

## Living the 21 Laws of Leadership

### *The Law of Intuition* Leaders Evaluate Everything with a Leadership Bias

*“I really believe my greatest service is in the many unwise steps I prevent.”*

*— William Lyon Mackenzie King*

## Application Guide

It has been said that a leader's intuition, that special "sixth sense," can be summed up most accurately as: "the leader's ability to ask his wife what he should do, and then not mess up the wise counsel she gives him."

There is more truth to that than most leaders would care to admit, but there *is* more to it and it is called the *Law of Intuition*. This is perhaps the most evasive of all 21 laws, but at the same time, it is the leadership law that in so many cases makes all the difference in the world.

The story of Apple illustrates this leadership law very well. Nearly everyone knows the success story of Apple. The company was created in 1976 by Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak in Job's father's garage. Just four years later, the business went public, opening at \$22 a share and selling 4.6 million shares. It made over 40 employees and investors millionaires overnight.

But Apple's story is not all the proverbial bed of roses. Since those early years, Apple's success, stock value and ability to capture customers has fluctuated wildly. Jobs left Apple in 1985, having been pushed out in a battle with CEO John Sculley, the former Pepsi president whom Jobs had recruited in 1983. Sculley was followed by Michael Spindler in 1993 and then Gilbert Amelio in 1996. None of them were able to re-establish Apple's previous success. In its glory days, Apple had sold 14.6% of all personal computers in the U.S. By 1997, sales were down to 3.5%. That is when Apple looked to the leadership of its original founder, Steve Jobs, for help.

Jobs intuitively reviewed the situation and immediately took action. He knew that improvement was impossible without a change in leadership, so he quickly dismissed all but two of the previous board members and installed new ones. Once new leaders were in place, he looked at the company's focus. Jobs wanted to get back to the basics of what Apple had always done best: Use its individuality to create products that made a difference. He also sensed a problem with the company's marketing, so he fired their ad agency and held a competition for the account among three firms.

These actions were not especially surprising, but Jobs also did something that really showed the *Law of Intuition* in action. He made a leadership decision that went absolutely against the grain of Apple's previous thinking. It was an incredibly intuitive leadership leap. Jobs created a strategic alliance with the man Apple employees considered to be their archenemy — Bill Gates. Jobs said, "I called Bill and said Microsoft and Apple should work more closely together, but we have this issue to resolve, this intellectual-property dispute. Let's resolve it."

They negotiated a deal quickly, which settled Apple's law suit against Microsoft. That cleared the way for future partnership and brought much-needed capital to the company. It was something only an intuitive leader would have done. As you might guess, when Jobs announced the new alliance to a meeting of the Apple faithful, they booed. But on Wall Street, Apple stock jumped up immediately.

Apple looks like it is turning around. Prior to Job's return, the company had posted net quarterly losses the previous year totaling over \$1 billion. However, in the first fiscal quarter of 1998, Apple recorded a net profit of \$47 million. In the long run, it is hard to know whether the company will ever recapture its former success, but at least it now has a fighting chance.

## I. Assessment

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

- A. When your intuition is different than the facts do you go with your intuition or follow the logical path?
- B. Are you more comfortable with all the facts or in an area of movement and ambiguity?
- C. When faced with a difficult situation do you tend to concentrate on solving it efficiently and quickly, or do you prefer to "ponder and play" with options for awhile?
- D. What is your intuition "batting average?" Do you hit or strike out more often?
- E. Are you aware of intentionally trusting and depending on your intuition?
- F. What do the key people around you think of your intuition?
- G. Have you invested time and effort into developing your intuition? If so, how?

## II. Application

Leadership success is often not about the most finely honed skills, intelligence and other measurable abilities. Though they are important, most dedicated students of leadership can improve those skills. More often than not, the "extra edge" is about intangibles such as opportunity, timing, passion, effort and *intuition*. Of these, intuition plays the leading role. So, let us examine how to apply this law in your life to a greater degree.

- A. Get an accurate working knowledge of intuition's application to leadership.
  1. What intuition is not:
    - a. Intuition is not \_\_\_\_\_ or "fortune-telling."  
I would always laugh when Johnny Carson, the former Tonight Show host, would do

his bit on "The Amazing Carnac." He would hold a sealed envelope to his forehead and call out an answer. He then would open the envelope and read the question! Of course with profound insight and much humor. (More humor than insight!) Intuition is not like the Amazing Carnac, it is not hocus- pocus, mystical, prophetic or anything outside the human realm.

b. Intuition is not \_\_\_\_\_.

Intuition is not a sure thing, there is risk involved, and this is what often separates the good leaders from the best, the ability to go with a hunch.

c. Intuition is not an \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ to hide behind. Intuition is not a path by which you can omit doing your "homework."

★ ***Intuition is informed insight!***

d. Intuition is not based on \_\_\_\_\_.

Emotion is based upon outside stimulus, and intuition is based on insight from within.

2. Intuition is:

★ ***Intuition is an inner sense or hunch that is based on the widest possible scope of input to any situation.***

★ ***The more you know, the more intuitive you can be. This combined with a leadership bias offers you the potential for the best leadership decisions possible.***

B. Learn to read \_\_\_\_\_ well.

Tapping into your own intuitive thoughts is based partly on your confidence in your own personal ability, and a good knowledge of your strengths and weaknesses. In other words, knowing yourself is key to trusting your intuition.

Reading yourself well comes partly from just plain experience, but you can greatly increase the cumulative value of your experience by paying attention to the process. That is, noting when you were right and when you were wrong about your hunches, think through how you arrived at the hunch.

You can get a feel for when it was just too much buttermilk and onions at midnight or the real thing, by paying attention. Make mental notes after each hunch plays out, for good or bad, and spend a few moments thinking through how you arrived at your conclusions.

On a bad hunch maybe you rushed through the process, or perhaps you were unwisely

influenced by someone else. On a good hunch, you may have been relaxed and thinking creatively or you were willing to take a risk by trusting your first impression. These are the kinds of things to note. Watch for patterns, and over time, it will become as natural as breathing.

- C. Observe \_\_\_\_\_, listen well and ask questions.

Leaders with good intuition are acutely aware of their surroundings. They are constantly observing people, situations, and sizing things up. Non-leaders go to events and just attend, leaders are always "sensing" the dynamics at work.

Leaders with good intuition listen well. They learn to "listen between the lines" for what is really being said. Leaders, though they usually have something they passionately want to say, understand the importance of not interrupting and giving their undivided attention to the one talking.

This triad is completed by asking insightful questions. Leaders with good intuition take the time to ask good questions that get beyond the surface to the "whys" and "what matters" of the issue at hand.

- D. Think \_\_\_\_\_ the box.

Creativity is essential to the intuitive leader. Creativity is about thinking outside the box. When my kids were little, a school teacher told them to color inside the lines and "use appropriate colors" such as green tree leaves with brown trunks. That kind of thinking is what saps the power of creativity right out of us! Needless to say I taught my kids differently, as I would today with my top executives.

Thinking outside the box requires a healthy disrespect for rules and regulations. It is inappropriate to "break the rules" and ignore policy for selfish purposes, but if it will advance your organization, or it genuinely is in the best interests of your people, and no one will be hurt in the process, then break away! Many rules and policies are made incorrectly, they are often designed to control the 5% troublemakers, rather than advance the success of the organization.

Explore all the options, never settle for the first answer, give yourself time to process all the information.

- E. Be prepared and willing to take a \_\_\_\_\_.

Playing it safe does not get the job done, and does not require intuition. "Just go by the book and there is nothing to worry about" . . . except the people out there who are taking

risks and will one day put you out of business. Risk is found in the playground of intuition and therein lies the potential for success. Comfort is found in the playground of safety and therein lies mediocrity. Leaders jump in the pool first.

Describing an accurate "feel" for appropriate risk is difficult to say the least. It is somewhere between hiding your money under your mattress and gambling against the odds. I do not believe in either. However, if I were forced to draw a line in the sand just across the 50 yard line, I would draw it on the side of gambling. This gives you the picture you need. It is not a carefree abandon, but neither does the true leader have the privilege of keeping things steady and easy.

You must balance the risk and the potential rewards, but without risk, there will be no rewards.

F. \_\_\_\_\_ logic and facts with your intuition.

★ ***Mature risk is a balance of all that you know from diligently doing your homework, and what you sense intuitively. Hard data and intuition are not enemies, nor are they like oil and water. Conversely, they are more like a hand in a glove, they fit into each other, and support each other. The glove gives the hand warmth and the hand gives the glove shape.***

This process obviously requires thorough fact-finding research. During this fact-finding, practice listening to yourself — in order to tap into your intuition. A coach of a professional baseball team in the ninth inning, trailing by one run, will often substitute in a "big bat." This is a player who has incredible stats, and is known for blasting the ball! The coach may also go with his/her inner intuition about the right player for the right moment in the game. He/she may well select a player with inferior stats because his/her intuition tells him this player has the experience needed and is the right player for the moment. How can he/she know for sure? He/she can not. This goes back to previous point on risk-taking. The more you pay attention to your intuitive leadership, the better you will get.

G. Learn to thrive amidst \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

Ambiguity and uncertainty are the arenas in which intuition is needed. A leader cannot excel to his/her or her maximum potential without the ability to function, even thrive in ambiguity and uncertainty. You must resist the urge to keep things controlled, tidy and orderly. That is how opportunities are lost, momentum is killed, and morale is wounded.

The urge to control is the most common issue leaders struggle with. There is certainly a sense in which control is the very thing a leader does. There is a significant difference

between a leader who controls to successfully guide the overall direction of the organization, and a leader who controls out of insecurities and a need to keep everything contained and manageable.

H. Get away from your usual surroundings for \_\_\_\_\_.

The four walls of your office, or any common place to you, often stifles the needed mental freedom to tap into creativity and intuition. The good news is that a true leader will create the environment he/she or she needs to be creative and intuitive. If you can not create it, then find it! Go somewhere that is conducive to good reflection time.

Some helpful guidelines are: easy access, free from distraction, pleasant surroundings, and self-contained.

I. Think with a leadership bias.

Who you are determines what you see. Leaders think differently than followers. It would be unkind to say that followers do not think, so I will just say that leaders think differently!

***Who you are determines what you see.***

1. Leaders think \_\_\_\_\_.

Leaders think in the realm of possibilities, how to make big things happen, not why big things can not happen. One of my biggest dreams is raising up one million prayer partners for pastors in America. I am excited about it and believe it is happening, and it will be realized.

2. Leaders think \_\_\_\_\_ and are results oriented.

Leaders frustrate quickly, (not quit quickly), when things are not growing and moving forward. They will do anything possible to move the organization forward. Results are also constantly on a leader's mind, the bottom line is essential!

3. Leaders think \_\_\_\_\_.

Leaders never shut off the thinking process! Even at play and rest, the mind is working on problem solving, ideas, relationship issues etc.

4. Leaders think \_\_\_\_\_ oriented.

Key personnel, networking, adding value to others are the kinds of things always on a leaders mind.

5. Leaders think \_\_\_\_\_.

Leadership in its top form is artistic, not technical or methodical. Words that are close to a leader's heart are morale, atmosphere, timing, momentum, attitude, emotion, process, and expectation.

J. Translate your intuition into action.

This is the bottom line . . . it is not enough to be intuitive, you must translate your intuition into action. Leaders make things happen.

### III. Action Assignment

**★ Keep a journal for 30 days recording your intuitive thoughts and corresponding responses to those thoughts. Jot brief notes about the ones that were accurate and productive and be sure to write down why. Also jot down a few notes recording the ones that you missed (in other words, your intuition was wrong, or off-base.)**

**★ It is very important to then think through what seems to lead you in the right direction and what leads you astray.**

This journal idea can be repeated as often as you like, keep using the same book for your notes and reflections. **Remember, you are intuitive in your areas of gifting.**