

Leading by Influence

Lebanon Lodge – Jan. 14, 2012

Worshipful Master Elect, tonight your peers are installing you as leader of their organization. There are many consultants and books on the theory of leadership but one of the more interesting experts on developing good leadership habits is John C. Maxwell. He explodes some of the myths about leadership – some of the misconceptions we have about the qualities a person must have if they are going to be successful leaders --- for example -

- 1) – The Myth About Position – The position may give an individual some time to prove themselves a leader but it is short lived. Stanely Huffly stated that “It’s not the position that makes the leader; it’s the leader that makes the position.” Often a politician will search out the direction that the crowd is going then get out in front and look like they are the leader. This is not leadership but rather just being a smart politician.
- 2) – The Myth of Knowledge – I.Q does not make you a leader. Go to any University and you can find brilliant researchers who are not leaders. Sir Francis Bacon said, “Knowledge is power.” Leaders need knowledge and intelligence but I.Q. alone does not make them a leader.
- 3) – The Myth of the Entrepreneur – We need entrepreneurs to take chances, to produce and sell products which create wealth in our country. These skills may give the appearance that they are leading. This is only a short lived appearance but has no long-term influence over people. They are not leading.
- 4) – The Management Myth – Leadership and management are different even though we often find them being used with the same meaning. Maxwell states that “leadership is about influencing people to follow while management focuses on maintaining systems and processes.”
- 5) – The Out in Front Myth – Being first to find or invent something may put a person number one or first but it doesn’t make them a leader. Often the one out in front of crowd is considered the leader. To be a leader a person not only needs to be out in front but must have people who are intentionally following the vision and going in the same direction.

In other words Maxwell believes “the true measure of leadership is influence – nothing more, nothing less.”

It is of interest to note that Maxwell suggested to 150 automotive CEOs that to truly find out which of their employees has leadership skills, they should assign staff to a volunteer group such as the Red Cross, United Way, Church or some similar Volunteer organization and observe how they lead. If they can get people to follow in one of those roles then they really have influence and leadership ability. This sounds to me like leading in Freemasonry.

Some will be content to follow others, to participate but let others make decisions and lead, while others will prove to be real leaders. A parallel can be drawn to leading in Freemasonry.

As the Worshipful Master Elect you have heard of the ultimate power of the Worshipful Master. This may have been great in theory in ancient times, however time and cultures have changed and one must have the ability to influence the brethren if you are to truly lead in the coming year. To remind you of the importance of influencing your brethren in the coming year I have for you, as my 10th symbolic working tool of a Worshipful Master, a magnet. As you know it can influence many things around it.

Congratulations and do have a great year! If I can be of any assistance during your year please contact me at your convenience.

Laws of Leadership – John C. Maxwell

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