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Leadership Assessment

On August 31st, 2020, I resigned a position as Director of Music at Friendship Bible Church (FBC). After taking a 4 month reset, I took on the position of Family Ministries Director at Palm Coast Bible Church (PCBC). Missions was soon added to my responsibilities and I was retitled as the Missions Pastor. In the meantime, I continued in leadership for the American Heritage Girls (AHG) troop I had launched which meets at FBC. I identify with John Maxwell's assertion that, "Every time you lead different people you start over again...however...you can move up the levels much more quickly than the previous time."¹ Reading Maxwell's book, *The 5 Levels of Leadership*, not only strengthened me in my path forward, but also enabled me to track where I had moved from and to evaluate how I restarted over positionally and have quickly gained traction. I am comfortably beginning to slide into training others as a Level 5 leader once again.

My Leadership Journey

Because my leadership journey began many years ago, this paper will focus in on my more recent experiences which are applicable to this process of self-evaluation.

At Friendship Bible Church

In my years at FBC, among other things, I revamped the music program in such a way that it not only provided music for the congregation but taught the church about corporate worship in actionable ways. I trained someone to take my place and left him with a strong team

¹ John C. Maxwell, *The 5 Levels of Leadership: Proven Steps to Maximize Your Potential*, (New York, NY: Hatchette Book Group, 2021), 17.

which held the same values and could function seamlessly even when the “leader” was not able to be present.

With American Heritage Girls

During my time at AHG, (a leadership development program for girls) I had the incredible opportunity to work alongside many women, a few men, and hundreds of girls as I set an example in leadership, encouraged them to step up into new roles, trained them, released them, and joyfully watched them train others. I had an exceptional replacement fully trained and already serving in the position which I was leaving. Unfortunately, some unexpected medical concerns prohibited her from continuing, however, by working together, we left the AHG troop equipped to move forward without us. My Level 5 leader who was unable to stay in her position, remains a close friend. Together, we continue to support and train the Level 4 leaders whom we left “behind.”

At Palm Coast Bible Church

At PCBC, I came in with a title and was expected to build programs and teams from scratch, so I carefully evaluated what had worked previously and then began by sharing meals with a myriad of different people. Because I had the position and had begun building relationships, people gave me permission to lead them. From there, I was able to move into production and started getting people into leadership in different teams. Then began the hard work of training those people to find people to lead. After a year, I am overjoyed to report that at least one team has a team leader who has reached Level 4 and has begun training those under him. The other teams are in varying stages, with leaders who are strongly Level 3 or in the process of moving into Level 2.

What this Shows Me as a Leader of Others

Over my years in ministry, I have learned that I thrive on seeing people succeed and grow. I rejoice when people achieve something that they never thought they could. I love being able step back, knowing that I do not need to have every detail or even be present for an event or project to thrive. I have experienced success in helping leaders reach the next level in their leadership potential. I have led successful trainings and events beyond my immediate ministry context and have recently been asked to consider participating in an international endeavor. This has led me to the conclusion that I have been called and gifted to empower leaders who empower leaders.

Where I Am in the Ministry Maturing Process

Moving to a new position at a new church filled me with great expectation, but also left me stumbling around a bit to find my grounding. My prior leadership experience taught me that what I really love to do, and am good at, is empowering others to step beyond what they think is possible in order to be whomever it is that God has called them to be. I enjoy showing off the accomplishments of others and do not hesitate to let the blame fall on me when blunders occur. I expect people to succeed and encourage them in that direction, always assuming the best. I am there to answer questions, listen to trials, celebrate joys, guide people into solutions, “hang out,” pray, and provide resources, but do not require that every detail be reported. I have leaders and followers who fully respect my word and are willing to jump in, even in my “blessed impulse” moments.² I have leaders who respect my word and are also secure in appropriately speaking up.

What God is Teaching Me

One of the greatest areas in which God is growing me is in learning to work with a Level 4/5 Team. Previously, I was a Level 5 leader who, after years, had trained up two Level 5 leaders in different ministries, without having been taught how to do so. Lacking an example before me,

² Maxwell, 253.

or one that invested in me, I grew through great trial and error. Currently, I serve on staff with 6 other Level 4 or 5 leaders who believe strongly in building teams with strong leaders in the church. Our ministry model is set up to accommodate this. I now have others on whom I can lean. We flow well together, encouraging one another in our strengths and helping each other grow in our weaknesses. I am fully released to do my job, grounded firmly in the knowledge that I have people to whom I go for help but who also have a belief that I will succeed. While I know how to release the people who are serving “under me,” what I am having to learn is to release, while at the same time support, those who walk beside me. I am constantly in awe of the trust they have me in to do what I need to do and to do it well. This gives me the push I need to keep striving forward.

Strengths and Weaknesses Identified in this Process

In speaking with people who knew/know me in past as well current ministry settings, I learned that I am not crazy to think that I did achieve Level 5 as a leader previously and that I am well on my way to that again. Those who evaluated my past ministries were quick to say that although they had, personally, walked with me through difficult times as I grew in my leadership, they felt that I had grown beyond those concerns. They saw me learn how to release control, back off of micro-managing, speak in ways that made people feel loved rather than just wheels in the cog, accept that my way is not always the way things must be done, and train others to be released. This points to a strength in me of being able to accept weak areas and embrace growth.

Those who evaluated my present ministry, including my husband, all pointed to the same hole. One termed it “trampling.” Another “living up to a performance lie.” Others mentioned “speaking too quickly in meetings” and “speaking too much where others can hear concerning a

particular subject (women in ministry).” One person hit the nail squarely on the head, “Operating out a place of wounding.” The people with whom I spoke noted that they believe, alongside this weakness, I have a strength in already being aware of it due to the fact that they were also able to point out ways in which they have seen me grow in this area. I love that I am ministering so closely with people that they know my weaknesses, but rather than condemn me, they are coming around me as support. Each of these people play a role in contributing to my continual growth.

While each person may have explained my leadership hole slightly differently, what they said stems from one “crucible moment” which left me with a hole in my soul.³ With the wounding I experienced as woman called to ministry who was increasingly given a backseat at FBC, I have had to work through feeling “worthy” enough to live in my calling. This results in me speaking up and over others to prove myself (in leadership meetings), “venting” about a difficult situation in which I have been placed by District Leadership in the area of women in ministry to people who can do nothing about it (only to the same few, but sometimes dangerously close to where others can hear), and having to repeatedly stop myself from taking on too much to simply prove, mostly to myself, that I am worthy and I am called.

My Leadership Style

My leadership style is a cross between servant leadership and coaching. I love to help people work in teams, learning to collaborate so that they do not experience burnout. I am driven to come alongside others to stretch them past initial fears and into continued growth. I love to guide people into training others and smile as people pour into the lives of those around them.

Conclusion: What I Have Learned

³ Maxwell, 256.

Through this process I have learned that I do have a strength in empowering others. I was able to leave strong leaders in my last ministry, even though the “odds” were against me. I have an incredible child-like faith in God’s provision, not only materially, but in supplying me with whatever gifts I need to accomplish what He asks of me. He continually strengthens my soul by placing me in positions that require me to grow, and He blesses me with others to grow alongside. I am determined to keep striving forward in His call on my life because “the Lord will fulfill His purpose for me,” never forsaking the work of His hands (Psalm 138:8, ESV).

Bibliography

John C. Maxwell. *The 5 Levels of Leadership: Proven Steps to Maximize Your Potential*. New York, NY: Hatchette Book Group, 2021.