

# The Right to Have Followers

*“Conduct yourself with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of every opportunity. Let your speech always be seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person.”*

Colossians 4:6-7

This leadership notebook is all about relationships. The best leaders handle relationships well and earn their right to be followed by others. They don't assume people will automatically submit to them. They demonstrate character, competence and chemistry with others and people follow because they want to, not because they have to do so.

## Two Common Ways Leaders Gain Influence with People

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Power – This is demonstrated when leaders use their title and position to get others to follow. This is unhealthy leadership.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Power – This is demonstrated when leaders exercise healthy relational skills to earn their right to lead. This is healthy leadership.

When leaders possess “personal power” it simply means they refuse to rely on external reasons to get people to do something. It is their presence, and more importantly, the presence of the Holy Spirit inside of them, that wins the hearts of others and inspires them to follow.

If you require a title for someone to listen to you, something isn't healthy about your leadership. Leaders should always offer more than a title or position to motivate people to act.

So, how do leaders do this?

**Discussion:** Can you think of examples of how people of influence motivate and mobilize others without using a title?

## Gaining the Respect of Others

The primary foundation for leadership involves trust and respect. The silent questions every follower asks of a leader are:

1. Do I \_\_\_\_\_ you?
2. Do I \_\_\_\_\_ you?

However, even when people answer, “yes” to these two important questions, leaders must understand the issue goes deeper. When leaders dig deeper, they may discover why more people do not follow them.

1. When people respect you as a friend, they \_\_\_\_\_ you.
2. When people respect you as a person, they \_\_\_\_\_ you.
3. When people respect you as a leader, they \_\_\_\_\_ you.

Often a pastor will mistake the love that people show him on Sunday. They shake his hand and tell him what a wonderful sermon he preached that day. However, when times are tough and commitment is necessary to follow his vision, people may hesitate. Why? They love him as a friend or admire him as a person, but they don't respect him as a leader. They don't believe he can take them to the fulfillment of that vision. Consequently, they refuse to commit themselves.

## Reasons Why Many Leaders Haven't Earned the Respect of People:

1. They think their \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ guarantees respect.
2. They think that \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ guarantees respect.
3. Their need to be \_\_\_\_\_ by others is greater than their need to be respected by them.

Before we venture any further into this notebook, let's build a foundation of respect in our leadership. Then, the relational skills we'll discuss in future lessons will take on greater meaning and value.

## Building Respect in Your Leadership

### 1. Respect \_\_\_\_\_ and Others

It all begins with self-respect. Once you possess this, you have the capacity to offer genuine respect to others. A famed psychologist wrote, *"Don't always try to be popular. It isn't possible for everyone to like you. It's far more important for you to like yourself. And when you respect yourself, strangely, you get more respect than if you court it from others."* The price tag the world puts on us is just about identical to the one we put on ourselves.

Respect for myself means...

- a. I understand who I am in Christ.
- b. I appreciate my talents and gifts God has given me.
- c. I usually do well with my work.
- d. I do not take every failure or criticism personally.

Respect for others means...

- a. I am careful not to hurt anyone's self-respect or their sense of dignity.
- b. I am able to see each person as someone created and gifted by God.
- c. I can see past the faults of others and see their needs and their potential.
- d. I attempt to treat everyone I meet as though they are very important.

**Discussion:** Do you generally show respect to others or fail to show respect to others? Why?

- Give some examples of how you show respect to others.

### 2. Exceed the \_\_\_\_\_ of Others

Leaders are different than followers in that they expect more than others do. They lead the way in putting forth effort and require their team to perform with excellence. They raise the bar. They set standards. They are not willing to simply get by with an attitude that says, "That's good enough." They push for improvement. This may upset some people initially, but in the end, it causes others to respect the leader.

Jesus spoke of this when He taught His disciples to:

- Walk the extra mile.
- Give others your coat not just your shirt.
- Turn the other cheek if someone hits you.

How to exceed the expectation of others:

- a. Set high personal standards.
- b. Know the expectations of others.
- c. Fulfill those expectations and go further.
- d. Finish each task or project, and then ask, "What more could be done to surprise everyone?"

**Discussion:** In what ways do you exceed the expectations of others as a leader?

### 3. Stand Firm on Your Convictions and \_\_\_\_\_.

Strong convictions precede great actions. Leaders understand that if they submit to pressure from peers, they move down to their level. If they stand up for their beliefs, they invite others up to that level. If you move with the crowd, you'll get no further than the crowd. Leaders must know what's right and take a stand.

Truths that Effective Leaders Know as They Lead People:

- a. You must learn to separate opinions from convictions.
- b. You cannot be an effective leader if you don't know what you believe.
- c. You must model the way and lead by example to gain respect.
- d. Only if you are willing to die for something are you really fit to live.

**Discussion:** What are your top convictions? For what do you take a stand?

### 4. Possess a \_\_\_\_\_ that's Well Beyond Your Age and Experience.

Let's face it. One universal promoter of respect is when someone displays a maturity that far exceeds their years and experience. When leaders display wisdom or initiative beyond their age, they win the confidence and respect of people. Keep in mind there is such a thing as "relative maturity." This means young children can be mature for their age. For example, we might say, "That boy is very mature for a five-year-old." In this principle, we are talking about leaders showing maturity beyond their age or level of experience.

Five Marks of Maturity:

- a. Responsibility – Maturity doesn't come with age; it comes with acceptance of responsibility.
- b. Confidence – Nothing convinces others like a confident spirit. People follow confident people.
- c. Consistency – People do what people see. They forget your sermons, but follow your footsteps.
- d. Character – A person who has the ability to make decisions based upon principles and values.
- e. Security – People look for security, and a secure leader provides a secure environment.

**Discussion:** What marks of maturity do you display? Which ones do you lack?

### 5. Experience \_\_\_\_\_ in Your Career, Family and Personal Life.

John Maxwell's oldest definition of success is, "*When those who are closest to me, love and respect me the most.*" Respect comes not only from results in your ministry, but it comes when people see the other dimensions of your life and see a well-rounded success. Success is hollow if you win at your job, but lose your family or your health.

To Gain Respect as a Leader, Success Must Be...

- a. In family, career and personal life.
- b. Noticed by others without the leader calling attention to it.

**Discussion:** Where are you the strongest and the weakest in the following areas:

Personal life / Family Life / Career Success?

## 6. Contribute to the Success of \_\_\_\_\_.

Leaders who gain respect are the ones who constantly add value to others. People follow them because they believe they are better for doing so; they always benefit. Alan Loy McGinnis said, *“There is no more noble occupation in the world than to assist another human being—to help someone succeed.”*

- We add value to others when we truly value them.

**Discussion:** What do you do specifically that adds value to others?

## 7. Think \_\_\_\_\_ of Others.

Those who lose in life focus on what they are going *through*. Those who win, focus on what they are going *to*. Leaders need to look ahead to the future and see a better tomorrow. They are a source of hope for everyone.

Leaders Who Gain Respect:

- Think bigger than others do. They can see more.
- Think beyond what others do. They can see further.
- Think before others do. They can see beforehand.

**Discussion:** What prevents you from seeing ahead and thinking bigger?

In summary, this lesson has been about gaining personal influence with people. It’s about earning your right to be followed, rather than demanding it because someone owes you their submission. Good leaders should seldom have to demand that someone follow. Their life demonstrates such competence, character and chemistry with others that people respect them and want to follow.

## Reviewing the seven characteristics of building respect as a leader:

1. Respect yourself and those who work with you.
2. Exceed the expectations of others.
3. Stand firm on your convictions and principles.
4. Possess a maturity well beyond your age and experience.
5. Experience success in your career, family and personal life.
6. Contribute to the success of others.
7. Think ahead of others.

### Assessment and Application

#### Assessment:

From the above seven characteristics of a respected leader, which do you believe you do naturally? In which ones do you need improvement?

**Application:** Reflect and list one action step you can take to grow in your personal influence.