

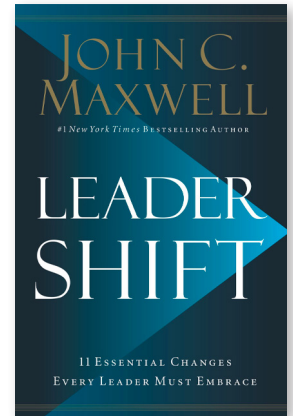


Executive Book Summaries®

Leadershift

The 11 Essential Changes Every Leader Must Embrace

by **John C. Maxwell**



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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

be successful. If they aren't nimble and ready to adapt, they won't survive. The key is to learn how to leadershift.

In *Leadershift*, John C. Maxwell helps leaders gain the ability and willingness to make leadership changes that will positively enhance their organizational and personal growth. He does this by sharing the 11 shifts that leaders need to be successful over the course of their careers. Each shift has the potential to change a leader's trajectory, set them up for new and exciting achievements, and strengthen and sustain their leadership abilities.

Among those leadershifts are the Focus Shift from Soloist to Conductor; the Production Shift from Ladder Climbing to Ladder Building, and the Influence Shift from Positional Authority to Moral Authority. Each shift requires leaders to change the way they think, act, and ultimately lead so they can be successful in a world that never remains the same. In *Leadershift*, Maxwell leads the way to new levels of leadership.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The mindset needed to leadershift.
- To identify the “costs” of becoming the best leader you can be.
- To shift from claiming positional authority to developing moral authority.
- To become a transformational leader and find your calling.

Why Every Leader Needs to Leadershift

The future seems to be coming at us faster than ever. To go forward, we need to move faster. And as leaders, we need to stay ahead, we need to see more than others, and we need to see before others. The more nimble, adaptable, and flexible we are, the more quickly we can move and change.

We have to change, reread our situation, and change again. And continue changing. How does a leader do more than just hang on and survive in such an environment?

The key is to learn how to continually make leadershifts. What is a leadershift? It is an ability and willingness to make a leadership change that will positively enhance organizational and personal growth.

Perhaps at no other time in recent history has adaptability been more important than it is now. If you want to be successful as a leader, you need to learn to become comfortable with uncertainty and make shifts continually. You need to be flexible and deal with uncertainty without losing focus.

Leaders who leadershift must be like water. They have to be fluid. Water finds a way, then makes a way. First it changes with its circumstances. The environment dictates the change. But moving water is also forceful. It first moves around an object, but at the same time it begins moving the object. It can wear down solid rock over time. A seemingly small shift can make a big difference.

The truth is this: every advance you make as a leader will require a leadershift that changes the way you think, act, and lead.

Before we talk about the 11 practices involved in leadershifting, let's lay the groundwork by describing the mindset needed to leadershift. How open are you to change? Are you willing to start asking more questions instead of giving more answers? Are you willing to become a better listener, a better observer? Are you willing to rely more on your intuition and your creativity?

Leadershifting will require you to rely on values, principles, and strategy, but it will also push you to rely on innovation, to seek out options, to harness creativity. You'll also need to let go of some things and be dedicated to getting better.

If you answered yes to these questions—or you're willing to move in the direction where you'll be able to answer yes—then you're ready to start leadershifting.

Soloist to Conductor: The Focus Shift

One of the first and most important shifts anyone must make to become a leader is from soloist to conductor. You can be a successful person on your own, but not a successful leader.

The potential of a group is always greater than that of an individual. People working together possess limitless possibilities. They can work together to do something greater than themselves. However, that doesn't mean that working together doesn't have its own challenges. When you transition from soloist to conductor, there are some realities you have to face:

Going slower so you can go farther. To lead others successfully, leaders need to travel with their people, not run or climb ahead of them. This requires a leader to do the leadership dance. To do the leadership dance, you must step ahead of people, staying close enough for them to see you; step beside people, listening to them and talking about the journey; and step behind people, sharing words of encouragement to keep them going. Doing this dance keeps you connected to your people and energizes everyone.

Recognizing that you need others. You can't produce the music of an orchestra when you're trying to be a one-man (or one-woman) band. Make it a goal to cultivate an environment where you put completing one another ahead of competing with one another. A "completing" culture has an abundance mindset, thinks win-win, practices shared thinking, and includes others.

Making the effort to understand others. Many entrepreneurs and high achievers are able to work alone. Like good soloist musicians who choose to play in the subway, they can create music without the assistance of any other musicians. But no one can become a good conductor without making the effort to understand other people. To make the leadershift from soloist to conductor, consider everyone else. Understand and embrace their thoughts, desires, talents, contribution, and journey.

Wanting others to shine more than you do. Good leaders do what they can to put others in position to win. Here's a simple formula to lift up people.

- See the possibilities in all people;
- Honor them in front of others;
- Invite them to help achieve the vision;
- Notice what they do well and compliment them; and
- Thank them to make sure they know they're valued.

When you get better, it makes you bigger.
Growth is sustaining. Growth is the only guarantee
that tomorrow will be better than today.

Goals to Growth: The Personal Development Shift

There was a time when people in the inner circle of Truett Cathy, the founder of Chick-fil-A, were pressing him to expand the organization. “We need to get bigger,” they kept telling him. Truett’s response: “If we get better, our customers will demand that we get bigger.”

That’s also true of personal growth. When you get better, it makes you bigger. Growth is sustaining. Growth is the only guarantee that tomorrow will be better than today.

Making the leadership shift from goal-oriented to growth-oriented isn’t complicated, but it isn’t easy, either. It requires a shift in mindset. It takes time, but it’s well worth it. If you shoot for goals, you’ll achieve your goals, but you may not grow. If you shoot for growth, you’ll grow and you’ll achieve goals. To start making that shift, do these things:

Embrace change. It’s human nature to desire improvement and resist change at the same time. And that’s impossible. If you want to become a better leader, a better employee, a better person, you must shift from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset. Why?

A fixed mindset believes intelligence is static, avoids challenges, gives up too easily, and ignores constructive criticism. A growth mindset believes intelligence can be developed, embraces challenges, persists when faced with setbacks, and learns from constructive criticism.

A fixed mindset results in an early plateau, achieves less, and hinders people from reaching their full potential, whereas a growth mindset fuels people to a higher level of achievement.

Develop greater humility. Are you willing to be criticized for the sake of improvement? Are you willing to admit you’re wrong in deference to your desire to change and grow? Are you willing to drop bad habits, change wrong priorities, and embrace new ways of thinking? That’s what it will take to make the leadership shift to growth. You must be willing to admit where you’re wrong so that you can

discover what is right. Anyone can make that choice, but it requires humility.

Embrace layered learning. Layered learning involves one life lesson applied upon another and another, each gaining greater insight, depth, and weight. It is wisdom acquired and applied over time. Author and professor C.S. Lewis said that learning isn’t so much like a train going from one station to the next, so that we leave one place and move on to somewhere else. Instead, our growth is similar to that of a tree. As we learn and grow, we add new rings of understanding without giving up the older ones. We build, using the past to strengthen us, and create something new.

Perks to Price: The Cost Shift

When people are asked why they want to be leaders, sometimes their answers reveal that their motivation is really about the perks of leading. They want to be in control. They want others to do what they say. They want a nicer office. They want a higher income. They want a better parking place.

But focusing on perks won’t take you anywhere worthwhile because deep inner fulfillment never comes from perks. What they offer is ultimately hollow. And they have never helped a leader to reach his or her potential.

Leaders who focus on perks end up misusing their leadership, and because they love perks more than people, they are continually tempted to misuse people to receive, maintain, or improve their perks.

If you want to reach your potential, become the best leader you can be, and make the greatest impact, then you must shift from perks to price in your leadership. A price is what stands between you and your potential.

If you want to be a better leader, you need to pay for it. Here are some common costs that every leader needs to take into account:

Reality: Leaders recognize that everything worthwhile is uphill. Here’s the reality of your leadership

potential: It's uphill all the way. No one ever coasted to success. No successful person has ever experienced accidental achievements. Nothing of genuine value is easy, quick, and downhill. If we want to succeed in leadership, we must do what we don't want to do, so we can do what we need to do. We must be willing to pay the price.

Example: Leaders acknowledge they must climb the hill first. All people with leadership ability have one perspective in common: before and more. They see things *before* other people do, and they see *more* than other people do. However, what sets great leaders apart from all other leaders is this: They *act before* others and they *do more* than others. Great leaders face their uncertainty and doubt, and they move through it to pave the way for others. And because they are willing to pay the price first and often pay more than others do, they can say with moral authority, "Follow me."

Consistency: Leaders understand they never get to stop climbing. There is a reason that sports teams seldom have back-to-back championships. The perks that come with the first championship often become a hindrance to achieving the next one. When a team earns the first championship, they don't get the next one free. If you desire to go to higher levels of leadership, you need to keep paying the price. That price will be higher than you think, and it will have to be paid continually and consistently.

Pleasing People to Challenging People: The Relational Shift

Pleasing people is not the same as leading people. If you're a leader, you can never make everyone happy. And wanting to do so is a setup for disappointment or failure.

You can never really lead your organization, serve your people, or reach your leadership potential if you're always trying to make others happy. You have to put doing what's right for your people and organization ahead of what feels right for you. To make that shift, you need to do these things:

Change your expectations toward leadership. If your leadership is motivated by pleasing others or receiving approval, you need to change your expectations. Shift your focus from what you gain to how you can help people, improve your organization, and achieve your vision. Otherwise, your leadership will always be limited.

Work to establish expectations up front. As a leader, you can either set expectations on the front end and set up

the working relationships for success or leave expectations unstated and deal with disappointment on the back end for both you and the people you're leading. Up-front expectations increase the value of any meeting, and up-front questions are the quickest way for people to understand one another and increase the value of their time together.

Balance care with candor. As a leader, you need to bring both caring and candor into the relationship. Care values the person, establishes the relationship, shores up weakness, offers comfort, and makes the team pleasant. Candor values the person's potential, expands the relationship, brings out strengths, offers a challenge, and makes the team productive.

Maintaining to Creating: The Abundance Shift

Have you ever thought about the expectations your profession or industry places on you? Are people in your leadership position expected to hold the line? Maintain the course? Change direction? Get out of the box? Blow up the box?

We all tend to fall into one of four different zones when it comes to innovation, which impacts how we live, how we lead, and what we achieve:

- **The Coasting Zone**—"I do as little as possible."
- **The Comfort Zone**—"I do what I have always done."
- **The Challenge Zone**—"I attempt to do what I haven't done before."
- **The Creative Zone**—"I attempt to think what I have never thought before."

The creative zone is where we experience abundance and expand our potential. If you want to take your leadership to ever-higher levels, you need to make the leadership shift from maintaining to creating and try to live in the creative zone.

If you want to shift from maintaining to creating in your life and leadership, then you need to take your crayons back. Here's how:

Build a creative culture. As Josh Linkner recommends in *Disciplined Dreaming*, fuel passion and celebrate ideas. Foster autonomy and encourage courage. Minimize hierarchy and reduce rules. Fail forward and start small.

Make plans but look for options. Good leaders are

If you want to bless your success, mess with it.
Get another perspective. Listen to other voices.

flexible and their plans are fluid. They allow for creativity. They plan, but they look for options. And that's important. Options always present themselves soon after action is taken on a plan. If we don't open ourselves up to those options, we miss the chance to innovate, to create, and—sometimes—to win.

Seek out and listen to different voices. Creativity thrives when one subject is approached from many different perspectives. It short-circuits the kind of one-way thinking that interferes with better solutions. If we get into single-perspective thinking, we find ourselves in ruts. If you want to bless your success, mess with it. Get another perspective. Listen to other voices. Have the courage to let go of your certainties, challenge your assumptions, and change your way of doing things. It will make you more creative.

Ladder Climbing to Ladder Building: The Reproduction Shift

This leadership shift is about changing from being a personal producer to an equipper of others. It's a shift that takes your leadership math from addition to multiplication. It takes you from the solitary climb to the top of your ladder, where you might enjoy the view and wave to the people down below, to watching many people climb to the top of their own ladders, and you all enjoy the view from the top together.

Here are the four stages to help you make this shift in your leadership:

1. Ladder climbing—"How high can I go?"

Wanting to climb the ladder yourself isn't a bad thing, because credibility in leadership is often built on personal success. So the first step in leadership is not leading others. It's leading yourself; it's showing you are capable of climbing the ladder yourself. If you need help in figuring out how to do that, ask yourself these three questions: "What are my strengths?" "What are my opportunities?" "Am I taking steps every day?"

2. Ladder holding—"How high will others go with

a little help?" When you want more for others and you're willing to give them some help, it's like holding the ladder for another person, giving them a secure base, empowering them to take moderate risks, and allowing them to climb higher. Ladder holding begins with a serving attitude, requires availability, attracts people who want to climb, is a pre-qualifier for discovering a person's potential, and multiplies effectiveness over time.

3. Ladder extending—"How high will others go with a lot of help?" The next step in the process is to extend the ladder for others. When you do that, you empower them to climb higher and go to entirely new levels. How do you do that? By intentionally and strategically mentoring them. To be a good mentor, remember that ladder extenders are successful, are specialists, mature, practiced in the art of asking great questions, and humble.

4. Ladder building—"Can I help them build their own ladder?" Ladder building is all about giving another leader the permission, equipment, and empowerment to create their own ladder. As a leader, if you surround yourself with excellent people with high potential, there will be a time when you should allow them to build their own ladders. That's the time when you release them to lead on their own.

Directing to Connecting: The Communication Shift

If you want to become the best leader you're capable of being, you must learn to connect with people. To do that, you must find ways to overcome the challenges of connecting and finding common ground. Here are some of the most important things for a leader who wants to connect with others:

Curiosity—ask people questions. Too many leaders don't ask enough questions—of themselves or others. This happens because they assume they have the answers; they value what they think more than what others think; they prioritize directing others over understanding others; they don't

recognize the need to find common ground; and they don't understand that questions help to manage expectations.

Disappointment is the gap between expectations and reality. How do we close that gap? By asking questions so that we can adjust our expectations.

Effort—go out of your way to connect with people.

If you care about people, you will be capable of coming up with ways to create connecting experiences with others. But it will take effort. And it will take even more effort to follow through on those ideas.

Listening—open the best door to connecting with people. If you never listen, before long the people around you will stop talking to you, and you'll become isolated as a leader. If you do listen, not only will they tell you things you need to know, but they will also connect with you because they see that you care and that you value what they have to say.

Encouragement—give people oxygen for their soul. As leaders, we must never underestimate the value of reminding others that we believe in them. That's why George M. Adams called encouragement oxygen for the soul. When you interact with others as a leader, what is your mindset? Is your intention to correct them or connect with them? Do you keep them down or lift them up? You have that choice every day—with those you lead, with those who lead you, with your friends, family, and colleagues.

Team Uniformity to Team Diversity: The Improvement Shift

A definition of "team" in the *Harvard Business Review* is "a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, set of performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable."

This definition assumes that there is a variety of skills. That implies diversity. Our differences really can make a difference in our teams, our organizations, and our individual lives.

Diverse teams fill in the knowledge gap. As a leader, it's important to know what you don't know. If you include a variety of people, then someone on your team will be able to help you.

Diverse teams fill in the perspective gap. Malcolm Forbes said diversity is the art of thinking independently together. When everyone thinks and says the same things, it's the end

of creativity and death to an entrepreneurial environment.

Diverse teams fill in the experience gap. A little bit of experience outweighs a whole lot of theory. The greater the differences in personal experiences, the greater the team's ability to achieve, and the greater number of "tools" the team has at its disposal.

Here are three suggestions for how to leadershift to diversity and inclusion:

Create a culture of sharing. No matter how diverse the workplace is, teams will not embrace creativity unless there is a culture conducive to interaction and sharing of knowledge. This requires de-emphasizing titles, positions, and roles. It means inviting everyone to speak up. It means giving people opportunities to lead before they have an official role—and sometimes even before you feel they are fully ready. And it means being more open to differences.

Broaden your perspective on diversity. Equality isn't just about giving everyone the same things; it's also about giving unique people what they need. Bernard Tyson, CEO of Kaiser Permanente, said, "We've evolved from equality to equity. Equality says everybody gets equal. Equity says no, everybody gets what they need. Part of building an inclusive environment is not how you're going to change the person. It's how you're going to change yourself and the environment in which the person is going to be successful." That requires us to think differently and treat diversity differently.

Provide solid leadership for diversity to be effective. As much as diversity can help a team, it can also challenge a team. Bringing together a diverse group of people isn't easy. The strength of diversity is problem solving and idea creation. The weakness comes in decision-making and implementation. Good leadership can help bring strength to both ideation and implementation.

Positional Authority to Moral Authority: The Influence Shift

A leadership position does not give someone leadership authority. Having a title is not the same as having influence.

Moral authority is the highest level of influence. Moral authority is the recognition of a person's leadership influence based on who they are more than the position they hold. It is attained by authentic living that has built trust, and it is sustained by successful leadership endeavors.

If your actions inspire people to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, then you are a transformational leader.

Moral authority is grounded in four things: competence, courage, consistency, and character.

- 1. Competence—the ability to lead well.** Competence is the core of moral authority. If you can't do your job, if you can't deliver the goods, if you can't lead the team well, why would anyone want to follow you? You can't cultivate moral authority unless people respect you. How do you build a foundation of competence? By giving your best, starting with the small stuff.
- 2. Courage—moving forward in the face of fear.** Leadership authority shrinks or expands with a person's courage. C.S. Lewis said, "Courage is not simply one of the virtues but the form of every virtue at the testing point." Without courage, you can't live any other virtue consistently. With courage, especially when facing great obstacles, you begin to gain moral authority. Courage encourages people during difficult and uncertain times; enables people to maximize their potential; and helps leaders find their voice.
- 3. Consistency—doing well all the time, not just sometimes.** Internal consistency between values and actions is essential to a leader's success if he or she desires to gain moral authority. Equally important is the ability to be consistent over time. Consistency establishes your reputation, makes team members more secure, allows for accurate measurement of your growth, models your expectations for others, and maintains your message.
- 4. Character—being bigger on the inside than the outside.** While much of leadership is outward and public, the right motives and the good character traits we need to become leaders with moral authority are won in private. These two aspects of leadership, public and private, resemble the two parts of a tree. One part you see: Our public leadership is like a tree's trunk and branches. That's the part that bears fruit. But who leaders are in private is what can't be seen, like tree roots.

What does it mean to develop deep roots as a leader? It means having strong character. Good character demonstrates integrity, authenticity, humility, and love.

Trained Leaders to Transformational Leaders: The Impact Shift

The impact shift from trained leaders to transformational leaders will bring the greatest change to your life and the lives of those around you.

If your actions inspire people to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, then you are a transformational leader. You influence people to think, speak, and act in ways that make a positive difference in their lives and the lives of others. That kind of leadership can change the world!

Trained leaders know how to lead, are liked, influence today, love to lead, help people, have a career, and impact a few. Transformational leaders know why they lead, are contagious, influence today and tomorrow, love the people they lead, help people change, have a calling, and impact many.

If you desire to make the impact shift from trained leader to transformational leader, start doing these actions:

Possess a clear picture of what transformational leaders do. Many people see problems and shake their heads. Transformational leaders ask "Why not?" because they're always thinking about trying to create a better future. Transformational leaders leverage their influence by speaking bold words about a better future. These leaders believe they can make a difference. That becomes their passion. Transformational leaders also believe in others. They are belief magnets.

Take positive action based on your internal changes. Transformation is a result of application, not education. That's why Gandhi said, "An ounce of practice is worth more than tons of preaching." To lead transformationally, you must first live transformed. That takes courage, the courage to let go of the familiar and set off on a better way.

Create an environment that promotes positive change. Here are the essentials for what creates an ideal environment: leaders who are passionate about transformation, resources that teach good values, small groups where people learn and participate, and commitment to reproduce leaders.

Career to Calling: The Passion Shift

How do you currently think about what you do for a living? When you have a job, your main goal is often to earn a living and support your family. You may not think beyond the time you spend on the clock. You may do your job with excellence or you may simply mark time, but either way, when you finish your day or your shift, you walk away and don't think about it.

When you have a career, the implication is that you are headed in a direction. You're making progress attaining positive achievements. An upward trajectory of skill mastery, larger responsibilities, and greater earnings are all marks of a successful career.

Your calling will result in the merging of your skills, talents, character traits, and experiences. It will make use of your experience, your gifts, and the lessons you've learned. It will be represented by a deep desire to create, lead, inspire, and make a difference.

Finding your calling is like finding your why—the reason you exist, your purpose for living.

Your calling matches who you are. If you could do one thing for the rest of your life, even if you never got paid for it, what would you do? What do people often ask for your help with? What experiences have you had that you desire to help others with?

Your calling is important to you, but it's not about you. A true calling is never about the person being called. It's about helping others. A calling moves us from the center of everything in our world to becoming the channel

through which good things come to others.

Your calling changes your perspective. Having a calling makes you see your world differently. Where you once saw only obligations and responsibilities, you will begin to see options and opportunities. No longer will you be focused on the tasks you are required to do. A whole new world will open up to you of things you want to do.

Remember, every advance you make as a leader will require a leadership shift that changes the way you think, act, and lead. The better we can lead and help others to lead, the greater and more fulfilling our impact will be.



John C. Maxwell is a #1 *New York Times* best-selling author, coach, and speaker who has sold more than 30 million books in 50 languages. He has been identified as the #1 leader in business by the American Management Association and the most influential leadership expert in the world by *Business Insider* and *Inc.* magazines. He is the founder of the John Maxwell Company, the John Maxwell Team, EQUIP, and the John Maxwell Leadership Foundation, organizations that have trained millions of leaders.

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