

# Audio-Tech Business Book Summaries



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## The 360° Leader Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization

by John C. Maxwell

*A summary of the original text.*

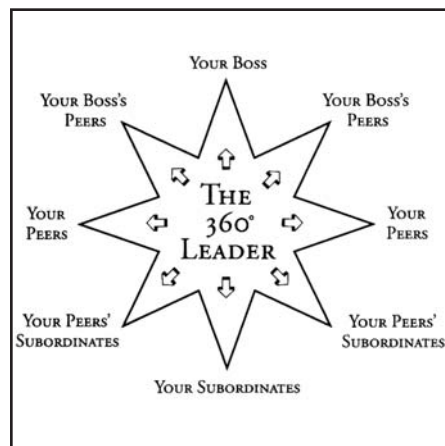
### SEVEN MYTHS ABOUT LEADING FROM THE MIDDLE

360-Degree Leadership means exercising influence in all directions, by using principles, skills, and insights that allow you not just to lead down, but also to lead up and lead across.

- *Leading up* means being able to do what others won't, as well as knowing when to push — and when to back off.
- *Leading across* means helping complete your peers, as well as letting the best ideas win.
- *Leading down* means interacting with subordinates by observing them and listening carefully, and always working to transfer your vision and reward productive people.

What does it mean to say that 360-Degree Leaders should influence people in every

direction? It means you should influence the following: those you work for, those you work with, and those who work for you.



So, how can you lead if you're not at the top of the hierarchy? You can do so by influencing people, making things happen, and helping advance the organization.

To do so, however, you'll have to overcome seven myths. All of these myths imply that, if you're not the top leader, you can't be a leader.

Let's begin with ***The Position Myth***, which says *you can't lead if you're not up front and on top*.

Real leadership often has little to do with your position in an organization. Instead, leadership is all about your influence. It's about building relationships and gaining the confidence of others.

Leadership consists of five levels that function like a stairway leading to increasing professional growth and effectiveness:

- The first step is *position*, where people follow you because they have to — and that's the least effective form of leadership because it often results in high turnover and low morale.
- The second step is *permission*, where people follow you, at least for a time, because they want to follow.
- The third step is *production*, where people follow because of what you've done for the organization — and this phase generates organizational success.
- The fourth step is *reproduction*, where people follow because of what you've done for them — and this phase produces long-range growth and widespread leadership development.
- The fifth step — one reached only by the strongest, most enduring leaders — is *respect*, where people follow because of who you are and what you represent.

Ultimately, leadership is not a position you occupy, but instead a choice you make. Thus, you lead because you've decided to settle for nothing less.

The second myth is ***The Destination Myth***. This myth is based on the assumption that *when you get to the top, you'll then be able to lead*.

However, if you want to achieve real leadership, you need to know a lot about it before you get in a situation that demands it. So, it's essential to start practicing leadership well before circumstances absolutely require it.

The third leadership myth is ***The Influence Myth***. Essentially, it says that *if you are on top, then people will naturally follow you*.

But remember that designating a person as CEO doesn't magically turn that person into a leader. Real influence isn't a gift you can receive, but rather a characteristic you must earn.

The fourth myth of leadership is ***The Inexperience Myth***. It says that *when you get to the top, then you'll somehow be ready to exert control*.

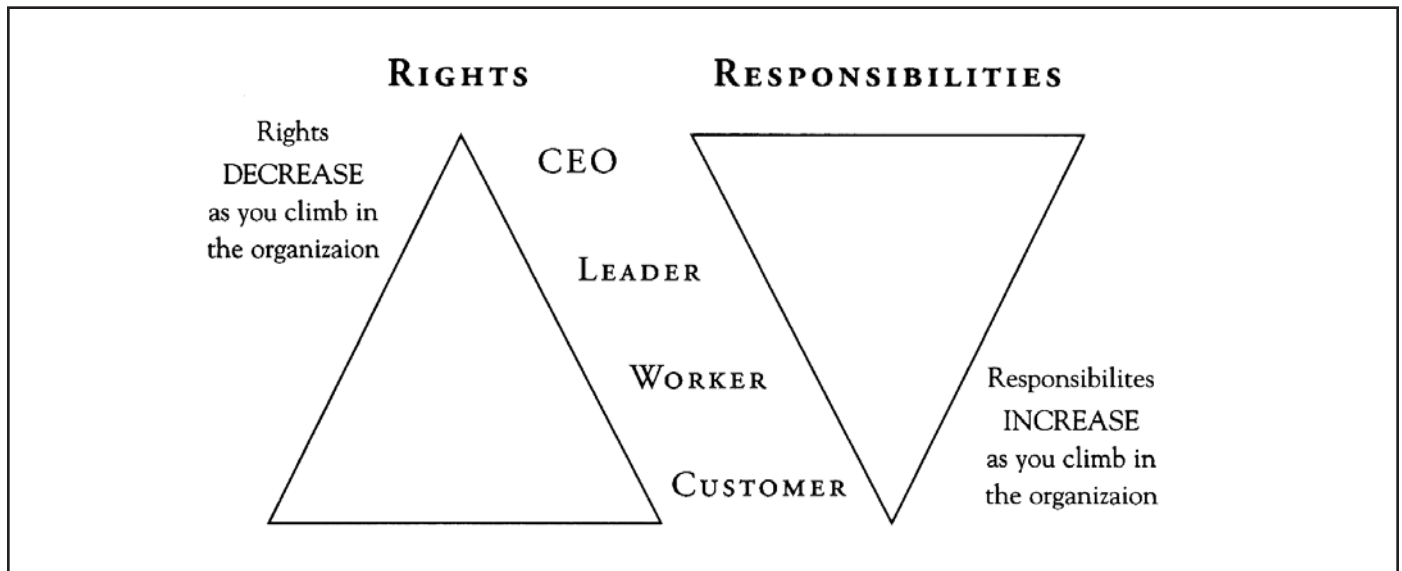
In fact, real leaders at any level exert a measure of control. Also, even some highly regarded CEOs of legendary organizations find out that they can't control everything. Ask Hewlett Packard's Carly Fiorina, once seen as the nation's most powerful female executive, only to get shown the door a few years later.

Being the top person has its own set of challenges. In leadership, no matter where you are in an organization, the bottom line is always your ability to get the attention and support of others.

The fifth myth is ***The Freedom Myth***. It asserts that *when you get to the top, you'll be free at last of limitations*.

People who believe this myth think that when they're in charge, the sky truly will be the limit. But that's not exactly true, because the higher you go, the more people expect and demand of you.

In some ways, a big company's leader might have *less* freedom than a salesperson. The top person must rely on the actions of other people for success, including employees, customers, and investors. But as long as the salesperson produces sales results, no one really cares what hours that individual works — or how he or she does the job.



The sixth leadership myth is *The Potential Myth*. It says *you can't reach your potential if you're not at the top*.

In fact, your potential is something you should be realizing along the way. If you don't begin learning how to lead from the middle, you may never get a chance to lead at all.

Vice President Dick Cheney is a lifelong leader from the middle. He's served for many years as a loyal advisor to three Presidents: Gerald Ford, George H. W. Bush, and George W. Bush.

Cheney apparently never subscribed to the seventh and final myth — *The All-or-Nothing Myth*. It asserts that *if you can't get to the top, then you shouldn't even try to lead*.

That's a recipe for disillusionment, cynicism, and bitterness. There's not just one place from which to lead. For example, while the undisputed leader of the civil rights movement was Martin Luther King, there were many other leaders in that struggle, some of whom may never have marched or sat at a segregated lunch counter. *Fortune* identified one such man as Clifton Wharton, the first black CEO of a major company, TIA-CREF.

Another business leader who advanced the cause of civil rights was James Avery. When he started with Esso Oil in the 1950s, he couldn't even use the same restroom as Caucasian customers. When he retired from Exxon in 1986, he was a senior vice president.

The point is that great leaders in institutions or social movements don't always become household names. But their positive influence can be enormous.

Clearly, leadership isn't an all-or-nothing proposition. You can have a powerful effect wherever you are in an institution. But to achieve leadership from the middle, you must overcome certain challenges.



## SEVEN CHALLENGES FACING 360-DEGREE LEADERS

To succeed as a 360-Degree Leader, you need to confront and overcome seven challenges.

Let's start with *The Tension Challenge*, which involves the pressures associated with *being caught in the middle*.

Unless you're the CEO and the owner of the company, your authority derives from someone else. That person, or persons, can fire you, demote you, or reassign you.

At least five factors affect the degree of tension anyone in the middle encounters, including:

1. *Empowerment*, or precisely how much authority and responsibility your boss gives you.
2. *Initiative*, or how you balance the actions you initiate without overstepping your boundaries.
3. *Environment*, or how the organization's and leader's "DNA" creates a unique situation for you.
4. *Job parameters*, or how well you know how to do your job.
5. *Appreciation*, or how you cope with not always getting the credit you may deserve.

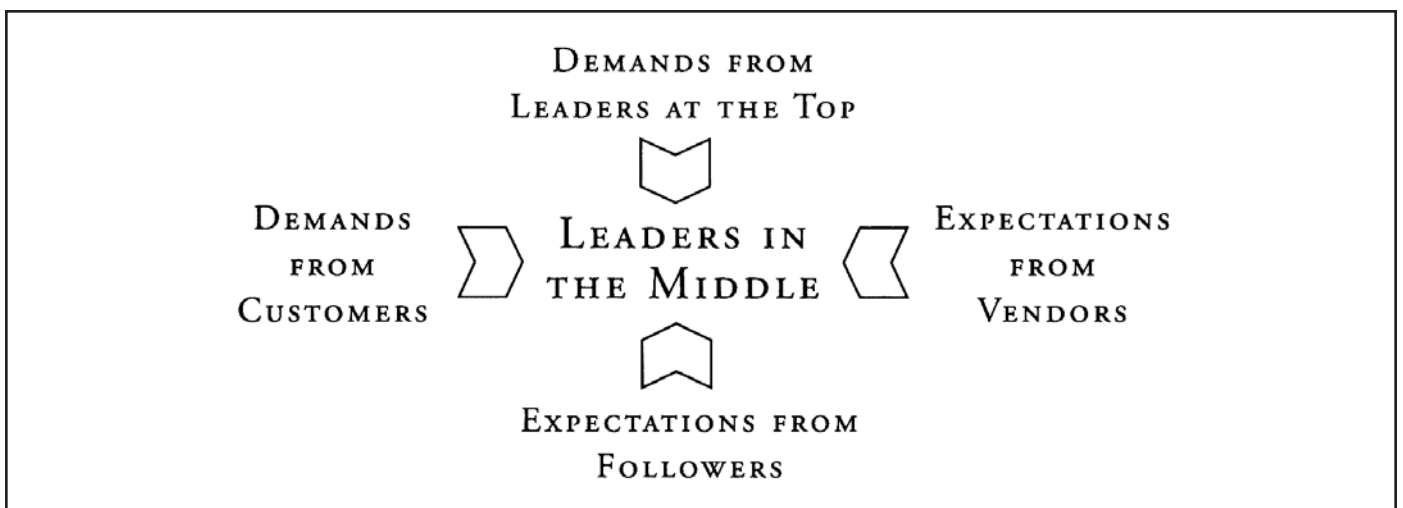
*The Frustration Challenge* involves *following an ineffective leader*. In facing this issue, recognize that your job isn't to fix the leader, but rather to add value.

It can be maddening for a good leader in the middle to work for a mediocre boss. Ineffective leaders include those who are insecure, visionless, overly political, selfish, controlling, or just downright incompetent.

If you're frustrated because of someone else's actions, be aware that the solution lies largely within you. Remember that your own leadership relies at least as much on disposition as it does on position.

Your role as a leader in the middle of an organization is to add value. So, when you're working for an ineffective leader, build the best relationship you can with that person. Then, identify the leader's strengths and weaknesses. If the leader asks for help in his or her areas of weakness, provide it. Whenever possible, publicly build up your leader any time you can do so truthfully.

You may also face *The Multi-Hat Challenge*, which is the challenge of *living up to the demands and expectations of leaders, followers, customers, and vendors*.



Leaders at the top of an organization face their own challenges, but they have a luxury denied to most leaders in the middle: specifically, they can choose what to do. In contrast, those in the middle mainly answer to the demands of others.

Remember that every role you play has its own responsibilities and objectives. You have to be flexible enough to interact with people differently in each role, yet maintain the same consistent personality. Your attitude and behavior should be consistent and predictable with everyone, or you won't seem trustworthy to anyone.

Another challenge is ***The Ego Challenge***, which refers to the fact that *leaders in the middle tend to be invisible*. Remember that consistently good leadership does get noticed eventually.

Handling the ego challenge involves concentrating more on your duties than on your dreams. It also requires that you focus on the satisfaction you get from doing your job well and making a significant contribution to your company's success.

Additionally, there's ***The Fulfillment Challenge***, reflecting a leader's natural preference for leading from "out front" or "on top" rather than in the middle.

Perhaps you've heard the old saying about the view from the middle of the pack. It's said that when you're the lead dog, the view always changes. If you're not the lead dog, your view always stays the same, and that view isn't exactly what one would call "scenic." But the truth of the matter is that the dog in the front of the pack isn't the leader. The person driving the sled is the leader, and that person is actually in the back.

There are advantages to being in front or on top of an organization. After all, it's the most recognized position, and it's exhilarating to have reached the summit. What's more, the top person gets to determine the organization's direction — and to set the pace. But the best leaders get the most satisfaction not from winning the race, but from helping the team win.

Leading from the middle has its own satisfactions. You can make it very satisfying if you develop strong relationships with key people, define winning in terms of teamwork, use your time to gain experience and maturity, and put the organization's success ahead of your own.

The sixth challenge is ***The Vision Challenge***. *Championing a vision is more difficult when you didn't create it.*

The more you invest personally in the vision, the more it will become your own. The most positive response to a leader's vision is to go beyond championing it to actually adding value to it. At that point, the vision becomes something more. It has greater value to the leader, to the recipients of the vision, and to the person who contributed to it.

What's great about this is that once you have begun to add value to the vision, you have eliminated The Vision Challenge, because you're no longer championing someone else's vision; instead, you are championing a vision to which you have contributed.

Finally, the seventh challenge, ***The Influence Challenge***, acknowledges that *leading others beyond your position is not easy*.

That's why 360-Degree Leaders work to change their thinking from, "I want a position that will make people follow me," to "I want to become a person whom people will want to follow." That's the only solution to The Influence Challenge.

And what kind of leader would people want to follow?

- People follow leaders they know: leaders who care.

- People follow leaders they trust: leaders with character.
- People follow leaders they respect: leaders who are competent.
- People follow leaders they can approach: leaders who are consistent.
- People follow leaders they admire: leaders with commitment.

If you work hard to become that type of leader, people will want to follow you. If you begin to practice the qualities of influence, you will be ready to take on one of the toughest tasks of 360-Degree Leaders: *leading up*.



## **THE NINE PRINCIPLES ESSENTIAL TO LEADING UP**

If you're trying to make an impact from the middle, you can probably relate to the myths and challenges we've outlined so far. So, how do you get beyond the myths and overcome the challenges?

You become a 360-Degree Leader by learning to *lead up* with your boss, *lead across* with your colleagues, and lead down with your followers. Each of these draws on different principles and requires different skills.

***Leading up*** is the biggest challenge. After all, most leaders — probably including your boss — want to lead, not be led. Yet they also want value added to the organization and their own job. Intellectually, they know that kissing up to the boss doesn't add value, but leading up does.

Granted, some leaders may resist almost any effort you make to influence them. But you can greatly increase your chances for success if you follow nine basic principles for leading up.

Principle #1 is that you must ***lead yourself exceptionally well***.

If you think merely wanting to do good things is enough, just ask all those people who buy gym memberships and then use them just once or twice. Achieving what you want requires a continuing effort to keep your focus and discipline.

Specifically, you must manage seven areas:

1. Manage your *emotions*, which you can do by concentrating on meeting your organization's needs first, rather than your own.
2. Manage your *time*, because in the words of psychiatrist M. Scott Peck: "Until you value yourself, you won't value your time. Until you value your time, you will not do anything with it."
3. Manage your *priorities*, by spending most of your time on the things you do best.
4. Manage your *energy*, by doing things that truly matter and emphasize resolving conflicts.
5. Manage your *thinking*, by recognizing that your mind will give back to you in ideas exactly the quality of the information and thought you put into it.
6. Manage your *words*, by using them sparingly but meaningfully.
7. Manage your *personal life*, because if it is chaotic, your work inevitably will suffer.

The second principle is to ***lighten your leader's load***. Remember that bosses can give up many

things, but one thing they can't let go of is having the final responsibility for what happens on their watch.

What steps can you take to lighten your leader's load? Start by doing your job well, day in and day out, and by being a problem-solver rather than a problem-maker.

Other ways to help lift the leader's load include: telling the leader what he *needs* to hear, rather than what he may *want* to hear; going the extra mile to get things done; standing *up* for the leader whenever you can; standing *in* for the leader whenever necessary; and asking the leader how you can help.

The third principle of leading up is that you must ***be willing to do what others won't***. Few things gain the appreciation of a top leader more quickly than an employee with a whatever-it-takes attitude. That's why 360-Degree Leaders must be willing to think outside of their job description, and to be willing to tackle the kinds of jobs that others are too proud or too frightened to approach.

To do what others won't, you must be willing to do 10 things that will set you apart from your peers:

1. Take on the tough jobs.
2. Pay your dues, by giving up other opportunities.
3. Work in obscurity, because the goal is to do something that matters, not to get noticed.
4. Succeed with difficult people.
5. Put yourself on the line.
6. Admit your faults, but never make excuses.
7. Do more than expected.
8. Be the first to step up and help.
9. Perform tasks that are "not your job."
10. Take responsibility for your responsibilities.

The fourth principle of leading up is to ***do more than manage — lead***. Being a manager doesn't make you a good leader.

Leadership involves *people* more than projects, *vision* more than procedures, *action* more than reaction, and *relationships* more than rules. Before people will follow, they need to believe in what you do, and know that you believe in them.

The fifth principle is that you should ***invest in relational chemistry***. The point here is that people won't *go along* if they can't *get along* with you.

You can get along with your leader if you understand that individual's priorities, interests, enthusiasms, vision, and personality.

The sixth principle is that you always need to ***be prepared when you take your leader's time***. The better the leader, the more pressure he will have on his time, and he won't appreciate your wasting any of it.

Spend at least 10 minutes on preparation for every one minute you spend with the leader. Don't make your boss think for you; in other words, leaders in the middle should only ask questions of their bosses when they cannot answer those questions themselves.

Also, learn to speak your boss's language, which helps you not only to communicate with the boss, but also to communicate with others on behalf of the boss.

The seventh principle is to ***know when to push forward — and when to back off.***

The most successful leaders make the *right moves*, at the *right moments*, and with the *right motives*. If you excel at pushing forward, at advocating critical actions, it's because your timing is very good, and you speak up at just the right moment. You know that a good idea advocated at the wrong time might as well be a bad idea.

To know when to back off, make sure that you aren't fixated on your personal agenda at the expense of the organization's future. Also, ensure that the actions you're proposing or taking aren't putting others, especially your boss, at risk.

The eighth principle is to ***become a go-to player.*** You want to earn a reputation for always achieving tough tasks. You want to be the person your leader invariably turns to during "crunch time."

Go-to players always find a way to make things happen — no matter what. They don't always insist on being in their comfort zones.

Finally, the ninth principle for leading up is to ***be better tomorrow than you are today.***

You become better tomorrow by concentrating on being extremely good at what you're doing now. You can do this by learning your craft today. Talk to those who are more experienced or skilled than you are at your profession. And keep honing your skills so that you are improving every day.



## **THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF LEADING ACROSS**

As we've discussed, leading up means influencing the boss above you. The second part of 360-Degree Leadership is leading across, which means leading your peers.

Here are the seven principles that underlie leading across.

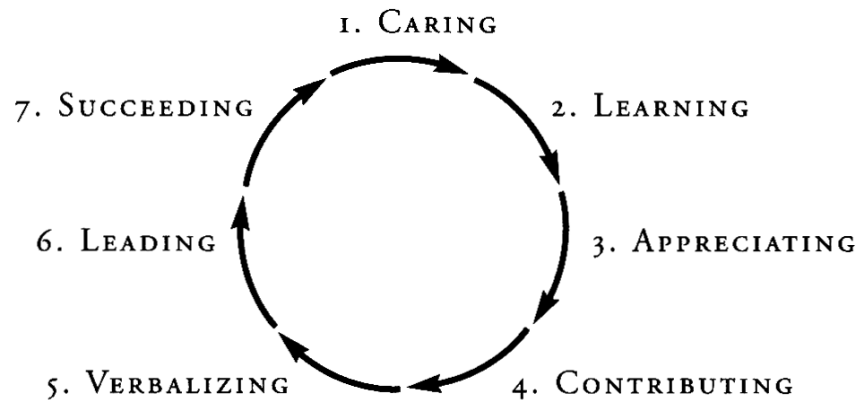
The first principle is to ***understand, practice, and complete the leadership loop.*** Many people who have difficulty leading across have trouble because their approach is too shortsighted. They try to gain influence too quickly. Leading is not a one-time event; it's an ongoing process that takes time, especially with peers.

If you want to gain influence and credibility with people working alongside you, then don't try to take shortcuts. Instead, use the leadership loop, which requires seven steps: caring, learning, appreciating, contributing, verbalizing, leading, and succeeding.

*Caring* involves taking an interest in people — and liking them as human beings. As for *learning*, it means getting to know them as individuals, and *appreciating* means truly respecting them.

*Contributing* refers to adding value to individuals, helping them to grow and become better as workers and people. *Verbalizing* means affirming people, and acknowledging their accomplishments.

## THE LEADERSHIP LOOP



*Leading* means influencing them by building on the solid relationship you've established, while *succeeding* means winning with them.

The second principle of leading across is to ***put completing fellow leaders ahead of competing with them.***

Winning at all costs will end up costing you the support of your peers. Certainly, there's nothing wrong with embracing healthy competition — in fact, it's a natural instinct of leadership. But organizations need both *competition* and *cooperation* in order to win.

In short, it's fine to be hard-driving and competitive. But when your peers are in trouble, they should know you'll be there for them.

That leads into the third principle: ***be a friend to peers.*** Friends are people you believe in and trust, which are powerful forces in building bonds. Friendship is the foundation of influence, the framework for success, and the shelter against the crises that inevitably arise in work life.

How do you go about being a friend to other employees? It's not a touchy-feely concept, but a way of creating a mutual-reliance group. Essentially, you listen to one another, find common interests, retain a sense of humor, and always be truthful.

The fourth principle is to ***avoid office politics.*** There are two ways to get ahead in organizations. The good way is by working hard, and the bad way is by working the angles.

People who rely on *production* emphasize how they can grow, believe actions speak louder than words, and base their decisions on principles. In contrast, people who rely mainly on *politics* emphasize who they know, focus on what they say rather than what they do, and base their decisions on the opinions of others.

The fifth principle is to ***expand your circle of acquaintances.*** The point is that if everyone you know looks, thinks, and acts the way you do, it severely limits your potential for leadership. Start by expanding beyond your inner circle. Every friend you have has a friend you don't have. By getting to know them, you can double, triple, or quadruple your circle of acquaintances almost overnight.

Next, expand beyond your expertise. Connect with people in other departments of your organization. Expand beyond your strengths, by meeting people with other talents. If you are a creative type, go out of your way to meet people who are analytical.

The sixth principle is to ***let the best idea win.*** Recognize that just because an idea is yours

doesn't mean it's the best. Ideas are the lifeblood of a dynamic organization. But they're never the possession of one individual.

How can you be sure your team develops the best ideas? As a 360-Degree Leader, you have to take seriously all ideas, not just your own.

In fact, you should encourage and protect creative people and their ideas. Also, you should make sure that when your own ideas get rejected, you don't take it personally.

That leads to the final principle: ***Don't pretend that you're perfect.*** Admit your limitations, ask for advice, and be open to learning from others. Understand that pride and pretenses are the enemies of real leadership.



## **THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF LEADING DOWN**

Generally, we conceive of leadership as a top-down activity. But remember that 360-Degree Leaders lead by influence — rather than position, power, or leverage — and that's also true of leading down.

They take that approach not only with people above and alongside them, but also with those below them. They invest the time and exert the effort to earn influence with their followers, just as they do with those over them.

There are seven principles you need to master in order to lead down.

The first one is to ***walk slowly through the halls.*** Understand that leadership is about influencing human beings, and most leaders spend too much time in their offices, and not enough out among the people.

Experienced "hall walkers" know that, to connect with others, you need to slow down and travel at their speed. Individuals in the organizational middle and below move more slowly than those at the top.

You can be a better leader if you care about the ones you lead. That means you should balance your professional interest in others with a healthy degree of personal interest in them.

If people start avoiding you, it's a red flag. Overall, tend to the real needs of the people around you, and they'll do a good job of tending to business.

The second principle is to ***view everyone as a "perfect 10,"*** at least potentially. If you really believe as a leader in a person's capacity to achieve excellence, it may just occur.

In other words, see people not in terms of their limitations — but rather in terms of their possibilities. If you do that, followers will seek you out, because they'll recognize you add value to them.

The third principle is to ***develop each team member as a person with specific characteristics.*** When you develop people, you're helping them to improve as individuals.

There are seven elements involved in developing others:

- First, view it as a long-term process requiring a systematic approach.
- Second, discover each person's dreams and aspirations, remembering that your goal is to help them become better people.

- Third, recognize that one leadership approach doesn't fit all followers.
- Fourth, harmonize organizational goals with individual development.
- Fifth, help people to know themselves, recognizing that it's the leader's responsibility to help people identify their strengths and weaknesses.
- Sixth, celebrate your people's strategic victories as a way to help them grow.
- Seventh, prepare people for leadership, which means working side-by-side with them.

To become a 360-Degree Leader, you must take responsibility for adjusting your leadership style to what your people need, not pressuring them to adapt to your style.

The fourth principle is to ***place individuals in their zones of strength***. This means giving them the opportunity to do what they're best at doing. Organizations achieving that goal have lower turnover, greater productivity, and a higher customer satisfaction.

Getting employees to do more of what they do best involves discovering their strengths, and giving them not just a job but the right job, one where they'll add the most value.

The fifth principle is to ***model the behavior you want***. People will follow what you do more than what you say. In other words, leaders need to *be* what they want to *see*.

Corporate culture is a reflection of the behavior of an organization's top leader and middle leaders. When you are top leader, your attitude determines the organization's atmosphere, and your values determine the quality of the decisions made. If you take ethical shortcuts, then other employees will follow suit.

If the institution's productivity is low, then you probably should question your own work ethic. Also, if your people don't trust you, it's time to take a hard look at your character.

Thus, real leadership means more than making demands on others. It also means asking tough questions of yourself and your leadership practices.

The sixth principle is to ***transfer the vision***. Of course, leaders in the middle generally don't invent the vision, but they usually interpret it.

As a 360-Degree Leader who's interpreting the vision for others, you need to emphasize the following: clarity, connection to the past and future, purpose, and the passion that will make employees want to go the extra mile.

The final principle in leading down is to ***reward for results***. In this regard, it's important not to make a mistake and reward the wrong behaviors, because you're certain to get more of whatever you reward.

For one thing, you need to praise good performers. But if you give praise without a raise, you'll have problems with employee morale. When you have truly outstanding performers, it's hard to overpay them.

Leading up, leading across, and leading down are not easy. However, the effort is worthwhile because 360-Degree Leaders make a tremendous impact on their organizations.



## THE VALUE OF 360-DEGREE LEADERS

Is it worth it to make the sustained effort necessary to develop yourself as a 360-Degree Leader? Yes, because of the great value that is added by such a leader.

The first value of 360-Degree Leadership is that ***a leadership team is more effective than just one leader.***

Because organizations are basically a collection of teams, they need team-building leaders with the following characteristics:

- First, *visionary leaders who are willing to hire people better than themselves* — even people who might at times command very big salaries.
- Second, *wise leaders who shape their people into a team* — because they recognize that a team is always more effective than a single individual.
- Third, *secure leaders who empower their teams* — focusing on developing others and wanting them to do well.
- Fourth, *experienced leaders who listen to their teams* — because they recognize that subordinates generally know the most about their specific function.
- Fifth, *productive leaders who understand one leader alone cannot ensure greatness.*

The second value is similar, reflecting that ***an organization truly benefits from leadership at every level.*** An organization rises and falls on the pervasiveness and effectiveness of its leadership.

Without a leader, any group at any level will lack a clear vision, and decisions will get delayed as people pass the buck.

Also, leaderless groups have extended conflicts because there's no one to resolve them. They have low morale, because there's no one in whom to believe, and they have reduced productivity because no one challenges them to improve.

A single leader, no matter how skilled or even charismatic, can't provide leadership at all levels of a complex organization. Thus, the more leaders the better.

The third value is that ***leading successfully at one level is a major qualifier for doing so at the next level.***

In fact, what's the best way to know if someone can become an effective leader at a higher level? It's to analyze the individual's track record at his or her current position.

If you're a good leader where you are, the odds are you'll continue to be a good one as you move up. As you strive to be an effective 360-Degree Leader, consider several points:

One is that leadership is a journey that starts *where you are*, not *where you want to be*. In other words, you can't really get where you want to go unless you know where you are — and what you're doing that either impedes or advances the organization.

Also remember that leadership skills remain the same at various levels. However, the *level of play* — meaning the degree of skill required — changes.

How can you make yourself able to perform well at the next level? Do so by growing as much as possible at your current level.

What's more, remember that great responsibilities come only after you learn to handle small ones well. St. Francis of Assisi put it this way: "Start doing what is *necessary*. Then do what is possible. And suddenly you're doing the *impossible*."

In many organizations, there's a great deal of frustration among leaders in the middle. They often have a great desire to lead and succeed, yet their own leaders often hinder their efforts.

Most people who leave their jobs do so because of an ineffective or incompetent leader. People don't leave their company; instead, they leave their leader.

To keep the right people from walking out the door, you must make your organization a place where leaders lead, and do it well. That's a process that may take years of sustained effort, but it's essential.

Here are a dozen power-unleashing activities you can emphasize:

1. Place a very high value on people, who are the ones who'll carry out the vision and strengthen the bottom line.
2. Commit resources to people development.
3. Place a high value on leadership throughout the organization.
4. Always be on the lookout for potential leaders.
5. Know your people and respect them.
6. Provide your people with leadership experience.
7. Reward individuals for leadership initiative.
8. Provide an environment where people ask questions, share ideas, and take risks.
9. Grow along with your people.
10. Draw your high potential people into your inner circle.
11. Commit yourself to developing a strong leadership team.
12. Unleash your leaders and let them lead.

Of course, leadership can sometimes be lonely. But the isolation disappears as you develop other leaders, and you become one of many.

A fourth value is that ***good leaders in the middle make for even better leaders at the top***. That's because when all the power collects at the top, the leader there receives no support from the middle.

Good leaders in the middle serve as a motivational force. Their effort encourages leaders above them to continue growing.

Moreover, good leaders in the middle give the organization something crucial: a future. In fact, tomorrow's organizational success depends on the emergence of new leaders with fresh ideas and a commitment to innovation.

In short, today's effective leaders in the middle will be tomorrow's influential leaders at the top.

Leaders at the top must spend time and energy on succession. However, the same is true of mid-level leaders, who should think about how to prepare their people to replace them.

The point is: Without successors, there can be no success.

The final value is that ***360-Degree Leaders possess the qualities every organization needs.*** Being such a leader involves more than going through the motions. In fact, it demands embracing — and internalizing — certain qualities.

It's a question less of what you say than of what you do — and, especially, what you are and what you can become

As a 360-Degree Leader, the specific qualities you need are: adaptability, discernment, perspective, communication skills, security, servanthood, resourcefulness, maturity, endurance, and "countability."

*Servanthood* refers to the fact that 360-Degree Leaders are servants first — and leaders second. They don't polish their own egos but rather add value to the entire organization.

As for *countability*, it reflects the fact that teammates, including leaders and followers, must always be able to count on one another. If someone always has your back, you'll never find a knife sticking in it.

Overall, leaders in the middle of organizations should get more credit. That's because the middle is the main force that causes most institutions to rise or fall.

Consider the example of General George C. Marshall, author of the famous Marshall Plan. He was never as famous as Churchill, Roosevelt, or Eisenhower, but he was perhaps history's greatest Army Chief of Staff.

From that position, he *led up* to the President. He also *led across* to the other Allied Commanders, and *led down* to his own senior officers.

Marshall oversaw the greatest institutional growth program in history. Under his command, he expanded the U.S. military from 200,000 people before World War II to 8.3 million at War's end, and Churchill called him "the organizer of victory."

Ultimately, Marshall, the organizational warrior, the leader in the middle, had such a great influence on the world that he won the Nobel Peace Prize.

Thus, being a leader at all levels is not about being on top, or achieving personal riches and fame. Rather, it's about adding value to an organization and helping sharpen the leadership skills of those around you.



## **THE KEYS TO LEADING FROM THE MIDDLE**

Becoming a 360-Degree Leader means overcoming various myths, confronting a number of challenges, and learning various principles about leading up, leading across, and leading down.

Here is a brief review of the seven myths every leader in the middle faces:

1. The Position Myth: "I can't lead if I'm not at the top."
2. The Destination Myth: "When I get to the top, then I'll learn to lead."
3. The Influence Myth: "If I were on top, then people would follow me."
4. The Inexperience Myth: "When I get to the top, I'll be in control."

5. The Freedom Myth: "When I get to the top, I'll no longer be limited."
6. The Potential Myth: "I can't reach my potential if I'm not the top leader."
7. The All-or-Nothing Myth: "If I can't get to the top, then I won't try to lead."

Every leader in the middle also faces seven challenges, which are:

1. The Tension Challenge, which is the pressure of being "caught in the middle."
2. The Frustration Challenge, which is caused by following an ineffective leader.
3. The Multi-Hat Challenge, which comes from having multiple responsibilities.
4. The Ego Challenge, which is the result of being hidden in the middle without any glory.
5. The Fulfillment Challenge, which reflects the reality that leaders like the front more than the middle.
6. The Vision Challenge, which means that championing the vision is more difficult when you didn't create it.
7. The Influence Challenge, which results from the fact that leading others beyond your position is not easy.

The nine principles you need to master in order to lead up are:

1. Lead yourself exceptionally well.
2. Lighten your leader's load.
3. Be willing to do what others won't.
4. Do more than manage — lead!
5. Invest in relational chemistry.
6. Be prepared every time you take your leader's time.
7. Know when to push and when to back off.
8. Become a go-to player.
9. Be better tomorrow than you are today.

The seven principles you need to master in order to lead across are:

1. Understand, practice, and complete the leadership loop.
2. Put completing fellow leaders ahead of competing with them.
3. Be a friend.
4. Avoid office politics.
5. Expand your circle of acquaintances.
6. Let the best idea win.
7. Don't pretend you're perfect.

And lastly, the seven principles you need to master in order to lead down are:

1. Walk slowly through the halls.
2. See everyone as a "10."
3. Develop each team member as a person.
4. Place people in their strength zones.
5. Model the behavior you desire.
6. Transfer the vision.
7. Reward for results.

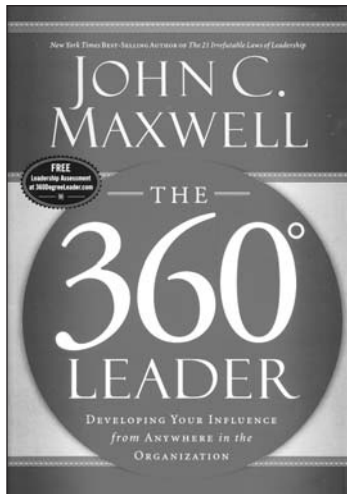
Clearly, leading from the middle isn't easy, but it's essential for your organization's economic well-being, as well as your professional and personal growth. Remember that leadership is less a matter of the position you hold than of the influence you exert. And you can start by leading now — right from where you are.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**John C. Maxwell** is known as America's expert on leadership. He has communicated his leadership principles to *Fortune* 500 companies, the United States Military Academy at West Point, and sports organizations such as the NCAA, the NBA, and the NFL.

The author is the founder of Injoy Stewardship Services and Maximum Impact, as well as several other organizations dedicated to helping people reach their leadership potential. He dedicates much of his time to training leaders worldwide through EQUIP, a nonprofit organization. The *New York Times* best-selling author has written more than forty books, including *Winning with People*, *Thinking for a Change*, and the two million-sellers, *Developing the Leader Within You* and *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*.



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