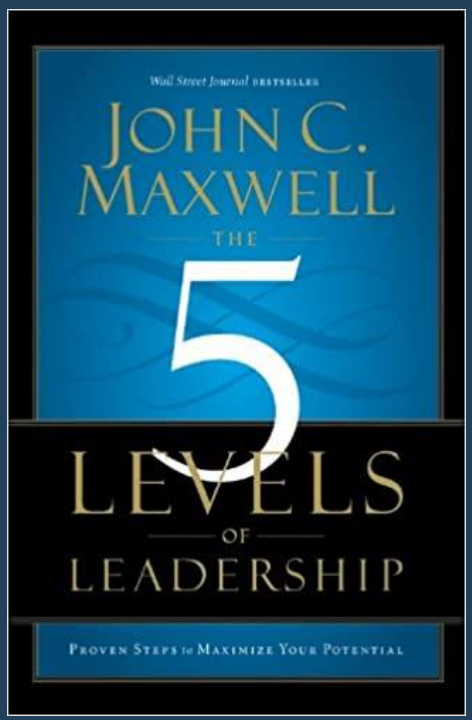

The 5 Levels of Leadership

Year of publication: 2011
Author: John C. Maxwell
304 pages
Link for purchase: https://amzn.to/3qNqUNo

"The 5 Levels of Leadership, written by John C. Maxwell, was published in October 2011 by Center Street.

The book is divided into five sections, dedicated to each level, with a total of 304 pages. It has a questionnaire that determines in what level you are and guidelines to help you.

Also, the author points out how the laws of leadership, the theme of his other book, "The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership", can be applied at each level.

Score

9

9 Aplicability
8 Inspiration
8 Innovation
9 Impact on results
9 Structure

Main ideas of the book

- Climbing the 5 levels of leadership requires continuous development;
- Being a leader is a privilege that makes it possible to change the lives of people, organizations, and communities;
- Earn the trust of your team and encourage everyone to grow together;
- Being aware of the weight of your responsibilities and knowing how to make difficult decisions are requirements for a leader;
- All leaders started their path when someone showed them the direction. Do the same;
- The room at the top expands with the arrival of more leaders, increasing the power of the entire organization.

To whom is this book indicated?

"The 5 Levels of Leadership" is indicated for leaders who wish to grow and for all those who seek to lead one day.

John C. Maxwell brings a clear picture of leadership that everyone can understand and get inspired by the positive impact a good leader creates.

Overview of the book

Overview: Level 1 - Position

Receiving a leadership position means having your potential recognized by an authority in the organization. It is the starting point of the climb through the 5 Levels of Leadership and an invitation to your development.
It allows you to define what kind of leader you will be. But to do that, you need to know who you are first. Discover your strengths and weaknesses, evaluate how you behave in certain situations and how to apply your skills. Remain true to your ethical, relational, and successful values.
There is no right way or form of acting that guarantees the success of a leader, as John C. Maxwell exemplifies. It is by living your values out and being honest with yourself.
However, a leader who uses position and rights to lead people is not able to see the value they have and focuses only on controlling them.
It is precisely by not using the rights granted by the title, but influence, encouragement, and example, that a leader grows. It is working and learning with the team that everyone advances side by side.
And good teamwork starts with the leader understanding who are the members of the team, what they need, and how to help them.

Overview: Level 2 - Permission

By building relationships with your team, they will start to follow you willingly, guaranteeing you the permission to be their leader.
John C. Maxwell shows, as the main advantages of the second level, a greater pleasure to work in a healthy and communicative environment, which inspires trust, respect, and care.
As an example of a leader who valued and cared for people, the author mentions Nelson Mandela. His encouragement and respect for all led to positive impacts and strengthened his leadership.
But don't think you can please everyone! To make it work, you need to keep a hard and productive side, along with people in the equation.
However, it is necessary to reinforce: be yourself, assume your failures, and learn from your mistakes. A leader is not perfect, but must always be someone that everyone can trust.
The author emphasizes in the book “The 5 Levels of Leadership” the importance of knowing yourself, what you want to change and accomplish, before forming bonds with others.
Also, don’t be afraid of having difficult talks. Do it candidly and carefully to help everyone improve and advance with you.
Remember the golden rule:

“Treat others as you want others to treat you.”

Overview: Level 3 - Production

Maxwell points out the importance of getting results to climb the levels of leadership and improve the company and your team.
To do so, the leader has to be an example and show the path to productivity, so others can follow.
By taking the initiative, the leader casts the vision and encourages everyone to do the same. People will realize they can accomplish more than they have ever imagined, creating positive changes.
The book “The 5 Levels of Leadership” also shows the hard part: committing to get results, being responsible for all the decisions made, and achieving success for the team.
A producer attracts other producers. But it’s necessary to prioritize your resources and activities to be able to accomplish many things in the right way.

It is also important to build a good team. Knowing the people you work with makes it a lot easier to identify their potential, strengths, and weaknesses.
Hence, you will know how to unite people who complement each other. Together they will be able to produce more and perform better. As John Maxwell said: teamwork can accomplish much more than individual work.

Overview: Level 4 - People Development

After reaching productivity, you need to develop new leaders. The fourth section of the book "The 5 Levels of Leadership" is about investing in people.
The reasons to do so are many, such as:

- Organizations grow when their workers grow, especially when new leaders are developed;
- Keeping your company successful isn't easy, but well-trained teams can do it better;
- New leaders will share the weight of responsibility and focus on fulfilling the vision;
- Developing people reinforces the bonds you made at previous levels and give personal fulfillment for them.

However, there are obstacles to overcome, because this task isn't easy.
Just the idea of transferring ownership and responsibilities blocks many people who fear that the work won't be done correctly.
That's why John Maxwell uses the 80% rule: if someone on his team can do one of his tasks 80% as well or even better, he gives that person the responsibility for it.
Another problem is that many people may not be receptive to the efforts necessary to grow as a leader. But don't give up trying to find the right one, it's worth the time!
During the climb, you got to know your team members very well. You learned what they can do and how they do it.
Work on their strengths to support and help them grow. Show you believe in someone by transferring a task and making them responsible for achieving success with their own hands.
Act as a coach and dedicate yourself to developing new leaders. Leave a legacy of people with the potential to overcome you and any other leader.

Overview: Level 5 - Pinnacle

The room at the top was not made so leaders could rest there. In fact, it's the opposite of that: it's where you keep learning, facing challenges and coaching more leaders.
Pinnacle leaders make a company reach the highest levels too. And when one of the leaders retires or needs to leave, there are others who are equally qualified to take over.
Thus, good leadership is never lost when new leaders are developed.
Never stop doing what is right! Keep learning, building relationships, being productive, and investing in people.
Stay focused and improve every day to increase your positive impact.

John R. Wooden - Level 5 Leader

John R. Wooden, a world-renowned college basketball coach, is an example of a level 5 leader.
In 1947, Wooden became a college coach. In order to do what was right for the players, he built strong bonds with each one of them.
He committed to his values when he declined the invitation to the tournament of the National Association of Intercollegiate Basketball (NAIB) during that first year, because it didn't allow African Americans to play.
With the end of the policy in the following year, his team joined the tournament, making one of the players, Clarence Walker, the first African American to play in the postseason tournament.
By having his players as friends, he gained their trust and respect. With teamwork and continuous effort, he achieved countless victories. The important part, as he said, was not winning, but living the journey.
Wooden knew who to recruit because he had a clear idea of what he was looking for when building the team.
He created the "Pyramid of Success" to teach important values to the team. With explanations, demonstrations, and corrections, he tried to make everyone achieve their best performance and become leaders by themselves.
Through his leadership, he changed many lives and left a huge positive impact. Among the many honors, his name represents an award to the best players of college basketball: John R. Wooden Award.

What do other authors say about it?

In “Everybody Matters”, Bob Chapman and Raj Sisodia say that workers should be encouraged to innovate and try new things. Even if they fail. This makes them realize that managers have full confidence in their potential and in what they do. In the book, this practice is called “responsible freedom”.

According to Angela Miguel, in the book “Learn Leadership from La Casa de Papel”, the purpose is the strongest trace that makes a leader. It is the explanation for the decisions made and for destiny. Leaders inspire others by sharing values, experiences, ethics and ideas, even if there are differences between them.

Finally, Ram Charan, Stephen Drotter and James Noel bring the concept of six essential leadership passages in the book “The Leadership Pipeline”. Each represents a step in the hierarchy, with skills to be developed. They also underline the importance of developing people and planning leadership succession.

Okay, but how can I apply this in my life?

John C. Maxwell presents many guidelines to follow as you climb the levels, such as:

- Define what kind of leader you will be and stay true to it;
- Get to know and value your team, learn and work with them;
- Dedicate time to every member of the team, encourage and help each one the way they need;
- Show how everyone can contribute to the company's vision on a daily basis and define what it means to achieve success in production;
- Share: give someone a leadership position and be a mentor, coach a new leader;
- Keep learning and growing, all the people you meet and all the experiences you have can teach you something.

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