

THE BIG IDEAS

Leadershifts

11 essential ones.

Layered Learning

Compound those +1 rings!

Consistency

And paying the price.

Moral Authority

The highest form of influence.

The Clock + The Compass

And living your calling.

Leadershift

The 11 Essential Changes Every Leader Must Embrace

BY JOHN C. MAXWELL · HARPERCOLLINS LEADERSHIP © 2019 · 288 PAGES

“If you want to be a successful 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. Simple and obvious it may be. Trivial it is not.

The truth is this: *every advance you make as a leader will require a leadershift that changes the way you think, act, and lead.* If you want to be an effective leader, you must leadershift. 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.”

~ John C. Maxwell from *Leadershift*

This is our 4th Note on one of John Maxwell’s books.

We also have Notes on [The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership](#), [The 15 Invaluable Laws of Growth](#), and [How Successful People Think](#).

John is one of my absolute favorite writers and teachers. His books are *ridiculously* packed with Big Ideas. (Like, jumbo-ridiculously packed with practical wisdom.)

As we’ve discussed, he’s one of the world’s leading authorities on leadership. He’s sold over 25 million copies of his dozens of books that have been translated into over 50 languages. His organizations have also trained leaders in EVERY single country around the world.

This is his most recent book, written after FIFTY (!) years of leadership. As per the sub-title, John walks us through the “11 Essential Changes” he has made and that he encourages every leader to embrace. (Get a copy of the book [here](#).)

Of course, it’s packed with Big Ideas. And, of course, I’m excited to share a few of my favorites we can apply to our lives TODAY so let’s jump straight in.

THE 11 ESSENTIAL LEADERSHIFTS

“I hope you will do whatever you can to search for your calling, and then work with everything you have to fulfill it. And I hope that you will embrace not only this leadershift but all the other ones I’ve discussed in this book. Remember, every advance you make as a leader will require a leadershift that changes the way you think, act, and lead. You can only reach your potential if you embrace these leadershifts:

- Soloist to Conductor—The Focus Shift
- Goals to Growth—The Personal Development Shift

“Change or die.”

~ Thomas Edgley

"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 leadership shifts. What is a leadership shift? It is an ability and willingness to make a leadership change that will positively enhance organizational and personal growth."

~ John C. Maxwell

- **Perks to Price—The Cost Shift**
- **Pleasing People to Challenging People—The Relational Shift**
- **Maintaining to Creating—The Abundance Shift**
- **Ladder Climbing to Ladder Building—The Reproduction Shift**
- **Directing to Connecting—The Communication Shift**
- **Team Uniformity to Team Diversity—The Improvement Shift**
- **Positional Authority to Moral Authority—The Influence Shift**
- **Trained Leaders to Transformational Leaders—The Impact Shift**
- **Career to Calling—The Passion Shift**

Are there other leadership shifts that you'll have the opportunity to make? Probably. I haven't discovered them yet, but if they're out there, I intend to. Why? Because long ago I made the personal development shift from goals to growth, and I'm still growing as a leader. If you're growing, you will discover them too. When you do, let me and others know about them. The better we can lead and help others lead, the greater and more fulfilling our impact will be."

Those are actually the very last words of the book. I'm pretty sure this is the first time (in 577 of these [Notes!](#)) that we've started at the very end, but it seems like a good idea so here we are! :)

"The 11 Essential Changes Every Leader Must Embrace."

Here's the super-quick look then we'll drill into a few of my favorites and see how we can apply John's wisdom to our lives TODAY.

- **Soloist to Conductor—The Focus Shift.** Can we do great things as a "soloist" rocking it on our own? Sure. Will we achieve our leadership potential that way? No. That requires the first leadership shift in focus from "me to we"—acting more like conductors than soloists.
- **Goals to Growth—The Personal Development Shift.** Goals are great. And... GROWTH is better. By making the leadership shift from Goals to Growth we think bigger + longer-term and seize the opportunities to get better. When? You know that story. TODAY. And every day.
- **Perks to Price—The Cost Shift.** Are you into leadership for the "perks"? Well, congrats on the power and prestige and big paychecks. Now it's time to make the shift to being willing to pay the price required to be your absolute best.
- **Pleasing People to Challenging People—The Relational Shift.** Isn't it nice to have people like you? Sure is! And... That's not at the heart of true leadership. We need to be willing to prioritize *servicing* over *pleasing*—challenging people to be their best.
- **Maintaining to Creating—The Abundance Shift.** Maintaining prior levels of success is one thing. Constantly (!) pushing ourselves to exit our comfort zones and create the next-best version of ourselves and the people/places we lead requires a leadership shift.
- **Ladder Climbing to Ladder Building—The Reproduction Shift.** Climbing ladders is great. And, an important part of the process. We need to prove our competence and ability to succeed. And... Helping others build THEIR ladders is ultimately what it's all about.
- **Directing to Connecting—The Communication Shift.** This shift's all about moving from being authoritative to collaborative; from talking to listening; from top down to side by side; from giving answers to asking questions. We need to make the communication leadership shift.
- **Team Uniformity to Team Diversity—The Improvement Shift.** It's time to celebrate our differences while, paradoxically, looking for common ground. *"If we can connect where we're similar and contribute using our differences, we can accomplish great things."*

"As Mother Teresa said, 'Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today. Let us begin.'"

~ John C. Maxwell

"Baseball great Babe Ruth is rumored to have said, 'Yesterday's homerun doesn't win today's game.' Isn't that fantastic? It's a good reminder to focus on today. What we did in the past may look good on a resume, but it won't help us win today."

~ John C. Maxwell

- **Positional Authority to Moral Authority—The Influence Shift.** Moral authority is the highest form of influence (aka leadership). The best leaders don't lead from a place of *positional* authority. They lead from a place of MORAL authority. Their integrity lights the way.
- **Trained Leaders to Transformational Leaders—The Impact Shift.** This, John says, is the most important. Want to change the world? Become a transformational leader—"inspire people to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more."
- **Career to Calling—The Passion Shift.** "A calling moves us from the center of everything in our world to becoming the channel through which good things come to others." Your destiny is CALLING. It's time to answer it and make the final leadership shift.

LAYERED LEARNING

"Any gardener knows that you can't force a seed to grow faster than nature intended it to. You can't make trees bear good fruit before they're mature. You can't rush the season. Plants need to grow, and though they may grow every day, it will not show every day. It takes a lot of growing to do a little showing.

That doesn't mean we shouldn't cultivate growth every day. Small improvements over time make a big difference. Knowledge gives us a layer of learning, increasing with each added layer until it turns into wisdom. It takes years, decades, sometimes a lifetime for a person to become an overnight success. ...

I like to think of layered learning the way C.S. Lewis talked about learning. He 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."

That's from our second leadership: "Goals to Growth."

Layered learning.

<- That's how John describes the incremental Optimization we talk about all the time.

What happens when we show up every day committed to and looking for ways to get a little better +1 +1 +1 style?

Well...

As we aggregate and compound those incremental gains over an extended period of time, we get some magic.

Which is why John also says: "What did Albert Einstein call the greatest mathematical discovery of all time? Not Arabic numerals. Not calculus. Not the theory of relativity. Compound interest—wealth that grows based on continual reinvestment. And what's the secret to compound interest? Consistency! It never stops growing."

Which leads us to the next Big Idea...

(But, first: How about we count and celebrate those rings on our trees and honor the natural rhythms of nature!)

CONSISTENCY <- HOW TO PAY THE PRICE

"One of my favorite examples of the compounding power of consistency occurred in the world of professional baseball in the 1980s and '90s with Cal Ripken, Jr. He is in the Hall of Fame, but he isn't there because he was the best hitter, best fielder, or best base stealer. He's there because of consistency.

"I love his phrase: live on the other side of 'yes.' I believe what he's talking about is seizing opportunities. When we do that, we're like Lori Greiner who wrote, 'Dear Optimist, Pessimist and Realist-- While you guys were busy arguing about the glass of [water], I drank it! Sincerely, The Opportunist.'"

~ John C. Maxwell

"Benjamin Franklin said, 'Empty the coins of your purse into your mind and your mind will fill your purse with coins.' What a great way to think about it. Be willing to invest in yourself."

~ John C. Maxwell

Ripken played in 2,632 consecutive games, the major league baseball record by a long shot. Only one other player passed the 2,000 mark: Lou Gehrig, with 2,160. For more than forty years, baseball fans believed Gehrig's record would never be broken. The rarity of that kind of consistency becomes clearer when you recognize that only five other players in major league history have ever played in more than a thousand consecutive games. Maybe that's why the game in which Ripken passed Gehrig's record was voted the most memorable in MLB history, ahead of Gehrig's farewell speech in 1939, ahead of Hank Aaron's home run record, and ahead of Jackie Robinson breaking the color barrier in 1947.

Ripken was quick to say that his success didn't come from being more talented than anyone else. ... In other words, he showed up, worked hard, played hurt, and gave his best—every day for sixteen years straight. He was the definition of consistency."

That's from our third leadership "Perks to Price" in which we learn the importance of embracing reality and PAYING THE PRICE.

First: I grew up admiring Cal Ripken so I especially appreciate the fact that his record-setting game is considered the most memorable in Major League Baseball history.

So...

How do we pay the price and layer our learning and reap the benefits of compounded growth?

CONSISTENCY.

I'm typing this the week after our Optimize Coach - Class I graduation weekend. 500+ of us did a Spartan Race together. Alexandra and I finished with an awesome group that included my favorite elementary school teacher Mrs. Keuhnast and one of our Optimizers who is a great-grandmother and who has—get this—exercised EVERY DAY (!) for over 4,700 (!!!) days in a row.

You know how long that is? Over 13 years.

(Nearly as long as Cal Ripken's epic consecutive-game streak for those keeping track. [This picture of us at the Finish Line](#) doesn't do her Sparkling awesomeness justice. She's AMAZING.)

P.S. Back to paying the price. John quotes the poet Rudyard Kipling who said: *"If you don't get what you want it is either a sign that you did not seriously want it, or that you tried to bargain over the price."*

Reminds me of Scott Adams and his wisdom from [How to Fail at Almost Everything and Still Win Big](#) where he tells us: *"One of the best pieces of advice I've ever heard goes something like this: If you want success, figure out the price, then pay it. It sounds trivial and obvious, but if you unpack the idea it has extraordinary power."*

I know a lot of people who wish they were rich or famous or otherwise fabulous. They wish they had yachts and servants and castles and they wish they could travel the world in their own private jets. But these are mere wishes. Few of these wishful people have decided to have any of the things they wish for. It's a key difference, for once you decide, you take action. Wishing starts in the mind and generally stays there.

When you decide to be successful in a big way, it means you acknowledge the price and you're willing to pay it."

MORAL AUTHORITY

"So what is moral authority? Here's my definition:

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. It is earned by a lifetime of consistency.

*"Ralph Waldo Emerson said,
'Our chief want in life is
somebody who shall make us
do what we can.'"*

~ John C. Maxwell

Leaders can strive to earn moral authority by the way they live, but only others can grant them moral authority.

Moral authority is truly the highest form of leadership influence, and many people recognize it. It comes from possessing good values. It adds value to others. It inspires people. It helps the leader make the right decisions for the right reasons. It marks a life of words and actions that line up. We know when we're in the presence of someone who has moral authority, and we want to follow them!"

That's from our ninth leadership: moving from "Positional Authority to Moral Authority." But... You know what? I actually STARTED reading the book here. On page 193 to be precise.

When I first got the book, I did my normal thing. Read the back cover. Then the inside flaps. Then I scanned the Table of Contents. The phrase "Moral Authority" literally jumped off the page and high fived my daimon. :)

Moral authority. <- John tells us that it's the highest level of influence.

He says: "Moral authority has the implicit power to transform what is into what can be. It takes people to higher levels of living and leading. It's inspirational, yet at the same time it is grounded and credible. It makes leaders better because they desire to do better. Moral authority brings out the best in teams because of the respect team members have for the leaders and the desire team members have to live up to and follow their example."

*"A different world cannot be
built by indifferent people."*

~ Peter Marshall

I read this chapter and asterisked and underlined pretty much the whole thing—writing in the margins "SOUL FORCE!!" and "RADIANT EXEMPLARS!!"

I smiled as I thought of our #1 goal of our Optimize Coach program: To help our Coaches coach THEMSELVES first so they can become radiant exemplars of their deepest values.

Why? Because that integrity is what leads to the highest form of influence.

How do we cultivate our moral authority? John tells us that it's grounded in four things: competence, courage, consistency, and character.

We need to be good at what we do and show up with excellence in the small things. That's the essence of competence.

Then we need to have the courage to do the right thing. John tells us that "Leadership authority shrinks or expands with a person's courage. Author and professor C.S. Lewis said, 'Courage is not simply one of the virtues but the form of every virtue at the testing point.'" (<- Brilliant.)

Then we need that consistency we talked about before—"doing well all the time, not just sometimes."

All of which leads us to character. John tells us this is a blend of integrity ("the alignment of your values and actions"), authenticity, humility, and love.

Moral authority.

One more time: It's the highest form of influence.

How's yours?

And... What's ONE thing you KNOW you could to Optimize this a little more TODAY?

P.S. Remember this: "What do you want to do with your leadership? I think every leader wants to make an impact, a difference. It's the reason we get up in the morning. It's why we work with people. It's why we create teams or build organizations. Do you have it in you to do something big? Do you want to change your organization, or your community, or your culture, or your country? How big are your dreams? The bigger they are, the more you need moral authority to accomplish them."

*"God gave me a dream bigger
than myself. It was so
intimidating that I had only
two choices: give up or get
help."*

~ John C. Maxwell

"My desire is that my one sentence would say, 'He still lives on in this world.' My hope is that what I taught leaders will be woven into their lives and continue to help others after I'm dead and gone. The goal in life is not to live on forever but to create something that does."

~ John C. Maxwell

THE CLOCK AND THE COMPASS

"People who have a sense of calling need to maintain a daily focus without losing their long-term perspective. I think of this as using both the clock and the compass. The clock helps me to stay on track with what I'm doing today. It encourages me to invest in my daily activities and to keep appointments. It allows me to fulfill the mission of the moment.

The compass helps me to stay on track with my destiny. It allows me to focus on the vision. It helps me know where I'm going. I maintain my overall values. I keep the vision before me. It allows me to fulfill the mission of my calling."

That's from the final chapter on our final leadership: "Career to Calling."

We talked about the shift from Job to Career to Calling in our Notes on Martin Seligman's [Authentic Happiness](#) where he tells us: "The good life consists in deriving happiness by using your signature strengths every day in the main realms of living. The meaningful life adds one more component: using these same strengths to forward knowledge, power, or goodness."

John gives us some tips on how to discover and live our calling. Including: "I like the advice of author, philosopher, and civil rights leader Howard Thurman, who said, 'Don't ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.'"

Here's to coming alive. Living our callings. Cultivating moral authority. In service to the world. Consistently.

TODAY.

B

Brian Johnson,
Heroic Philosopher CEO

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About the Author of This Note

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Brian Johnson is the Founder + CEO of Heroic. He's spent half of the last 25 years as a Founder/CEO and the other half as a Philosopher. Brian loves integrating ancient wisdom and modern science to help YOU become the best, most heroic version of yourself so we can create a world in which 51% of humanity is flourishing by 2051. Learn more at heroic.us.