

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF
THE 21 IRREFUTABLE LAWS OF LEADERSHIP

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BECOMING
A PERSON OF
INFLUENCE

How to POSITIVELY IMPACT *the* LIVES of OTHERS

Becoming a Person of Influence: Book Summary

John C. Maxwell has been hailed as America's premier expert on leadership. Each year he speaks in-person to hundreds of thousands of people, while his bestselling books impact the lives of millions more around the globe. GiANT Impact multiplies his influence to corporate leaders in more than twenty countries through world-class events, training, and resources.

Jim Dornan serves as a coach, strategist, and mentor to some of the highest achievers in the world. He is the founder of Network TwentyOne International, and has more than 30 years of entrepreneurial experience. He regularly trains and equips businesspersons in Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, and the Americas.

Becoming a Person of Influence

Everyone influences others. You don't have to be in a high-profile occupation to be an influencer; whenever your life connects with another person, you exert influence. Everything you do—at home, at work, or at play—has an impact on the lives around you. No matter what your goals are in life, you can achieve them faster, you can be more effective, and the contribution you make can be longer lasting if you learn to develop your influence.

People respond to one another according to their level of influence. The more influence we have, then the more people seek our advice, trust our decisions, and follow our lead. If we desire to be successful and lead the way, then we must focus on gaining influence.

A Person of Influence Has Integrity with People

Integrity allows others to trust you. When you earn trust, people respect your motives instead of suspecting them. Consequently, trust gives you the opportunity to influence and add value to their lives.

To maintain integrity, a person must take care of the little things. Most people misunderstand integrity. They think cutting corners ethically is fine as long as they avoid major lapses. However, anytime you break a moral principle, you create a small crack in the foundation of your integrity. Make enough cracks, and you end up with a faulty foundation that crumbles under pressure.

A Person of Influence Nurtures Other People

If you look around, you'll discover that the people in your life are hungry—for encouragement, recognition, security, and hope. The process of feeding these basic human needs is called nurturing. Influencers nurture others, not to make people dependent on their leadership, but to free people to reach their potential.

To nurture, focus on giving rather than getting. Before you can do anything else in the lives of others, you must take a genuine interest in them. Until you show that you care for them, there can be no connection and no success together. The breadth of your influence on others relates directly to the depth of your concern for them.

A Person of Influence Has Faith in People

Your goal as an influencer is not to get others to think more highly of you. Rather, your duty as a leader is to get people to think more highly of themselves. Rarely do external difficulties defeat people; usually a lack of self-esteem holds them back.

People rise or fall to meet your level of expectations of them. If you express skepticism and doubt in their abilities, then they will repay your lack of confidence with mediocrity. On the other hand, if you show belief in people, they will go the extra mile to live up to your high hopes for them.

A Person of Influence Listens to People

Be impressed and interested, not impressive and interesting. If you consistently listen to others, valuing them and what they have to offer, they are likely to develop a strong loyalty to you, even when your authority with them is unofficial or informal.

Listening communicates respect, and paves the way to influence. When people know you care about their opinions and ideas, then they're much more likely to be receptive of your input and feedback.

A Person of Influence Understands People

Most people don't look beyond their own experience when dealing with others. They tend to see events through the grid of their position, background, or circumstances. Their narrow vision of life alienates others and hinders relationships.

Recognize that people view life from different vantage points. Give others the benefit of the doubt, and display empathy. By seeking to understand people—how they think, what they feel, what inspires them, how they're likely to act and react in a given situation—you'll be able to connect with and inspire those around you.

A Person of Influence Enlarges People

Most people want to get ahead, but they are reluctant to change. They are willing to grow only enough to accommodate their problems; instead they need to stretch until they reach their full potential. On their own, most people stop short of achieving their best. They need someone to come alongside them in order for their dreams to translate into reality.

You enlarge others by affirming their talents and helping them to grow both personally and professionally. Many people have trouble spotting their areas of greatest potential. They need help discovering and developing their strengths. By enlarging another person, you increase their capacity to learn and to lead. Having been enlarged, they are now better equipped to seize opportunities and maximize resources, and their growth extends to others.

A Person of Influence Navigates for Other People

People need assistance as they work through life's difficulties. When the storms hit, they need guidance until they can travel under their own power. You've got to help them find their path, avoid pitfalls, and stay on course. At times, this means walking beside them on the journey until they can navigate on their own.

A Person of Influence Connects with People

Many leaders believe that it is the follower's responsibility to initiate contact with them, but the reverse is true. To be effective, you must initiate connections. Unless you meet people where they are, no progress will be made.

Look for ways to build bridges to people within your sphere of influence, especially during times when they experience adversity. The connections you make will strengthen your relationships incredibly and prepare you for the journey you can take together. You will never achieve alone what you can do in partnership with others.

A Person of Influence Empowers People

When you empower people, you share yourself—your influence, position, and wisdom—so that they can function at their best. Empowering means entrusting power to others. The act of empowering increases the stature of others without decreasing your own authority.

Empowerment not only helps the individuals you raise up by making them more confident and productive, it also gives you added freedom and promotes the growth of your organization. Delegating responsibility lightens your load, and enables you to focus on those tasks only you can accomplish. Meanwhile, empowerment creates a dynamic environment in which leadership happens, not only at the top, but throughout the company.

A Person of Influence Reproduces Other Influencers

Anytime you influence people who either do not or cannot exercise influence with others, you limit the extent of your leadership. However, when you influence leaders, you're not influencing just them; you're indirectly influencing all of the people they influence as well. The effect is multiplication.