

Living the 21 Laws of Leadership

The Law of Influence

**The True Measure of Leadership is Influence —
Nothing More, Nothing Less**

*'You know what makes leadership? It is the ability to get men to do
what they don't want to do and like it. '*

— Harry S. Truman

Application Guide

In the chapter on the Law of Influence, I tell the story of Lincoln in the Black Hawk War. In 1832 he gathered a group of men together to fight. In those days, the person who put together a group of volunteer men for the militia often became its leader and assumed a commanding rank. Lincoln accepted the rank of captain with this group of men.

Though Lincoln showed initiative and courage, two good characteristics of leadership, he was no more prepared to lead a small band of men than — become president! (His presidency would not happen for another 28 years.) He knew nothing about being a soldier, had no military experience, and had no idea of war tactics.

I love the part in the story that describes Lincoln trying to guide a couple dozen men across a field and through a gate into another field, but he just could not manage it. Telling about the incident later, Lincoln said, "I could not for the life of me remember the proper word of command for getting my company endwise. Finally, as we came near (the gate) I shouted: This company is dismissed for two minutes, when it will fall in again on the other side of the gate."

As time went by, Lincoln's level of influence with others in the militia actually decreased. While other officers proved themselves and gained rank, Lincoln found himself going in the other direction. He began with the title and position of captain, but it did him little good. He could not overcome the Law of Influence. By the end of his military service, Lincoln found himself having achieved the rank of private.

Personally, I am a Lincoln student and fan, but that does not change the fact that at that time in his life he was not a successful leader. He did not have influence over the soldiers. Influence as a leader is non-negotiable.

Something else happened to Lincoln. In 1832, he ran for legislature and lost. In 1832 he also lost his job, and wanted to go to law school but could not get in. In 1833 he borrowed some money from a friend to begin a business and by the end of the year he was bankrupt. In 1834 he ran for state legislature and won. In 1838 he tried to become the speaker of the state legislature and was defeated. In 1840 he attempted to become elector and lost. In 1843 he ran for Congress and lost. In 1846 he ran for Congress again, he won and went to Washington and did a good job. In 1849 he sought the job of land officer in his home state and was rejected. In 1854 he ran for Senate of the United States and lost. In 1856 he sought the Vice-Presidential nomination at his party's national convention and got less than 100 votes. In 1858 he ran for U. S. Senate again, and again he lost. In 1860 he was elected president of the United States.

In addition to his tremendous tenacity, he also had a spirit that would never quit. I am convinced that Lincoln learned much about leadership between 1832 and 1860 when he became president of the United States.

You can learn to live this leadership law like Lincoln did, and increase your influence in whatever area you lead or desire to lead.

Remember that leadership is an art, not a science, and it is a process not an **event**, so you **can** increase your influence if you will take the following steps.

I. Assessment

The following questions will give you insight as to how well you are living the Law of Influence.

A. What are your _____?

1. Why do you want to be a leader?
2. Are you willing to pay the price?
3. What do you hope the results and rewards of leadership will be?

B. Do people respond to your _____?

1. Is anyone following your leadership?
2. Are the right people responding to your leadership?
3. If you did not give them a paycheck, would you still have influence?
4. If you lead volunteers, do they follow you joyfully and loyally?
5. Would people follow your lead if you did not have your title?

C. Why should someone follow _____?

1. Are your relationships in good shape?
2. Are you accomplished in your field?

II. Application

The following practical guidelines will help you increase your influence.

A. Develop your passion for people and relationship skills.

Leaders who do not like people do not last long. Leaders who love people but do not express it, do not last long either.

- * *Relationships are 85% of leadership. The following are some basics to help make sure you are on the right track. Remember, knowing them is not enough, you must invest time with them.*

1. Commit yourself to becoming a world-class _____.

This is the most basic of all principles in relationship skills for leaders. People need genuine, sincere, and authentic encouragement. People will follow you (to a limited degree) if all you do is encourage them!

The acid test of whether or not you are an encourager is if people migrate to you other than times when they need something from you. Simply put, do people seek you out? Do they seek you out, not for permission or a signature, but to be around you? If they do not, you are not yet an encourager. Look around you; before work, after work, at lunch, at church — when people see you do they smile and walk toward you or do they continue on their path by you? This is an important observation for you to make.

- * *If this exercise reveals that you are not yet an encourager, I want to encourage you by giving you the first step to becoming an encourager! If the people do not come to you -you go to the people! **Get out of your office and into the hallways! Find ways to lift people's spirits and brighten their day. This is not a surface phony exercise. Sincerity is essential.***

The more you encourage, the more people will migrate toward you and ultimately your influence will increase. This is not about numbers of people. The goal is not to have a Rock Star profile where hundreds of screaming fans throng at your feet. The group of people that seek you out may be small, that is OK. That is more about personality and giftedness. The key is, as a leader, to make sure you do not “walk the hallways” alone!

2. Practice the three basic steps to _____.

- Learn people's names quickly.
- Be more interested in making people feel good about themselves, than making people feel good about you.
- Smile much and live with a positive attitude.

3. _____ more than you _____ and learn to ask excellent questions.

You communicate how much you care by how much you listen and how much you are on the other person's agenda. *Part of good listening is the ability to ask good questions.* Leaders who are good with people practice asking good questions in order to learn more about them. That way, a leader may better help meet their needs and accomplish the mission of the organization.

The questions are often simple, but the answers reveal much. The point is not to ask questions just to ask questions. Questions are never to be used as a controlling technique. Always ask questions with a specific purpose in mind.

4. Learn to _____ people correctly.

This is an advanced level of relationship skills. Reading people is not always easy even for veteran leaders. You must become a student of human behavior. *The p/ace to start is to become observant and watch people. Study what they do, and then ask yourself why they do it.* Learn to make correlations between behavior and motivation. Except for the exceptionally gifted, this is a process of trial and error.

5. Learn to quickly and easily say _____

Nothing will help "oil" the relational machinery than your willingness and ability to say "I'm sorry." When is the last time you sincerely apologized to someone above you, at your level, and someone below you?

6. Always go for the _____ scenario.

Never make a deal unless both parties win. Never.

7. _____ the credit and praise.

When there is success, share the rewards! Be sure to give the praise publicly!

- B. Master your trade and increase your productivity.

In today's economy, a mastery of your trade and noteworthy productivity are hallmarks of an influencer. This combined with good relational skills will greatly increase your influence. Be careful of increasing your productivity without developing your people skills. This is short-term and fragile leadership. Without solid relationships, your first major mistake is likely to be your last.

❖ Leader of a sales division.

You may be a master salesperson, outsell everyone by a country mile, and have the most productive sales team in the company — but if your relationships with the team are poor, I promise, your success will be short lived.

On the other hand, you may be the nicest person in the entire company, literally loved by all, but if you do not master your skills and significantly increase your bottom line productivity you will soon lose what influence you have.

Good questions to ask yourself:

- ✓ Does my work play to my strengths?
- ✓ Do others recognize my success?
- ✓ Do I have an “extra-mile-whatever it takes attitude?”
- ✓ Am I growing and getting better?
- ✓ Are others enjoying and benefitting from my success?

C. Invest your life into developing the people around you and closest to you.

Creating a climate or environment for potential leaders to blossom around you is essential. This is essential for anyone who desires to increase their influence. This climate will also provide the necessary atmosphere for everyone in the organization, or your department, to grow and succeed in fulfilling their responsibilities.

This law is closest connected to the Law of the *Inner Circle* and will be covered more fully in that chapter.

1. _____ your key people.

All good leaders know who their key people are, and focus their efforts and energies into them.

2. _____ your key people.

People do not care how much you know, until they know how much you care. You can lead for a short distance with a paycheck, but you can lead for a life time if the people know you care about them as a person

3. _____ your key people.

Equipping is the process of training people to ensure the basic competencies required to fulfill their responsibilities are present.

4. _____ your key people.

Developing is the process of investing in the individual beyond their career competencies to ensure their personal growth is well-rounded and always continues.

You can invest a lifetime into the process of increasing your influence, and I encourage you to do just that. I have given you enough in this one chapter to last you for months! What I have shared with you will launch you in the right direction for a successful leadership journey.

III. Action Assignment

** Leadership is a lifetime of growth, but for today, the important thing is identifying the specific area where you need to begin. Do not worry about choosing the wrong area, since they deserve continued growth. Just keep working through all the areas one at a time. That is the key. Do not attempt to improve several things at once, you will only end up frustrated. Choose one at a time.*

** If you are still having trouble knowing which area to select first, perhaps a trusted colleague, close friend or mentor can guide you.*

What will your next step be?

1. - Enhancing your relationships (be specific.)

Measurement: People like you.

2. - Increasing your productivity (be specific.)

Measurement: People like and respect you for what you are doing for the organization.

3. - Developing your team (be specific.)

Measurement: People like and respect you for what you do for them.

Write a brief plan: