

# LIVING THE 21 LAWS OF LEADERSHIP APPLICATION GUIDE

## *-Introduction and Getting Started-*

My desire is to see you succeed, and live life to your maximum potential by increasing your leadership ability. That is why I wrote my book *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, and produced this companion application guide. It is called an "application guide" because without applying the 21 laws to your life, you will not become a better leader. Reading the book alone is a good start, but that will not get you to the finish line.

You can read my book, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, in a few days, but it will take you a lifetime to fully maximize the laws in your own life. The Application Guide: *Living The 21 Laws of Leadership* is designed to guide you on a 21 month life-changing process of developing your leadership ability

1. First, read through the book, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, in its entirety. It is important that you get a big picture view of leadership and understand how the laws are interrelated.

2. Listen to the audio cassette tape, and study the corresponding section in the Application Guide for each of the leadership laws. Commit one month to each law.

There is one audio cassette tape and one section in the Application Guide for each of the 21 chapters in my book. Each one requires a month of your focused attention. Obviously, at the end of the month, you have neither "mastered" the law, nor are you "out of time." You have a lifetime to learn and grow, but you have dedicated a month to focus on this law in order to lay a foundation for your own leadership ability.

There are three parts to each section in the Application guide.

1. Assessment
2. Application
3. Action Assignment

The Assessment segment is a cluster of questions designed to help you evaluate your current level of living out that particular leadership law. The Application segment is a group of principles and practical guidelines, beginning with a story from my book, to help you integrate that particular leadership law into your life. The Action Assignment is a project to help you put your new insights into practice. Do not skip the Action Assignment!

I promise that in 21 months, if you follow this application guide, your leadership ability will be dramatically increased, and your life will be greatly enriched. Lead on!

*John Maxwell -*

# **Living the 21 Laws of Leadership**

## *The Law of the Lid* **Leadership Determines the Level of Effectiveness**

*"There are many elements to a campaign.  
Leadership is number one. Everything else is number two. "*

*– Bernd Brecher*

# Application Guide

Let me tell you a story that illustrates the Law of the Lid. In 1930, two young brothers named Dick and Maurice moved from New Hampshire to California in search of the American Dream. In their search for success, the brothers tried out a few business opportunities in and around Hollywood. In 1937, they struck on something that worked. They opened a small drive-in restaurant in Pasadena.

Dick and Maurice's tiny drive-in was a great success, and in 1940, they decided to move the operation to San Bernardino, fifty miles east of Los Angeles. Their business exploded. Annual sales reached \$200,000, and the brothers found themselves splitting \$50,000 in profits every year - a sum that put them in the town's financial elite.

As times changed, they knew they needed to make some changes as well. In 1948, they eliminated the carhops and started serving only walk-up customers. They streamlined everything. They reduced their menu to focus on hamburgers. The kitchen became like an assembly line, where each person focused on service with speed. Their goal was to fill each customer's order in 30 seconds or less. And their profits soared. The two young men had the golden touch.

Who were these brothers? Their names were Dick and Maurice *McDonald*. They had hit the great American jackpot, and the rest, as they say, is history, right? Wrong! The McDonalds never went any farther because their weak leadership clamped a lid on their ability to succeed.

It's true that the McDonald brothers had *one* of the most profitable restaurant enterprises in the country. Their genius was in customer service and kitchen organization. People called them from all over the country to learn more about their method, but when they tried marketing the McDonald's concept in 1952, their effort was a dismal failure. The reason was simple. They were good restaurateurs, and understood how to run a business, make their systems efficient, cut costs and increase profits. They were good managers but lacked the leadership necessary to grow their organization. At the height of their success, Dick and Maurice found themselves smack-dab against the Law of the Lid.

In 1954, the brothers hooked up with a man named Ray Kroc, who was a leader. He soon struck a deal with Dick and Maurice, and in 1955, he formed McDonald's System, Inc. (later called the McDonald's Corporation).

Kroc immediately bought a franchise to use as a model and prototype to sell other franchises. There he assembled a team and built an organization. The "lid" in the life and leadership of Ray Kroc was obviously much higher than that of his predecessors. Between 1955 and 1959, Kroc opened 100 restaurants. In 1961 for the sum of \$2.7 million, he bought the exclusive rights to McDonald's from the brothers, and he proceeded to turn it into an American institution and global entity.

Today the company has more than 21,000 restaurants in no fewer than 100 countries. Leadership ability - or more specifically the lack of it - was the lid on the McDonald brothers' effectiveness.

The good news is that the "lid" can be lifted! You can grow!

## I. Assessment

The following questions will give you insight as to how well you are living the *Law Of The Lid*.

### A. Getting started

#### 1. What are your \_\_\_\_\_ strengths?

Productive strengths refer to the strengths that produce the greatest yield. This is the key to productivity rather than the strengths that you enjoy employing, but do not produce significant and measurable results. Write your strengths below:

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#### 2. What are your \_\_\_\_\_ weaknesses?

It is not wise to "chase" down every little weakness or shortcoming you have. It is wiser to buttress them, and devote the majority of your time to improving your strengths. For example, if you are not great at detail, get someone around you who is strong in detail. ~~Destructive weaknesses~~ are those major flaws of character or competency that must be corrected in order to continue growing, leading and being productive. Using the accountant, pilot and surgeon again as examples, weak in detail would be a destructive weakness mandating attention. Write your weaknesses below:

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#### 3. How do you rate yourself as a leader?

*A leader is defined as one who influences other-s.*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Novice Leader									Great Leader
Little influence									Significant influence

Measure yourself again in 2 months and again in 42 months as you study and practice the living laws! You will see great improvement.

#### B. Do you have a bias toward leadership or management?

In the following seven questions there are two parts to each question. The first part indicates a bias toward leadership and the second part indicates a bias toward management.

Answer honestly and quickly, do not dwell on the questions.

- Are you focused more on dreaming the vision of the future or analyzing the details of today?
- Do you spend more time looking for opportunities or smoothing out current systems and situations?
- Do you spend more time anticipating and studying the changing trends or reacting to the trend?
- Are you focused more on people or on accomplishing a task?
- Do you prefer high risk environments or a safety zone?
- Do you have a bias toward creativity, fluidity and innovation or toward preservation, protection and procedure?
- Do you rely more on instinct and intuition or facts and figures?

Leadership is not better than management, it is a different function than management. As a matter of fact, great leaders need great managers to maximize their potential. Leaders and managers make great teammates. They need each other. Leaders without managers can not keep what they grow, and managers without leaders can not grow what they keep! However, the purpose of this growth resource is leadership development, therefore it is assumed that you will greatly benefit by focusing on the leadership centered portion of each question as your growth guide.

#### C. Increasing your value

Increase Leadership = Increase Value

This is not to suggest that there is a direct correlation between better leadership and a larger paycheck. In more situations than not, when you increase your leadership, you increase your value, and your financial rewards.

1. What one thing could you do in the next 30 - 90 days that would clearly increase your value?
2. What is the one thing you could do in the next 30 - 90 days that would get you a raise (or put you in line for one)?
3. What are you currently doing that may be preventing you from receiving a raise?

## II. Application

The following guidelines will help you “lift the lid” and keep on growing in your effectiveness as a leader.

### A. See yourself differently.

You may or may not have a healthy self-esteem, which by itself is an important issue, but not the emphasis here. The focus here is to see yourself in a larger way. See your self beyond where you are now. See yourself at the next level of living, whatever that may be for you.

It may be exerting more self-confidence, it may be speaking more directly or honestly, it may be making more money, it may be associating with another group of people. There is no limit to the number of possibilities here, I even hesitate to list any for fear of limiting your thinking. So think big and think broad.

Picture your future better than your present. This may sound like pop psycho-babble, but it is not. Without this most basic belief, or faith in your future, you will lose the hope and inspiration needed to lift your leadership lid.

### 6. Identify and begin removing any blockages that prevent you from lifting your “Leadership Lid”.

Seven common “lid blockers” that keep your leadership potential from moving forward.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

Thinking too small or narrow in scope. Settling for one solution or no solution at all.

2. Unresolved \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship issues at home, financial difficulties, health concerns, anything of a significant nature.

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Flaws in your integrity that compromise basic moral and ethical standards.

4. \_\_\_\_\_

You are simply not keeping up with the skill growth needed to move forward.

5. \_\_\_\_\_

You are associated with the same people and experiences over and over again.

6. Frequent exposure to the \_\_\_\_\_

People who discourage, criticize or control you.

7. Not believing in \_\_\_\_\_

Self-esteem and self-confidence not sufficient to apply new knowledge and relate to people at the next level. (*Professional counseling may be a positive and helpful part of your growth.*)

These seven common “lid blockers” to your leadership and personal growth are not meant to suggest that perfection is required before you can grow as leader. *Perfection* is an unattainable and unworthy goal, but *progress* is a must. Therefore, while you make progress in any of the above areas, keep moving forward in your leadership pursuits.

### C. Examine your primary professional environment.

Real estate agents tell us that there are three keys to the value of a piece of property, location, location, location. Your “location” carries the same level of significance.

There is a vast difference in the types of professional environments from the “creative and free” Ben and Jerry’s to the “formal and structured” IBM. The right environment makes a tremendous difference.

Perhaps you are a creative type trapped in a drab office with no window, or you are a people person in a “virtual office” at home.

Maybe you are a top sales person who is forced to sit through numerous administrative meetings, or you are a sensitive soul with a domineering dictator for a boss.

Perchance you are a businessman in a suit and tie — office and briefcase and you were meant to work outdoors in a less constrictive setting. Possibly you are working for an employer, even a good one, but you were meant to work for yourself.

This is not necessarily about doing the wrong thing, but doing the right thing in the wrong environment. There is a difference! Here is a field project for you: compare Southwest Airlines to Delta Airlines. Interview employees and talk to management. You will be amazed at the difference.

*\* It is true that there is no perfect scenario, and it is wise not to search for the proverbial “greener grass”, but there comes a point in time where you realize that you are in the wrong environment.*

How do you know? Here are four helpful questions.

- Are you consistently \_\_\_\_\_?

Your days are filled with accomplishment, not just activity.

- Are you consistently \_\_\_\_\_?

You have fun doing what you do.

- Are you \_\_\_\_\_ in your endeavors?

You find meaning and value in what you do.

Are you \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ that the lid of your life is lifting off of you? You are not in the same place you were last year at this time, you have grown and moved forward.

It is possible that you may be both productive and growing, (1 and 4) but yet not happy and fulfilled. This works for the short term, but eventually your unhappiness and lack of fulfillment will lead to lowered productivity and stunting of personal growth.

### III. Action Assignment

*\* Carefully think through the potential “lid blockers” to identify any that may affect you. You may have one that is not on this list, so do not limit that in your thinking. To protect you from “over-thinking” review the four questions at the end of the list of seven blockers.*

Select 3-5 books in the most needed area of growth for you as a leader. Read and apply the new insights to your life. On the following page is a list of suggested titles.