

# EXTRAORDINARY RESULTS



*Mastering the Art of  
Leading, Coaching, &  
Influencing Others*

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# LEADING OTHERS & INFLUENCE



## Simple Truth



**P**eople have been studying, analyzing, and attempting to define what characteristics and attributes make a great leader for thousands of years. Every few years or so a new leadership theory hits the training and personal development world and a new fad is born.

Each fad promises success, whether it be 10 Ways To Communicate Better or 5 Ways To Be More Effective. The bottom line is that there are a lot of folks trying to grab your attention and they all have the best intention to help you be a better leader, salesperson, manager, husband, or wife. That is just the way the self-improvement industry works. The hope is you will find what you need to grow in one of these books, and yet the expectation seems to be that they each hold the silver bullet that will cure all of your problems.

The simple truth is that there is no silver bullet, book, or single training event that will cure your dis-ease or your issues. Chances are, if you are struggling with an issue, you always will. You can work on it and improve in that area, but it rarely ever goes away completely.

For example, if you don't like conflict you probably never will. You can acquire skills and a mindset that may change how you face conflict that will make you more effective, but you will never like it! That's okay, you don't have to like conflict to be a great leader, you just need to effectively manage through it.

This book is rooted in simple truths, simple ideas, and simple actions you can take to increase your ability to influence others more impactfully. Just remember simple isn't always easy, and easy isn't always simple. Things will be hard until they are not. In other words, when you decide that something isn't hard, it won't be, it will just be something you do.

## Defining Extraordinary Leadership

You can argue back and forth about who you feel is a great leader. You can turn on any cable news network and watch panels of experts debate the topic of leadership and who is a good leader and who is labeled a horrible one. At times, it is difficult to comprehend how folks can hold such diametrically opposed opinions of the very same person. You love Donald Trump, you hate Donald Trump, you love Angelina Jolie, you hate Angelina Jolie. Who's right?

If I asked you, based on your experiences, to tell me about the leaders who have influenced you in a positive way, I'm sure you could mention at least one person. You might mention a person you worked for at one time, or maybe a parent or relative, a teacher or your high school soccer coach. Regardless of whom you selected, they influenced you to achieve more, to be more, or accomplish more than you thought you were capable of achieving. In the same way, I'm sure you could also bring to mind a leader that impacted or influenced you in an incredibly negative way as well.

All of us have been influenced throughout our lives by leaders—some good and some not so good. The ones we remember the most are those who had a positive influence on our lives, the ones who helped bring out the best in us—those who help us to accomplish extraordinary results.

Successful leadership comes down to your ability to influence others. In fact, the definition of a leader is exactly that:

*A leader is a person who influences others to do or to be their best.*

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Based on that definition, everyone has the ability to influence others — which means in some small way every one of us has the opportunity to lead.

True leaders realize that in order to influence others to do or to be their best, they first have to stop focusing on themselves. That’s easier said than done.

Why? Because most leaders got promoted to a leadership position after they had proven themselves as an individual contributor. Individual contributors succeed because they do the work themselves, and they focus their efforts on themselves and their individual contribution. They directly impact the work.

Leaders, on the other hand, have to step back and influence others to get the work done. For some leaders this is a huge problem because they don’t know how to influence, they only know how to get the work done. The single biggest shift any leader has to make is the jump from being an individual contributor to being a leader. It is a complete and total shift from doing the work to having the ability to influence others to do the work without micromanaging or stepping in and taking over or doing it themselves. This is a challenge that highly driven individual contributors fall into when they don the leadership cape.

## Defining Influence

Merriam-Webster’s dictionary defines *influence* as “the power to change or affect someone or something.” This means the power to cause changes without directly forcing them to happen. A leader, in this context then, is a person or thing that affects someone or something in an important way.

I am often asked about the difference between influencing and manipulating others. I don't mean to generalize here but...the question usually comes from leaders who are very nice and are worried that they are being sneaky and insidious.

So, what is the difference between influence and manipulation?

Let me reframe it with a question: How many of you love the experience of sitting down across the table from a car salesperson and his “manager” to buy a car?

For most non-driver, non-type-A personality people who are not driven by a need to win, buying a car is a terrible experience because they feel like they are being manipulated. The truth is...they probably are.

Car salespeople know they have a very limited window of time to sell you a car, because they know if you walk out that door chances are you're not coming back. So they have to pull out all of the stops to get what they want...to sell you a car!

Here's how Merriam-Webster defines *manipulation*: “to manage or utilize skillfully; to control or play upon by artful, unfair, or insidious means, especially to one's own advantage.” While not all car salespeople are like this, a high percentage of them are. The key here is that the difference between whether it is influence or manipulation comes down to the intention of the person who is attempting to influence. Manipulators emphasize their own advantage. Leaders emphasize what works for everyone, and put the needs of the other person first. The question then becomes: Is it a person's intention to get what they themselves need? Or is it about helping the other person get what they need?

## **Defining an Extraordinary Leader Who Influences**

In order to be an extraordinary leader, you must truly understand the purpose behind leading. Your job as a leader is to hold up a flashlight — and sometimes a mirror — so that your team can see the obstacles

they are placing in their paths, tripping over, and then looking outwardly for the causes.

The job is to help the team understand that they are placing those obstacles in their path, and that they are responsible for removing those obstacles so that they can move forward. Forward can be realized as better results, a promotion, a higher level of productivity, a bonus, an increase, a job they truly want, or even a career shift that takes them away from your team, and sometimes your company. In the end, leaders help others to achieve extraordinary results.

Years ago, I was working with a company that was going through a merger. One of the leaders I was working with was terrified that his job was in jeopardy because the corporate headquarters was being moved to a different location. Operating from a fear-based mindset, he decided to withhold information as a way to become invaluable. He falsely believed that if he withheld the information and no one else had access to it, they would never get rid of him. He would be irreplaceable! You can probably see where this is going?

As a result of keeping things secretive and withholding information that would benefit the team, he and the company eventually parted ways. Why? He was viewed as someone who wasn't a team player and wasn't willing to adjust to the new culture or the changes that were taking place around him. Had he been able to see that his behavior was giving him the exact opposite results that he wanted, he might have decided to do things differently. The problem was that he was continuing to blame everyone else for his problems. If the merger had never happened, if they just kept the corporate headquarters where he was located, everything would have been fine. He pointed outward at everyone else and blamed them because he wasn't willing to take 100% responsibility for the fact that his beliefs and his actions were the root cause of his poor reviews and disciplinary actions.

Sometimes what is best for the employee is to move forward by moving away. The reality of the situation above was that deep down the employee wasn't really happy. He eventually went off and started his own business.

Sometimes an extraordinary leader can get so wrapped up in their own needs and their own agenda, they overlook what might be best for the employee. You may get so heavily invested in holding on to an employee that wants to or needs to move on. When this happens it may mean that you do everything you can to get them to stay, and then there is a good chance your conversation will either border on manipulation or be full-blown manipulation.

Focusing on others is simple, but sometimes isn't even close to being easy. Most humans are wired to make sure we get our needs met first. Some of the greatest teachers in the world: Gandhi, Jesus, the Dalai Lama, Lao Tzu, Mother Teresa, Muhammad, Martin Luther King Jr., Buddha, believed that your path to success, happiness—and even enlightenment—begins when you can get out of your own way and focus on helping others.

Being an extraordinary leader is no different. You may not change the world but you can influence the lives of your people and those you lead in a significant way. Then again, who knows? You or one of the people you lead may just change the world in a way neither one of you could ever imagine!