



## Written Summary

<http://bestbookbits.com/the-21-irrefutable-laws-of-leadership-summary-by-john-maxwell/>

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John Maxwell is one of the world's foremost authorities on Leadership. John has trained millions of people and written over 50 books. Like many other authorities on Leadership, John would agree that Leadership is about Setting Direction, Aligning People, Motivating and Inspiring. John breaks down leadership even further. Each of the 21 laws has its own chapter in which John shares personal stories and biographical sketches of some of history's greatest leaders. A quick look at each law is as follows:

1. **The Law of the Lid.** It states that there is a lid on or limit to our potential that is determined by our leadership ability. As we grow our abilities as a leader, we automatically grow our ability to impact the world. If our leadership ability stagnates, so does our ability to make a bigger impact.

2. **The Law of Influence.** Influence is the power or capacity to produce a desired result. Maxwell refers to this law many times throughout the book. Simply stated he says that the true measure of leadership is influence- nothing more, nothing less. Influence is what helps fulfill the goals and dreams of the leader and without influence, a leader lacks the ammunition to reach the destination.
3. **The Law of Process.** Leaders are learners and their capacity to develop and improve their skills distinguishes leaders from their followers. The learning process is ongoing and a result of self-discipline and perseverance. To quote Maxwell “If I need to be inspired to take steps forward, then I’ll attend an event. If I need to improve, then I’ll engage in a process and stick with it.” Maxwell asks the questions “What is one little thing you can do more of that would have a positive impact on your life or your business? And is there something you can stop doing that will have the same kind of impact?” Both are important as we strive to get a little better every day.
4. **The Law of Navigation.** Anyone can steer a ship but it takes a leader to chart the course, carefully, seeing where they want to go and charting the most effective course to get there. This holds true for individual leaders and for leadership teams. To quote Maxwell “If the leader can’t navigate the people through rough waters, he is liable to sink the ship.”
5. **The Law of Addition.** The law of addition focuses on advancing others, not ourselves. Leadership is an act of service to others and the true leader focuses on creating value for others. The best place to serve is where we can add the most value to others. Leaders add value to others by valuing others and relating to what others value. True leaders ask “How can I serve?” Because they are focused on service, it’s not so much about “What’s in it for me.”
6. **The Law of Solid Ground.** The solid ground is solid character, living with integrity, authenticity and discipline. Trust is the foundation of leadership. It is earned or it isn’t. Character is the source of trust. We build our character by being scrupulously honest, even when it hurts. To be authentic, we must be ourselves with everyone, not pretending to be something that we aren’t. Discipline comes from doing what needs to be done whether we like it or not.
7. **The Law of Respect.** We must be strong and worthy of respect if we want people to respect us, to have a high opinion of us and be willing to follow our lead, because people naturally follow people with leadership skills and traits

stronger than they possess. Choosing those one wishes to follow is not accidental. People follow others who possess leadership traits they respect and admire and consider more worthy of respect than themselves.

8. **The Law of Intuition.** Great leaders have intuition, the sense they should head in a certain direction. Intuition is the power to discern the true nature of a person or situation. Like any other leadership quality, intuition can be developed. Leadership intuition is really that inner thought or perception to make a particular change in an organization, or to know what to do at a particularly challenging time. To trust oneself, one's insights, one's instincts.
9. **The Law of Magnetism.** Maxwell describes leaders as magnets. They are constantly attracting followers and often attracting new leaders to themselves. It is because of this that organizations experience growth. However, we attract people like ourselves, so if we want to attract great people, we must ourselves be great.
10. **The Law of Connection.** Connection is to bring or to join one thing to another, to hit it off, to be on the same wavelength. Establishing a connection with another person is vital in leadership. A CEO who fails to emotionally connect with his people is on the road to failure because we must connect with others before we can expect them to follow. As Maxwell says "Leaders touch a heart before they ask for a hand."
11. **The Law of the Inner Circle.** It states that those closest to us will determine our potential as a leader. They should be people who have our best interest at heart, want to see us succeed, and able to hold us accountable. Our strength as leaders comes only partially from what we know. It is also dependent on the skills of our inner circle and how closely connected our inner circle is to each other. An example of the law of the inner circle comes to us from Mother Teresa, who said "You can do what I can't do. I can do what you can't do. Together we can do great things.
12. **The Law of Empowerment.** So many of us are limited by our unwillingness to give up something either because of wanting to hoard knowledge and skills to ensure job security, resistance to change, or lack of self-worth or low self-esteem. Empowerment is to give the means, the power or opportunity to do to others. In order to empower others, we must first trust ourselves and then trust others to follow through managing processes and performing the tasks.

13. **The Law of the Picture.** People do not do what people hear, they do what they see. Leaders lead by example. Because of this, we must embody our ideals to create a picture of what will inspire people to follow our lead.
14. **The Law of Buy-In.** Getting support for our ideas, vision and strategy requires others to buy-in to us first before deciding to support our ideas, vision and strategy. In the words of General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, “Leadership is a potent combination of strategy and character. But if you must be without one, be without strategy.” The law of the buy-in causes people to take one of these actions: to look for another leader when they do not buy-in to the leader or the leader’s vision; to look for another leader when they do not buy-in to the leader, but do buy-in to the vision; to seek to change the vision when they buy-in to the leader, but not the vision; or to support the leader and the vision when they buy-in to both.
15. **The Law of Victory.** Leaders find a way for the team to win. True leaders have a passion for victory. Winston Churchill is one of the finest examples of someone who inspired victory. His most famous quotes are” Never, Never, Never Give Up!” , “The Harder The Battle, The Sweeter The Victory!” and “Victory At All Costs, Victory In Spite Of All Terror, Victory However Long And Hard The Road May Be: For Without Victory There Is No Survival.” Abe Lincoln is quoted as saying one of his general’s leadership captured defeat out of the jaws of victory by not having a passion for victory. A victory that comes from finding a way for the team to win may be having no Plan B or going from Plan A all the way through the alphabet to bring our vision to life and do what we’re here to do.
16. **The Law of Big Mo.** If we’ve got all the passion, tools and people we need to win, we’re in trouble if we can’t get things going. Big Mo is “Momentum” and momentum is a close friend of effective leaders. When we have no momentum, even the smallest tasks seem insurmountable and small problems look like huge obstacles. On the other hand when we have momentum on our side, the future looks bright, obstacles appear small and troubles seem unimportant. Creating momentum requires someone who has a vision to assemble a good team and motivate others. Momentum starts with energy and enthusiasm to create and celebrate small wins to show consistent progress which is a powerful motivator.
17. **The Law of Priorities.** Many people are so busy that they can’t get anything important done. They are unfocused and this can only lead to failure. Focusing on what is most important is so much more effective than being busy. Becoming

laser focused on a clear vision leads to more success, faster, even when what has to be done is difficult or even painful. We've all heard of the 80/20 rule. It says that 80% of our activities will lead to 20% of our results and that 20% of our activities leads to 80% of our results. The key is to identify the 20% of our activities that bring us the highest return on our investment and get rid of or delegate the rest of the activities. Once we understand our focus, we can prioritize our to-do list and make things happen faster.

18. **The Law of Sacrifice.** Leaders trade freedom for responsibility. In any organization of more than one person, the larger the organization gets and higher we go, the more we need to be willing to give up. A leader must give up to go up. Maxwell says and I quote "It is easier to go from failure to success than it is to go from excuses to success." I never thought of this before, but it makes a lot of sense. Without sacrifice, there is no improvement. A question that comes up for me is, "Am I making excuses or am I unwilling to make the sacrifices to get me from where I am to where I want to be?"
19. **The Law of Timing.** When to lead is as important as what to do and where to go. Because not all moments are created equal, effective leaders know when to seize the moment, when to move forward and when to back off, what to improve and how radical those improvements should be. Higher level leaders often see opportunities and risks before others see them, see more clearly and completely than others see, and see farther than others see. This allows them to start planning sooner, see more options, and plan and prioritize for what lies ahead both in the short and long terms.
20. **The Law of Explosive Growth.** A strong leader recognizes that developing leaders around him/her will exponentially create a larger group of leaders. The Law of Explosive Growth states that leaders who attract followers grow by addition, whereas leaders who develop leaders grow by multiplication. Maxwell calls this "Leader's Math". Leaders are hard to find and many enjoy flying solo. Most of the time leaders like change which contributes to why many organizations struggle to keep leaders. When senior leaders continue growing it enable more junior leaders to continue on their own development journey.
21. **The law of Legacy.** Leaders who leave a lasting legacy leave an indelible imprint on our hearts because they chose to make an impact on the world. Maxwell contends that leaders who practice the law of legacy are rare. But the ones who do practice the law of legacy leave a legacy of succession in their

organizations, family, friends and the world as a whole. How does this happen? These individuals lead with tomorrow as well as today in mind; they create a leadership culture within their organizations; they pay a price to assure lasting success; they value team leadership above individual leadership; and they realize that the leader's lasting value can only be judged based on how well the organization did after the leader is gone. In other words, those leaders who leave a solid legacy choose a life of significance, not just a life of success.

by Jack Lyons