

A Book Review on John C. Maxwell. Developing the Leader Within You, Harper Collins Leadership:Nashville,Tennessee,2018.

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"Developing the Leader Within You" is mostly considered as revolutionary leadership book written by John C. Maxwell, a famous leadership expert. The book gives valuable insights and practical help on a leader's personal growth and leadership development. The book is all about the foundational lessons to becoming a good leader. Maxwell highlights that leadership is not recognized solely by position or title but is a practice that can be practiced by leaders' willingness to spend time and effort.

The first chapter answers the question of why many people don't develop as leaders? Maxwell provides the reasons for this: many people think leadership is not for them because they assume that they are not born leaders and they can't lead. Another reason is that the people who don't develop as better leaders think that they need to be appointed as a position of leadership. Another assumption is that leadership is maturity, and the work experience will automatically make them leaders. The last assumption leaders need to wait until they get a position to start developing as a leader. In this book Maxwell answers the question of "How to develop the leader within you with ten chapters containing ten essentials for leadership development. The important concept for leadership development is *Influence*. Maxwell concludes *leadership as a influence* with a vast experience of teaching on leadership and observing the leaders. Influence is the beginning of true leadership. In this book the writer aims to help understand how influence work and how to use influence to lead more effectively. All the chapters are designed to help leaders to acquire skills and abilities to further hence as a leader and with every addition of each skill provided in this book help to become a better leader. Maxwell presented his discovery of how influence can be developed in five stages or tools he called them as 5 levels of leadership to understand the dynamics of leadership and create road map to follow and to influence others. The five levels are: Position, Permission, Production, people development and pinnacle. If the leaders use the 5 levels of leadership as a clear visual reminder of how their influence works. It's a paradigm for leadership and pathway to leadership and each leader is challenged to apply the 5 levels of leadership to develop the influencer within them.

The second chapter aims at the development of priorities as a key to leadership. Maxwell recommends priority principle as the solution to the problem of using the time rewardingly. Good leaders always think ahead and prioritize their responsibilities. Following through the priorities effectively enhance life and improve leadership. Maxwell writes "if you want to develop the leader within you, don't wait for tragedy to realign your priorities". Maxwell provides the following five principles for developing prioritizer within a leader: working smarter has a higher return than working harder; you can't have it all; the good is always the enemy of the best; proactive beats

reactive; the important needs to take precedence the urgent. Maxwell encourages leaders to review the to-do list every morning and evaluate each task using the importance/urgency criteria to help priorities effectively and keep things into order quickly. Having a strategy for evaluating leaders daily to-do list by priority is invaluable and Maxwell provided necessary tools that help leaders with priorities in the bigger picture and provides three proactive priority solutions and challenge the leaders to embrace priority principles.

In chapter three Maxwell offers insights on how to focus on developing character from the inside out. Character is the foundation of leadership. Maxwell offers the insightful list of the problems outlined in inherent in leadership by Pope Francis and confess that he examined his own character in the light of the provided list and self-examination process. Maxwell believes that “the Self-examination questions heightens the awareness of the need to keep improving leaders character because the heightened influence of leaders magnifies their impact on others both positively and negatively” Maxwell states that “the reality is that leading ourselves is often the most difficult task we face every day”. Maxwell offers three great reasons why good character is worth pursuing: firstly, Good character builds strong trust, secondly successful leaders embrace the four dimension of character, those are: authenticity, self- management, humility, and courage, finally character makes you bigger on the inside than on the outside. Further Maxwell believes that “core of character boils down to three main things: embracing good values, practicing self-leadership, and valuing people.

Chapter four describes the plan to prepare for creating positive change leaders’ desires make. Maxwell provides several reasons why people want the benefits of positive change without the pain of making any changes of themselves: people feel awkward and self-conscious doing something new; people initially focus on what they will have to give up; people are afraid of being ridiculed; people personalize change and may feel alone in the process. Maxwell answers the question is how many people does it take to create positive change? The answer is one person who is willing to lead the people involved in making the change through a process and do his best to take everyone with him. Maxwell suggests that leaders who want to make a positive change need to develop a process to plan what needed to be changed, communicate it to the people, help them process the changes mentally and emotionally, and put the plan into action. Maxwell called this process as “PLAN AHEAD” an acrostic: Predetermine the change that is needed; Layout your steps; Adjust your priorities; Notify key people; Allow time for acceptance; Head into action; Expect problems; Always point to the success; Daily review your progress. Maxwell encourages us to use these individual steps to face the ultimate test of leadership: creating positive change.

Chapter five focus on Maxwell’s positive take on solving the problem that make leadership challenging. Problem solving affords unique opportunities to the leaders to make an impact. Maxwell believes that “problems hold potential benefits which is why problem solving is the quickest way to gain leadership. Problems introduce us to ourselves; problems introduce us to others; and problems introduce us to opportunities. Maxwell describes each of these benefits to understand and embrace these principles to become a better problem solver.

Chapter six highlights the significance of a leader’s attitude. When it comes to leadership, attitude becomes even more important. Maxwell states that “Leaders need to see possibilities when others don’t, encourage people when

they are feeling defeated, and demonstrate commitment when others want to quit”. Good leaders understand that a positive attitude creates a positive atmosphere, which encourages positive and productive responses from others. In this chapter the writer put muscle in a leader’s attitude. Maxwell says, “To be an effective leader, you don’t have to be happy all the time or be a cheerleader. But you need to model an attitude of positive vision during tough times. A leader’s attitude must exemplify resolve, tenacity, focus, determination, and commitment. It must demonstrate consistency, see possibilities, and fight for victories during tough times.” In this chapter, Maxwell offers steps to develop the positive attitude and embody as a leader. The following steps are provided: Disown your helplessness; take the bull by the horns; enter the: No whining zone; put on a new pair of shoes; nurture your passion; exceed expectations and never be satisfied. Finally in this chapter Maxwell gives Paul Martinelli’s “Whatever -it-takes attitude into action” to develop the leader within you in area of positive attitude. Chapter seven emphasizes servant leadership which is the heart of true leadership. Maxwell stresses that true leadership is not about gaining power or control but about serving others and helping them reach their full potential. He encourages readers to adopt a servant mindset, placing the needs of others before their own and cultivating a culture of collaboration and empowerment. Maxwell teaches on “to become a leader who serves others, leaders need to focus on making change in two areas: develop the heart of a servant and develop the hands of a servant. Maxwell opines that “a change of heart is like gratitude. If it is unexpressed, it has little value. As you seek to develop the heart of a servant, be sure to follow through with the *actions* of a servant”.

Chapter eight deals with vision as the indispensable quality of leadership. Maxwell quotes Andy Stanleys “Vision gives significance to the otherwise meaningless details of our lives... too many times the routines of life begin to feel like shoveling dirt. But take those same routines, those same responsibilities, and view them through the lens of vision and everything looks different. Vision brings order to chaos. A clear vision enables you to see everything differently.” Maxwell states that “clear vision does wonders for a team, but it also does wonders for a leader. Among its greatest benefits are direction and passion. For leaders vision sets direction for their lives. It is like having a road map. It prioritizes both action and values, helping leaders to remain focused”. Further in this chapter Maxwell offers reasons why the vision is so important to leaders: what you can see determines what you can be; you see what you are prepared to see; what you see is what you get. Maxwell concludes that “Leaders can’t take their people farther than they can see. That is why their vision needs to be clear.

Chapter nine speaks on the toughest part of leadership that is self-discipline: the price tag of leadership. Maxwell believes that “as leaders, our greatest challenge in leadership is leading ourselves first. He believes that many highly gifted leaders stopped far short of their potential because they were not willing to pay this price of self-discipline.” In this chapter the writer spends time explaining truths about self-discipline. Self-discipline makes leadership uphill climb possible. Self-discipline makes the difference between temporary success and sustained success. Self-discipline makes habit your servant instead of your master. Self-discipline is developed -not given. Self-discipline is most easily developed in areas of strengths and passion. Self-discipline and respect are connected. Self-discipline makes consistency possible and consistency compounds. Maxwell suggests that “leaders are responsible to help themselves and make themselves better before they try to help others. If there is

one thing to fight for a leader, this is it, because it unlocks the door to so many other abilities: character, priorities, influence, and serving people. If you win the battles within, all the other victories become within reach”.

The last chapter emphasizes personal growth and provides the reasons why personal growth is matter. Maxwell is convinced that, your capacity to grow will determine your capacity to lead. Development, expansion, and the future of your leadership depend on your dedication to personal growth. Maxwell offers following reasons for growth matters: Growth is the only guarantee that tomorrow will get better; growth means change; growth is the great separator between those who succeed and those who don't; for growth to be maximized, it must be strategic; growth is joy. Maxwell believes that growth is not automatic. You must fight for it. And you must make it a daily habit.

Developing the Leader Within You by John C. Maxwell is a powerful resource for leaders who seek to enhance their leadership skills to become effective leaders and contains a blueprint for leaders who wanted to release their potential as leaders to accomplish their goals and fulfil their vision. John C Maxwell delivered the foundational principles he used in leadership for more than 40 years. The reading of this book personally impacted me and alerted me in many areas of my personal life and ministry and the book offers me a practical strategies and valuable insights to help me to evaluate and unleash my leadership potential and grow as an exemplary leader. I strongly convicted that it is a must read for all leaders.

