Influence. As John C. Maxwell has so perfectly summed it up, leadership is influence; nothing more, nothing less. This is an area that most of us take for granted. Often, we think of leadership as a person who wields power and authority. A crack of the whip and it will instantaneously result in everyone toeing the ship as a person who wields power and authority. A crack of the whip and it will instantaneously result in everyone toeing the line—even more instant than Maggi instant noodles. Perhaps, when you are in such a position technically there is some magical powers of coffee. One also believes that the workplace should be fun and fulfilling! Get in touch with her at editor@leaderonomics.com.

I have come here largely to the end of your note. May the pages ahead be as insightful, engaging and purposeful to you, as they have been for me. Have an amazing weekend ahead.

Carpe diem,
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Try This!

Influence is the capacity to have an effect on the character, development or the behaviour of someone or something. This shouldn’t be confused with authority, as authority is closer to control than leading. What is so important about having influence? To be a leader, you must at least be followed by people, and generally people will follow the one most influential.

When in a position and having the power of influence, you have a choice to either be a positive or negative influence. What you may have realised is once you authentically choose to be a positive leader, your relationship with your surroundings dramatically changes.

Though you can’t always do the right thing, by being a good example to others, you will eventually create a ripple effect and see others mirroring you. So how do you use your position for good?

1. Believe in a Vision
   A true leader believes in a vision. When someone truly believes in something, it oozes from his mannerisms and he just bursts with confidence when he talks about it.

   This is something people easily pick up on, and the mere burst of confidence tend to encourage others to believe in their vision too. Most people will eventually mirror the confidence their leaders have.

2. Self-Concept and Identity
   The self-concept and identity theory of influence works by casting a certain identity on a person whereby the person is influenced by it and turns that identity into a reality. Take for example when you tell someone that he will be successful and great. As soon as the person hears this statement—especially if it’s coming from someone in a leadership position and is well-respected—when said with full confidence, the idea will be ingrained into the subconscious mind of the listener. Eventually, his actions will be based on becoming something great, which in turn changes the influence into a reality.

3. Stay Neutral and Objective
   When life gives you lemons, make lemonade! Difficult times are also the most influential times. When going through a rough patch, you navigate through with hope and optimism (this is also when people look up to you as a role model).

4. Respond, Don’t React
   When a negative comment is said about you, you would immediately want to give a stinging reply, rush to your own defence or complain to others. What’s worse is if you take the criticism on board. Pausing to regain your composure and thinking objectively in such situations is vital before you reply. Responding instead of reacting means you take the emotional charge out of the situation, incident or problem.

Sharing Thoughts
   Since being in such a position technically turns you into a role model, maybe you could take this opportunity to enable the less fortunate and disabled.

   For example, fast food chain McDonald’s has it in their employment policy to not discriminate and actually hire the disabled. This policy has been rather successful by giving the disabled hope and indirectly showing society that we shouldn’t look down on them.

   With that, use your position to be a good influence and sit back and watch the ripple of goodness!

The opinions expressed in this leadership guide are those of the writers or the people they quoted and not necessarily those of Leaderonomics.

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