

Assignment Title:

The 5 Levels of Leadership

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After reading 5 Levels of Leadership by John C. Maxwell, I can share that I am finally entering level 5, and it is an exciting time. I have studied leadership for over twenty-three years since I have a Human Resources background. It is a topic that has always fascinated me, especially when you hear about the good, bad, and the ugly. The level of leadership that I have currently attained is level 5, The Pinnacle. I have just entered this stage as I am promoting someone into a Director position at the non-profit organization I now work for full-time. “Level 5 leaders are measured by the caliber of leaders they develop, not the caliber of their own leadership.”¹ This quote from Maxwell’s book stood out and resonated with me. It takes the focus off of you and emphasizes others, which is the accurate measure of a leader and measuring a leader’s success. As an Assistant Vice President and an Officer of my company, and accepting my ministerial call, I can say that I am genuinely in a position to serve others.

As a leader to others, this phase shows that my leadership philosophy includes leading from a place of courage and empowerment. As a leader, it is my responsibility to know my people, support their professional development and recognize their achievements. I will be their biggest cheerleader and will help them to achieve their goals. My door is always open, and I will ensure that they are comfortable with an open and transparent environment. Positive intent is always my assumption. I will understand what is different or unique about each team member to develop a shared understanding and a basis for utilizing differences to maximize everyone’s contributions.

¹ John C. Maxwell, 5 Levels of Leadership: (New York: Center Street, 2011), 235.

I will lead by example by modeling, coaching, and reinforcing behaviors that helps the team to feel valued and engaged. I will continuously involve the team in brainstorming and making decisions, support their unique approaches, and match tasks and assignments to individual capabilities.

As a team, I will foster collaboration so that they will trust each other and understand the potential of their own talents and strengths. I will leverage their strengths to motivate, coach and develop team collaboration to deepen their engagement, increase team productivity and drive results across the organization.

I will operate in a decisive manner focusing on integrity, reliability, ethical, confidential, and honest approach. I will be diplomatic and fair, tough on principle, and easy on people. Active listening is essential, so I will listen to understand, not to judge. Problem Solving is key to our success. I will lead by applying critical thinking, analytical skills, and research. I will lead by practicing our core values of professionalism, compassionate and trustworthiness.

A few pet peeves include, punctuality. We host a lot of meetings and our being on time is important. Always be honest. Urgency and follow-up is key as we have members that depend on us to offer assistance and or guidance. I will lead from a respectful place, value your competency and value our communication. I will learn from our experiences and will continue to develop myself and the team. I will not hold anyone back when it is time for them to spread their wings and fly.

In the ministry maturing process, I would say that I am learning and growing as a new Leader. At first, I realized that people would follow me because of the title “Clergy”. I am a long-standing member of my church, totaling 22 years this October. Transitioning from lay to clergy has been a very interesting experience for me to process. There are some that welcome you with open arms in your new role while others are skeptical. The three ministry leaders that I work with currently were very instrumental in helping me to identify my blind spots in my soul and in leadership. The comments helped me to process my field education internship. In this setting, it was vital for me to not overpromise and under deliver. I almost had a scheduling conflict because I committed to an assignment and thought I would not be able to complete it because of my work schedule and seminary schedule. Thankfully everything worked out but it was a slightly stressful situation until the end.

I am also learning not to take things personally as I mature in this ministry process. Unfortunately, I have learned that there are just some mean people that you will encounter on this ministry journey. Sometimes you are surprised by the people that embody this behavior because you are not expecting this from your clergy counterparts. However, three years in, I can say that God has helped me not focus on the small stuff and do the work that God has called me to, which it to lead His people. When I think about it in this context, it helps me to do what Maxwell outlines in his book “move beyond your job description”² and interact with God’s people.

² Maxwell, 5 Levels of Leadership, 65.

The checks and lessons that God is teaching me is to move away from my ISTJ personality, which is Introverted, Sensing, Thinking and Judging. God wants me to love his people with his heart. In this season, he wants me to have Godly sorrow. To me, this means that the things that break His heart would break my heart for His people. This will allow me to serve His people from a spiritual lens and not from my human lens. This is a lesson that He has been teaching me, especially towards the tail end of my seminary experience. As an ISTJ, I like to rely on facts and sometimes my judging can kick into overtime depending on the situation. But God does not want me to operate in this space. I have seen a significant change in this area of my leadership, and I know that the Holy Spirit is working in me.

The strengths and weaknesses identified in this process focused on wanting to have things perfect and defensiveness. Wanting to have things orderly and structured related to ministry helps me prepare for my ministerial assignments by relying on the Holy Spirit. This is a strength in my leadership but can easily be turned into a weakness if perfectionism is allowed to govern more than relying on the Holy Spirit. Another strength is my integrity and loyalty. I will work at whatever tasks it is until the job is done. I roll up my sleeves and I am not afraid to get dirty. One of my weaknesses can be defensiveness. Though I interned at my home church where I have attended for the last 22 years, I never felt quite welcomed in this space. Again, there was a weird dynamic that existed and that had me to be on guard. Because I saw defensiveness in these meetings, I could see what it looks like when I wasn't actually being defensiveness. This really set me free because as I reflected on my own behavior over the past, I didn't like how I felt and it definitely

made me uncomfortable when I saw defensiveness play out in these meetings. As a result, I have reflected more on my leadership style, emphasizing collaboration rather than taking things personally. Another weakness may be my blunt approach at times. I believe in being honest but I have to remember that not everyone can handle honesty and the timing of sharing feedback is critical.

My leadership style has definitely evolved over the years and can change depending on the setting that I find myself in professionally or in ministry. I would conclude by saying that my leadership style is transformational leadership. I strive to be a leader that inspires my team with a vision. I work to encourage and inspire my team and empower them to achieve the goal and or mission at hand. As I shared earlier in this paper, I am a role model and I know that my team, whether at work or in the church, is watching me at all times. This may seem like pressure for some, but I rely on my Father in heaven to work in and through me in all settings.

This leadership style has proven advantageous as it has helped build morale within the teams that I have been blessed to lead. I am able to use motivation and inspiration to gain support from my team and ministerial co-laborers. I value the relationships that I have with the people I work with and through this leadership style, we can accomplish the work and or grow God's kingdom. To God be the glory!