

## Living the 21 Laws of Leadership

### *The Law of E. F. Hutton* When the Real Leader Speaks, People Listen

*“Though it is important that people know you,  
it is more important if they think you are worth knowing.”*

— Unknown —

## Application Guide

Anyone who is a parent knows what it is like at times not to enjoy the benefits of this leadership law. Something about toddlers and teens . . . they seem to listen to everything and everyone *except* their parents! I think God knows we are so exhausted from the toddlers, and the terror that is coming with the teens, that He gives us a break for those few peaceful elementary years. I am grateful for the people who had a positive influence in my kids lives during those years, and I learned a little more about the *Law of E. F. Hutton*, the law that teaches us that people listen to whom they consider to be the real leader in their life.

My first church in Hillham, Indiana brought this lesson home on a professional leadership level. I was 22 years old in 1969 and did not have a clue about leadership principles, fortunately God had given me some gifts in this area or I might still today reside in Hillham!

The real leader was Claude, not me. Claude was there long before me, probably before I was born, and would be there long after I was gone. At my first board meeting I arrived full of enthusiasm and clueless about what to do, the good news was no one expected me to do anything. Claude was in charge anyway. Claude opened the meeting and presented several agenda items, all seconded by Benny, (if Claude was Johnny Carson, Benny was Ed McMahon.) Everything Claude motioned, Benny seconded. When Claude was done, the meeting was over. Claude was the leader and did not need any title to prove it.

I could have spoken up and foolishly insisted that I was the Senior Pastor and therefore the leader in-charge, and declare the agenda, or I could have manipulated a coup and attempted to force out the most respected and influential man in the church who was twice my age. Fortunately, I chose a third option, an inner instinct helped me to keep my mouth shut. That was a good thing.

I learned to meet Claude out on the farm and ask him about various issues in the church; from doors that needed to be repaired and painted, to needing another room and teacher for Sunday School. Sure enough our "farm talks" became "board agendas." Just like clock work, I met with the E. F. Hutton of the church understanding that until I had earned that influence it is wiser to get the job done than to demand my rights and authority as a leader.

Over the years, and "many miles" from Hillham, I have observed the *Law of E. F. Hutton* to be consistently true. I have sat through countless board meetings in which the one with the title was not in charge. In some meetings, the people were polite and respectful of the person with the title, all knowing however, who the real influencer was. In other meetings I have witnessed outright disrespect and rebellion toward the official leader. In either extreme, or anywhere in the middle, the law still holds steady. People look and listen to the person with the most influence.

Who you are, what you know, who you know, what you have accomplished and what you are currently able to do are all factors that contribute to your ability to see this law applied in your life, and as a result, your level of leadership is increased.

## I. Assessment

The following questions will give you insight as to how well you are living the *Law of E. F. Hutton*.

### A. Before you speak

1. Do you have something of value to say?
2. Have you done your homework?
3. Are you clearly aware of what you want to accomplish?

### B. When you speak

1. Do people listen?
2. *Who* listens?
3. How long do people listen?
4. Does anyone do what you ask or say?
5. After you speak, do people ask you to speak more, or again?
6. After you speak do you more often regret what you said, or would say it again, exactly the same way?

### C. When other's speak and you are present

1. When someone else speaks do others in the group ask what you have to say?
2. When someone else speaks do others look toward you and wait for comments before they speak?
3. When someone else speaks do they look toward you or include your name (in a positive way) in their comments?

## II. Application

The *Law of E. F. Hutton* is another form of influence focusing on communication. This law is *not* about communication, but includes it. This law, like all laws on leadership is ultimately about influence. In this case, influence through communication.

The following practical hints are designed to assist you in developing your leadership according to the *Law of E. F. Hutton*.

A. You are the \_\_\_\_\_.

★ ***There is a wise proverb that says "it is not what you say, it is how you say it." There is much truth to that, but I will go one step further and add that "it is not what you say, but who says it!" Content certainly is important, but not as important as the one who delivers it. In other words, the message is important, but the messenger is very important. You may have brilliant strategies, impressive degrees and titles, and a galactic-sized I.Q., but if people do not sense your influence, it is all for not. Billy Graham is an excellent example. The gifted evangelist has delivered some very simple and plain messages, but he is Billy Graham!! And that is enough!!***

The following are five areas that constitute the fact that you are the message.

1. Your level of \_\_\_\_\_ sends a message.

Confidence comes largely from two sources, preparation and experience. The more you prepare, and the more successful each experience is, the more confident you become. Without confidence your influence will suffer, and people will not listen to what you have to say.

2. Your degree of \_\_\_\_\_ sends a message.

What you have accomplished sends a profound message about you as a leader. This area carries so much impact that if you are super accomplished in one field, people will listen to you speak, and want your opinion on anything, even if you know nothing about it! Sports Superstars are a great example. I recently saw a life-sized Michael Jordan cut-out photo advertizing batteries in a local store. The quote was something like "Mike says their the best." I will grant you that Mike may well be the greatest basketball player ever to wear hightops, but what does he know about batteries?! Nevertheless, people were lining up to buy them!

The point is that your accomplishments matter, and unless you are a Super Star, your accomplishments must be in the field that you desire to influence.

3. Your quality of \_\_\_\_\_ sends a message.

People do not always know what the issue is, but they can "feel" when something doesn't "seem right" about the leader. Blatant character flaws have the opposite effect that super competency does. You can be very accomplished, but your character can sell you

down the river. Go back in recent history in the sport of boxing. One of the greatest boxers, Mike Tyson, lost it all because of his character, not his skill and competency.

Your character is not likely to have blatant flaws in it, but I cannot emphasize enough the importance of pure integrity even in the little things.

4. Your measure of \_\_\_\_\_ sends a message.

Charisma is the ability to bring a sparkle into the room. It is the ability to create energy and cause people to feel good about themselves and the current experience. Charisma is light, hope and joy. Charisma is faith, positive attitude and confidence. Charisma is what draws people to you and makes the medicine go down easy.

Charisma is not magic. It is not possessed only by superstars, (though they certainly have a greater portion than most). Charisma is not substantive, but it is significant. Leading without at least a modest level of charisma is an uphill hike.

The basics of charisma are relatively simple. Stay positive (no whining!), encourage others, smile, remember and use names, develop a good sense of humor (laugh easily and often), believe the best in people and most importantly, focus on others — not yourself.

5. Your caliber of \_\_\_\_\_ sends a message.

Finally we come to content. It is obviously important, but falls at the end of the list of priorities! Prepare thoroughly and prepare to the best of your ability. Speak wisely, at the right times, to the right people. And remember the acid test when you do talk — are people listening?!

- B. \_\_\_\_\_, but speak up.

Silence is golden, wait your turn, but remember — leaders communicate. Leaders know when to speak, and have a valuable contribution to make. You cannot lead if you do not speak. The old saying: "he is a man of few words" is more often ascribed to a philosopher type, not an effective leader.

Leaders must be with people, and when you are with people you must communicate to influence. (Your example does communicate loudly as well, but the point here is the necessity of verbal expression in order to influence.)

Listen long enough to hear others' thoughts and opinions, listen to be courteous and respectful, listen to learn, and then speak to make a contribution for the benefit of others. This is the idea of having something of value to say. Leaders strive to add value to others and help move the mission or project forward.

The following are 6 steps to becoming an E.F. Hutton:

1. Listen
2. Look
3. Lead
4. Look
5. Learn
6. Lead

C. Do not fight the \_\_\_\_\_.

If things are not going the way you would like them to, perhaps someone else has garnered more influence than you . . . do not fight the tide. Swim with the current until you have earned the favor of influence. In other words, if you clearly are not yet the E. F. Hutton you believe you should be, take the time to invest in your personal growth so others will want to listen to you. Develop a solid relationship with the one who is the E. F. Hutton, help him or her succeed, and learn all you can. Your time will come!

D. If you get in hot water . . .

**★ Leadership is an artful endeavor; it is constantly fluid and keeps you on your toes. A mental nap at the wrong time can be lethal. On occasion, no matter how experienced a leader you are, you will find yourself in hot water. You may well be the E. F. Hutton of your organization, but once in a blue moon, you can find yourself in deep weeds.**

**Let me offer you some good insights to get you back on track.**

- ✓ Do not be \_\_\_\_\_.
- ✓ Do not assert your formal \_\_\_\_\_.
- ✓ Do admit that you have made a \_\_\_\_\_.
- ✓ Do \_\_\_\_\_ no matter what you have done.
- ✓ Do give others the benefit of \_\_\_\_\_.
- ✓ Do not hold a \_\_\_\_\_ against anyone.
- ✓ Learn from your \_\_\_\_\_.
- ✓ Get on with your life!

E. Master the art of 30 second communication.

Study the million dollar superbowl commercials, they will give you an excellent idea of how to communicate both thoroughly and concisely. I mentioned at the beginning of this section that the law of E. F. Hutton is not about communication, but it does include it. The point is leadership, the vehicle is communication.

People do not tolerate long winded, pointless communication. They will turn you off quickly, even if you had a good point to make. Know what you want to say, who you want to hear it, and the results you desire . . . before you speak.

### III. Action Assignment

Practice carefully observing when you are up to bat, whether it is speaking in a meeting, delivering a sermon, giving a sales presentation, debating an issue or talking to your kids! Are people listening? Are they responding as you desire? Are you making significant changes because of your influence? Your E. F. Hutton quotient will reveal much about your leadership.

The encouraging thing for all leaders is that you can increase your influence. The practical insights in this chapter will help you do just that.

Evaluating the E.F. Huttons:

1. List the top three areas where you influence people.

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2. List the top three areas that other influencers influence people.

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3. Speak out and lead in your three areas.
4. Support other influencers in their strong areas.