

# The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership

Maxwell

## Study Guide

<https://gracelead.co>

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This document contains key points from The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership by John Maxwell plus some discussion questions.

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## 1-Law of the Lid

Leadership ability is the LID that determines a person's level of effectiveness as well as the organization's effectiveness.

### Discussion

What would you have to change in your daily schedule to focus on improving your leadership skills as much as you focus on improving your other skills?

How much time do you spend each week doing something to improve your leadership skills?

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Minutes each week</i>
Reading a leadership book or article	
Taking a leadership class or viewing an online leadership lesson	
Talking to a coach or learning partner about your leadership skills	
other?	

## 2-Law of Influence

### 5 Myths about Leadership

1. Myth that leadership is the same as **management**. Leadership is about influencing people to follow. Management is about systems, processes, and tasks.
2. Myth that leadership is the same as **innovation**. At best, innovation has a short-term effect unless a person has influence with others.
3. Myth that **knowledge** is leadership because knowledge is power. There are many brilliant people who are not good leaders because they are unable to influence others.
4. Myth that a **pioneer** is always a leader. Being in front doesn't mean you are a leader unless others intentionally follow you.
5. Myth that positional **authority** is leadership. People may comply with those who have authority but will only follow willingly if the person influences them.

Leading in a volunteer organization is a truer test because you have very little other than influence to get and keep people on board.

### Discussion

Consider those around you. In what ways do they influence you?

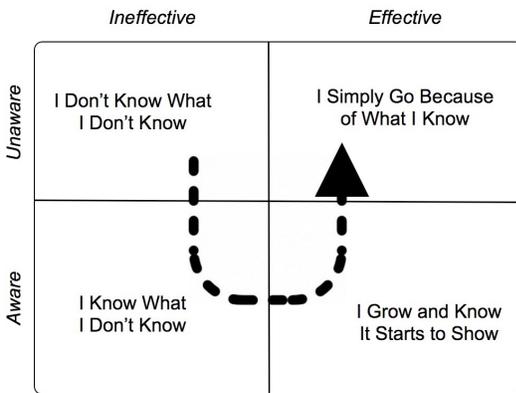
In what ways are you influencing others?

What could you change to become a more effective influencer?

- Be a better listener
- Learn what interests and motivates each person
- \_\_\_\_\_

### 3-Law of Process

The secret of your success is found in your daily agenda. Successful leaders are lifelong learners.



#### Discussion

What can you do to find out what you don't know?

What can you do to begin or maintain the daily discipline of personal growth in leadership?

### 4-Law of Navigation

A leader sees more, sees further, and sees sooner than others do. The secret to the law of navigation is **preparation**. Before leaders take people on a journey, they go through a **Navigation Process**.

1. Consider what they learned from past successes and failures relevant to the upcoming journey.
2. Gather information from a variety of sources (the leadership team, people in the organization, leaders outside the organization).
3. Think things through regarding how the journey will affect them, others, and the organization overall.

*Count the Cost*  
**Luke 14:28**

4. They balance optimism and realism, faith and fact.

#### Navigation Strategy: PLAN AHEAD

- P**redetermine a course of action.
- L**ay out your goals.
- A**adjust your priorities.
- N**otify key personnel.
- A**llow time for acceptance.
- H**ead into action.
- E**xpect problems.
- A**lways point to the successes.
- D**aily review your plan.

#### Discussion

Look at the four steps in the navigation process. Which ones have you used before you begin a project? What would interfere with you taking all four steps before your next project?

Of the components in the PLAN AHEAD strategy:

- Which are you most likely to do well?
- Which are you likely to skip or do poorly?
- What would help you become stronger in each of the components (coaching, watching someone, training, tips/tools)?

## 5-Law of E. F. Hutton

The real leader is the one people wait to hear before they act. To become a real leader:

1. Develop depth of character.
2. Build the right kinds of relationships with the right people.
3. Become knowledgeable about the key factors affecting the organization.
4. Learn to deal with intangibles.
5. Develop relevant experiences that show you are capable of facing challenges.
6. Develop a track record of successes.
7. Strengthen your abilities to the point that you can prove your capability.

### Discussion

Of the seven developmental areas to become a real leader, which are your strengths and which need most work?

Pick one to strengthen. Develop an action plan.

## 6-Law of Solid Ground

When it comes to leadership, it's not safe to take shortcuts. Over time, if you make good decisions and record wins for the organization, you will build credibility.

**Trust** is the foundation of leadership. Treat trust as your most precious asset. Character makes trust possible and trust makes leadership possible. To build trust, make sound decisions, admit mistakes, and consistently put the welfare of your followers and the organization ahead of your self-interests.

### Discussion

To what degree do you think your followers and peers trust you? Consider:

<i>Trust Factor</i>	<i>never&lt;.....&gt;always</i>
How often do you do what you say you're going to do in the timeframe you promised?	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
How often do you build up others instead of tearing them down (even if it's "kidding")	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

## 7-Law of Respect

People don't follow others by accident. They follow individuals with leadership they respect.

### Discussion

What leaders are you fully following? In what ways are those leaders stronger than you?

## 8-Law of Intuition

Intuition helps leaders become readers of the intangibles of leadership.

- Notice details of changes to the situation or environment.
- Pay attention to where things seem to be headed.
- In every situation, look for available resources: materials, technology, people.
- Pay attention to changes in people's moods and behaviors.
- Notice changes to your own state of mind, strengths, and weaknesses.

The principles of leadership are constant; however, the application changes with every leader and situation. That's why intuition is important.

**Discussion**

What could you do to be more aware of the intangibles in the above list?

**9-Law of Magnetism**

You tend to attract people who are similar in attitude, generation, background, values, life experiences, and leadership ability. If you think the people you attract could be better, it's time for you to improve yourself.

**Discussion**

What one thing could you improve about yourself to attract better leaders?

**10-Law of Connection**

Effective leaders know they have to touch people's hearts before asking them for a hand. The stronger the relationship and connection between individuals, the more likely the follower will want to help the leader. As a leader, take the initiative to build relationships.

*To lead yourself, use your head; to lead others, use your heart.*

**Discussion**

- In what ways do you take the initiative to build relationships with others? Give examples.
- How can you do this if it appears you share no interests or commonalities with a person?

**11-Law of the Inner Circle**

Every leader's potential is determined by the people closest to him/her. Bring the following five types of people into your inner circle.

1. **POTENTIAL Value:** Those who are good at leading themselves.
2. **POSITIVE Value:** Those who boost the morale of others.
3. **PERSONAL Value:** Those who raise up you, who support you and help you improve.
4. **PRODUCTIVE Value:** Those who are good at developing other people.
5. **PROVEN Value:** Those who develop other leaders who develop people.

Surround yourself with the best people possible.

**Discussion**

- What people are now in your inner circle? Which of the criteria do they fit?
- What other people fit the criteria? What can you do to build relationships with them?

<i>Potential Value</i>	
<i>Positive Value</i>	
<i>Personal Value</i>	
<i>Productive Value</i>	
<i>Proven Value</i>	

## 12-Law of Empowerment

If you want to be successful as a leader, you have to empower others. The greatest things happen only when you give others the credit. Enlarging others makes you larger.

### Discussion

What factors make it easier or more difficult for you to give others authority over something that is important to you?

## 13-Law of Reproduction

The only way you will be able to develop other leaders is to become a better leader yourself. To develop leaders:

- See the big picture. The potential of Grace depends on the growth of its leadership.
- Develop yourself so that you can attract people with leadership potential.
- Create an eagle environment: cast a vision, offer incentives, encourage creativity, allow risks, and provide accountability.

### Discussion

- As you look around you at Grace, do you pay attention to indicators of leadership potential? Give some examples.
- In what ways are you developing yourself as a leader that prospective leaders might follow?

## 14-Law of Buy-In

Having a great vision or worthy cause is not enough to get people to follow. People buy into the leader before buying into the leader's vision.

### Discussion

- Have you given people reason to buy into you?
- How can you tell if people buy into you as a leader?

## 15-Law of Victory

Victory is more important than being right. Three Components of Victory

1. Teams only succeed when there is **unity of vision**.
2. Teams require **diverse talents** to succeed.
3. Teams only succeed if they have a **dedicated leader** who gives the encouragement, empowerment, and direction they need to win.

A leader must not accept defeat. Victory is the only option. There is no plan B.

### Discussion

- How can your group achieve unity of vision?
- What are the talents on your team? What talents are lacking to have sufficient diversity?
- As a leader, are you giving enough encouragement, empowerment, and direction? How do you know?

## 16-Law of the Big Mo

At the beginning, your key task is to build momentum. Here are some tips:

- Keep the **vision in front** of your team.
- Focus on what your team **can do** rather than what it can't do.
- Celebrate victories, no matter how small.
- Make progress where you can.
- Continually focus on developing leaders.

### Discussion

- What specific things do you do to keep the vision in front of your team?
- In your interaction with your team what percentage of the time do you focus on what they can do rather than what they can't do?
- Give examples of small victories you have celebrated.
- How do you make sure the team continues to make progress?
- What are you doing to develop leaders?

## 17-Law of Priorities

Pareto Principle: If you focus your attention on the activities that rank in the top 20 percent of importance, you will have an 80 percent return on your effort. Order your life by the three Rs.

1. Always begin with what your boss **requires** of you. Either do it or delegate. Your job is to see that it's delivered.
2. Focus on what gives the greatest **return**. Spend most of your time working in your areas of greatest strength. Engage others to assist with necessary things not in your area of strength.
3. Focus on what gives the greatest **reward**. Don't accept all opportunities. Accept the ones that fulfill you.

The best leaders find ways to satisfy multiple priorities with each activity.

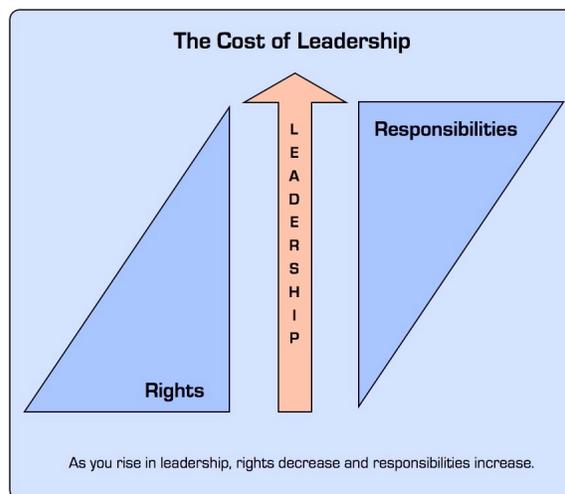
### Discussion

- In reviewing the projects currently on your schedule, which are the top 20% in importance?
- How much of your time do you devote to the top 20% of your projects?
- To what degree do you focus on what your boss **requires** of you?
- How much of your time do you spend on tasks that bring the greatest **return**?
- When an opportunity comes, what criteria do you use to decide if you will take it?

## 18-Law of Sacrifice

The true nature of leadership is sacrifice. Sacrifice is an ongoing process. Effective leaders sacrifice much that is good to dedicate themselves to what is best.

### Discussion



- In what ways have you experienced a decrease in rights and increase in responsibilities as the diagram shows?
- To what degree are you comfortable with sacrifices as a leader?
- What sacrifices have you made as a leader?

## 19-Law of Timing

Great leaders recognize that **when** to lead is as important as what to do and where to go.

### 4 Possible Outcomes to Every Move

wrong action at wrong time	DISASTER
right action at wrong time	RESISTANCE
wrong action at right time	MISTAKE
right action at right time	SUCCESS

### Discussion

How can you tell when the time is right? What could make you hesitate when you know the time is right?

## 20-Law of Explosive Growth

Leaders who develop leaders multiply their growth. The better the leaders that you develop, the greater the quality and quantity of followers.

Recruiting, developing, and retaining leaders is difficult because they tend to want to go their own way. Leadership development takes time, energy, and resources.

### Discussion

- What do you look for in prospective leaders?
- What methods do you use to recruit and engage leaders?
- What time, energy, and resources are you personally investing in developing leaders?

## 21-Law of Legacy

Leave a legacy by doing the following:

- Lead the organization with a **“long view.”** Lead with both tomorrow and today in mind.
- Create a **culture of leadership** development. It is the only way to build the breadth and depth of leadership to continue to grow an organization.
- **Pay the price today** to assure success tomorrow. You must determine the sacrifices necessary to develop leaders.
- Value **team leadership** above individual leadership. The larger the organization, the stronger, larger, and deeper the team of leaders needs to be.
- **Walk away** from the organization with integrity. When it's time to leave, do it with grace.

Every leader eventually leaves. To leave a legacy, put the organization in a position to do great things without you.

### Discussion

- When you decide which project or program to do, in what ways do you consider the long view as a criteria?
- Think of some specific, practical things Grace could do to help create a culture of leadership development.
- What price are you paying today to help Grace have success tomorrow?
- Think of a group of leaders with whom you interact. How do you behave with that group to demonstrate that you value team leadership? What aspects of team leadership make you uncomfortable? What accommodation do you make to work through that discomfort?
- In what ways are you preparing yourself and the organization to make your eventual departure pain free?