A leader knows the way, goes the way,
and shows the way.
--John Maxwell

Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.
--1 Cor. 11:1

Leadership

If you want to be an eagle, don't spend your time with turkeys.

Effective leaders know that negative people cast long, dark shadows in an organization. They know that fear of failure or rejection often controls negative people. They know that fear destroys dreams.

On the other hand, effective leaders know that positive people are like sunlight. They bring hope, creativity, optimism, excitement, and energy to a team.

Positive Leaders

I've had the special privilege of working closely with some outstanding, positive Christian leaders. In 1964, when Winnie and I began our missionary service with World Gospel Mission, George R. Warner was president. He was known for his humility and compassion. Later I served with Thomas H. Hermiz, current president, a strong, decisive leader and superb communicator. Today it's my joy to work with John Maxwell of INJOY Ministries. He is a Christian leadership author and speaker whose enthusiasm and humor are powerful communication tools. Another Christian leader whose friendship I

value is Stan Toler, known for his incredible people skills and generosity. Then there was my wonderful friend and leadership model, the late George E. Luce, one of three sons of A. L. Luce, founder of the Blue Bird Body Company.

When the character of a man is not clear to you,
look at his friends.
---Japanese proverb

While these men differ in personalities and leadership styles, they have at least two things in common. First, they demonstrate a passion for God and His perfect will in their lives. Second, they surround themselves with positive people. They know that attitude is everything.

Team Building

All great leaders are team builders. They're not one-man bands. They know that an individual totally wrapped up in himself or herself is a formula for smallness, not greatness. Instead of trying to do the job alone, they enlist, train, empower, and involve the best people available. They coach and encourage. They share their vision of what God wants to do through the team. They know that dreams motivate positive people.

A single arrow is easily broken,
but not ten in a bundle.
---Japanese proverb

The best leaders do everything possible to help each member of the team

reach his or her potential. They rejoice when team members excel. They recognize and reward excellence.

John Maxwell has often said, "Never do ministry alone." In other words, the effective leader is always preparing other leaders by pouring his or her life into them. The great leader has served best when he or she has helped produce other leaders, perhaps even leaders who are more capable and effective than their mentor.

God will give to us what He knows
will flow through us.

Heroes Help Mold

As a young boy, I often slipped my radio under the covers and listened late at night to broadcasts of the Brooklyn Dodgers. I loved Snider, Reese, Robinson, Hodges, Furillo, Campanella, Erskine, and the other "boys of summer" who played in ancient Ebbetts Field. But I wanted to be like Vin Scully, the Hall of Fame announcer who broadcasted the Dodgers games on radio. His golden voice captivated me.

Then as a teenager I heard Jimmy Lentz preach. What a communicator! His eloquence and delivery mesmerized me. I dreamed of the day when I could preach with the power of Dr. Lentz. In fact, many years later we did preach together on several occasions. From the day I met him until the last camp meeting we preached together, he always encouraged me. He bragged on my preaching and called me "his boy." While I'll never have his skill as a communicator, his words of encouragement often gave me urgently needed reassurance. He gave me more than a model--he poured his life into me.

He helped influence the character and direction of my life.

Mentoring Erwin

Erwin Patricio, described earlier, lived in the "pig pen" of life until Jesus radically transformed his life. A few years after his conversion, this Native American brother joined the staff at Southwest Indian School as chaplain.

Erwin loved God and cared deeply about the spiritual needs of the students. I soon recognized that he could become an outstanding speaker and Christian leader. I loved his sense of humor and admired his positive outlook on life.

I spent countless hours with Erwin. Each day I looked for ways to encourage him. I sent him notes expressing gratitude for his ministry to students. I talked with him, prayed with him, laughed with him, and cried with him.

Treat a person as he is,
and he will remain as he is.
Treat him as he could be,
and he will become what he should be.
---Anonymous

I tried to convince Erwin that he and Naomi should travel across the United States representing Southwest Indian School in churches and Christian colleges. He quaked at my suggestion. But I continued to assure him that God would use his personal testimony in a powerful way.

At last, the Patricios started on their journey across North America, visiting church after church. Wherever they went, churches experienced an awakening that

bordered on and sometimes equaled revival.

As Erwin and Naomi continue to share their steadfast faith and transformed testimony, they have led multitudes to Christ. I rejoice that God allowed me to have a part in their ministry.

The Big Picture Frame

Big picture people

understand that leadership is a positive channel

to help others reach their potential in Christ.

POSITIVE LESSONS

Through my years in full-time Christian ministry, I have had the opportunity to observe the lives of Christians who possess a positive attitude. Here is what I've learned from them:

1. They refuse to become defensive.
2. They learn from defeats.
3. They look for opportunities to affirm others.
4. They avoid enslavement to things. They know that a collection of possessions on earth does not produce an abundant life. They know that gadgets and toys don't lead to peace and joy.
5. They avoid addiction to busyness. They don't believe that "God will love me more if I do more." Instead, they recognize it as a destructive philosophy.
6. They remember that success is not a destination, but the journey.
7. They take time to have fun. They know that playing can be as spiritual as praying.
8. They value relationships . . . with God, their families, their friends, and their colleagues.
9. They remember that God has not called us to perfect performance and achievement, but to complete surrender to His Son.
10. They don't expect life to be free of problems. They know that life isn't a quiet stream without waves or storms.
11. They've learned to listen. They value the ideas and opinions of other positive

people.

12. They unload guilt. They know that a person is destined for misery until he or she forgets the things that are behind.
13. They remember that they are earthen vessels and subject to mistakes. They don't try to "walk on the water." Instead, they strive for honesty and transparency as they walk in the power of the Spirit.
14. They believe that one person can make a difference, yet they never forget the vital importance of teamwork.
15. They set high goals that they can reach only with God's help.

Mentoring sends people where I cannot go. It touches more lives than I can touch. Leadership without mentoring is self-serving.

True leadership must be
for the benefit of the followers,
not the enrichment of the leaders.

Action Points

- ✓ Who are the positive leaders who have influenced your life?
- ✓ Who is your “coach” at this stage in your leadership development?
- ✓ Who are you coaching?
- ✓ Review “Positive Lessons.” Which lessons do you need to work on to increase your leadership potential?

Think About It

It's not enough to finish the race yourself.
To be successful, you must take somebody
with you across the finish line.
--John Maxwell