

LEADERSHIFT: The 11 Essential Changes Every Leader Must Embrace

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Leadershift: The 11 Essential Changes Every Leader Must Embrace by John Maxwell provides the reader with modifications that leaders should make to maximise their effectiveness. The changes the author prescribes throughout the book are systematic and methodical.

In chapter one, the author emphasises the importance of shifting as it relates to moving from conformity to adaptability to growth. He states that “you cannot be the same, think the same, and act the same if you hope to be successful in a world that does not remain the same.” Maxwell also provides information on how to leadershift as well as continually learn from the past but live in the present, be conscious of timing, see the big picture, look ahead, take risks, and be forward-thinking.

In subsequent chapters, Maxwell describes 11 shifts. Many people in leadership positions experience the limelight due to their achievements; however, to be truly effective leaders, they must focus on leading or conducting a team and empowering others to ensure that everything comes together effectively for the organisation. The author states that they must shift from soloist to conductor. Maxwell also suggests that leaders should develop a perspective that focuses on personal and internal growth as a precursor to focusing on the development of others within an organisation. He also posits that leaders shift from being self-interested and seeking perks to being invested in giving, focusing on, and developing others. In the relational shift, the author stresses that leaders must value people, challenge them, set expectations that elicit the best from them, and play to their strengths. In this leadershift, leaders must be willing to move from maintaining the status quo to promoting creativity and risk-taking within teams. Maxwell states, “Together, everyone accomplishes more.” He admonishes leaders to be creative and not to get comfortable. As Maxwell states in the words of American Giant:

Comfortable has no guts

Comfortable never dares to be great

Comfortable falls apart at the seams

Don't get comfortable

In chapter 7, Maxwell uses the ladder as the metaphor for this leadershift. He states that most leaders have climbed ladders to get where they are but at this point, it is time to empower others to not only climb but to build their own ladders, which means developing their talents, goals, and dreams. He also discusses the importance of good communication skills which allow people to make connections with others. This requires a paradigm shift in which leaders function with humility, ask questions, go out of their way to make connections, are generous, listen, encourage others, and work to earn trust.

According to Maxwell, leaders must embrace diversity which entails respecting and soliciting perspectives from people different from yourself. In this shift, leaders must be willing to learn from others. They must conquer fears of conflict, expand their personal networks to include diversity, confront arrogance, personal insecurities and prejudices. Maxwell states, “When I recognised that others knew what I didn't and that they had as much to

contribute as I did, I could leave my world and enter new ones. Instead of fearing loss, I was anticipating what I would gain from our interaction.”

Maxwell reviews his levels of authority and states that the pinnacle of these levels is moral authority which is dependent on the development of competence, courage, integrity, consistency, authenticity, humility, and love. Maxwell is clear that the most effective leaders are transformational. They lead and empower others and move beyond the norms of practicing their leadership training. Finally he stresses that the most effective leaders understand why they lead and have a calling to leadership.

Leadershift: The 11 Essential Changes Every Leader Must Embrace gives extraordinary advice to the reader on how to put your leadership in high gear. The gems within this book are not just for corporate leaders, but for anyone who provides leadership in any capacity. Maxwell’s conversational tone engages the reader. The essential changes are presented in a hierarchical form with Maxwell informing the reader that the most important chapter is the last which defines how to become a transformational leader. In each chapter, Maxwell provides personal anecdotes from his own experiences. He relates stories of his own failures and shortcomings, reinforcing the notion that leaders can grow and develop over time if they are open to doing so. His honesty regarding his shortcomings and growth in leadership stimulates the reader to pause for introspection. Likewise, the bold statements used for illustrations drives the reader to delve further into the manuscript.

Critical comments are few but the reader would benefit from being familiar with John Maxwell’s’ previous writing to fully appreciate many of his references. Also, although he talks about his intentionality in developing his understanding of diversity, the book only minimally reflects this quest. He quotes Martin Luther King, Jr., Mother Theresa, and Gandhi, but he does not cite contemporary writers of diverse backgrounds. It would demonstrate significant growth if Maxwell referenced contemporary writers and scholars of diverse background. That said, given Maxwell’s comments in this area, one can infer that he is still growing. In conclusion, the book is engaging, informative, and inspiring. We highly recommend *Leadershift* for current leaders and those who feel called to lead.