anyone in any leadership position, from business executives to student councillors.

In his revised edition, Maxwell builds on his foundational messages for how to become a good leader, explaining how influence, character, service and vision can be used as a roadmap to influence others.

Perhaps the most relevant point is Maxwell's conviction that leaders must first work on themselves. He disrupts the traditional idea of a leader having all the answers, and instead asks readers to acknowledge the true goal of any leader who leaves a lasting legacy — to serve others.



5 BEST QUOTES

"People tend to become what the most important people in their lives think they will become."

"A leader is great not because of his or her power, but because of his or her ability to empower others."

"Image promises much but produces little. Integrity never disappoints."

"People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. Leadership begins with the heart, not the head. It flourishes with a meaningful relationship, not more regulation."

"Developing yourself to become the leader you have the potential to be will change everything for you. It will add to your effectiveness, subtract from your weaknesses, divide your workload, and multiply your impact."



10 BIG IDEAS

1. INFLUENCE IS THE DEFINITION OF LEADERSHIP

In its simplest form, leadership is the ability to obtain followers.

Maxwell writes that influence is the beginning of true leadership. If you mistakenly define leadership as the ability to achieve a position instead of the ability to attract followers, you will go after position, rank or title. This results in either the frustration of having no followers or the focus on gaining a title when you could already be making a difference.

The best investment in tomorrow is to develop your influence today. If you are communicating effectively, you will get positive recognition for your communication from the audiences you are trying to influence, which means people will think what you are doing is right and that you are doing it in the right way. When you get positive recognition, your influence grows. You are perceived as competent, effective, worthy of respect—powerful.

2. THE FIVE LEVELS OF LEADERSHIP

Maxwell outlines the five levels of leadership as:

- Position: in some kind of defined role
- Permission: when people are happy for you to lead them
- Production: when people start getting things done
- People Development: when you start bringing out the best in others and they are loyal to you
- Pinnacle: When you are known outside of your organisation or school for your leadership abilities

You can navigate all levels of leadership in your life, education and career.

3. PRIORITIES MATTER

Most people overestimate the importance of most things but “the art of being wise is knowing what to overlook”, and “making everything a priority means nothing is a priority”.

You can’t have it all. As a leader, you have to rethink how you do some things and make the most of the moments you have. The more responsibility you carry as a leader, the more you have on your plate. The ability to juggle multiple high-priority projects successfully is something every successful leader must learn how to do. As the list of tasks grows, you can agonise or organise.

Maxwell recommends starting with high importance/high urgency tasks, then high importance/low urgency. For tasks that are urgent but not important, aim to find someone else to help you. Things that are neither urgent nor important can be taken off your list.



10 BIG IDEAS

4. CHARACTER

Here are some ‘diseases’ of bad leaders:

- Thinking we are immortal, immune, or downright indispensable – which is the enemy of humility and service.
- Excessive busyness – which leads to stress and agitation.
- Leadership Alzheimer’s disease – where leaders forget who nurtured and mentored them.
- Downcast faces – where leaders treat their “inferiors” with sour severity.
- Excessive planning and functionalism – which leads to inflexibility.

Having good character does not ensure you will be successful in life or leadership. However, you can be sure that having poor character will eventually derail your goals to lead.

Here’s the good news: if your character is not what you want it to be, you can work on it and change it.

5. PROBLEM-SOLVING

Problems are only problems if you allow them to be.

They actually hold potential benefits, which is why problem-solving is the quickest way to gain leadership. Problems introduce us to ourselves, to others and to opportunities.

What’s more, problems tend to multiply whenever you:

- Lose perspective
- Give up an important personal value
- Lose your sense of humour
- Feel sorry for yourself
- Blame others
- Wish they would just go away

Good leaders anticipate problems so they can position themselves and their team for success. What potential problems do you see in your world, and what is your game plan to fix them when they happen? Downsides rarely have an upside unless you are ready for them on the front end.

6. ATTITUDE

Modern leaders do not dictate or act like a ‘boss’

We admire and like to be around people who are positive, tenacious, and expectant. People with a good attitude lift us up and inspire us.



10 BIG IDEAS

Attitude, Maxwell writes, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than your education, financial status, circumstances, past failures or your successes. It is more important than appearance, giftedness, or skill. Your attitude can make or break a company, a church, or a home.

The remarkable thing is that we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace. We cannot change our past. Nor can we change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We also cannot change the inevitable. The only thing that we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude.

7. SERVICE

Maxwell has a background as a church leader but he quotes salesman Zig Ziglar when he writes that “If you help people get what they want, they will help you get what you want.”

The powerful message is that the heart of leadership is based on serving others, not yourself. According to Maxwell, hearing this, “Challenged me to invert the “power pyramid,” putting others at the top and myself at the bottom.” The tips he relies on include:

- Not relying on position or title alone when it comes to influencing others
- Choosing to believe in people and their potential
- Seeing things from the perspective of others
- Creating an environment of encouragement
- Measuring success by the value added to others

8. VISION

Vision is the indispensable quality of leadership. Without it, a team’s energy ebbs, people begin to miss deadlines, team members’ personal agendas begin to dominate, production falls, and people scatter.

All leaders see more and before others. What makes this indispensable is that it allows their followers to begin expanding their vision and acting on it more quickly. If the leader doesn’t see the vision, the people never will.

If what you see is what you get... what picture do you have in mind for the future? Be clear about it and share it with others so they come on board and share it with you.

Good leaders don’t allow themselves to be dragged down into mundane territory. They set their eyes on the horizon and their hearts on the people.



10 BIG IDEAS

9. SELF-DISCIPLINE

Good leaders practice self-control before they try to engage others. Self-discipline comes before leadership success. It is the price tag of achieving something extraordinary.

There is no such thing as accidental achievements. When you have self-discipline, you stop seeing everything as an uphill battle and turn temporary successes into sustainable ones.

Keep in mind; there is an addendum to self-discipline, because it is impossible to be at 100 per cent all day, every day. And it's not necessary. You only have a certain amount of energy. You need to choose when to use it.

10. PERSONAL GROWTH

Growth matters. If you try to lead out of what you learned long ago, and you're not growing in the present, the clock is ticking on your time as a leader. Development, expansion, and the future of your leadership depend on your dedication to personal growth.

Maxwell's tips for growth are to:

- Keep asking questions
- Keep the bar of excellence high
- Be people-centric
- Stand tall
- Focus on today

Personal growth increases hope. It teaches us that tomorrow can be better than today, and we do not change unless we grow.

**3 ACTION STEPS****1. START WITH TWO**

Pick two people in your life right now with whom to intentionally build your influence. Choose one important person from your school life, maybe your teacher, a fellow student or someone in a different grade. And choose one important person from your personal life, perhaps a parent, or friend.

Determine which level of leadership you are currently on with each person. Then see if you can progress to the next one.

2. WORK WITH 'JUST FOR TODAY'

Just for today . . . I will choose and display the right attitudes.

Just for today . . . I will embrace and practise good values.

Just for today . . . I will determine and act upon important priorities.

Build your self-discipline one day and one good habit at a time.

3. LEARN... AND UNLEARN

What do you need to learn today that you didn't know yesterday?

And what do you need to let go of that you held onto yesterday?

Keep learning and growing as you accept the challenge of guiding others and influencing positive change.

**1 KEY TAKEAWAY**

Great leaders are not born into their roles. The process of developing the leader within you is a lifelong journey.

Maxwell himself writes that he is continually working to grow and learn and reminds readers to stay humble and see their position as one that is continually evolving.



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Read the full book

Developing the Leader Within You 2.0

by John C. Maxwell

John C. Maxwell argues that leadership is not a position you are handed, it is influence you build. This edition lays out the habits that grow that influence: character, vision, self-discipline, and the courage to serve people before yourself. This summary captures the core ideas. The full book carries the stories, the depth, and the tools to lead well.

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