Influence That Really Matters

"Prof." That's what his students called him—a moniker of deep respect and deep affection.

Dr. Howard G. Hendricks, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Christian Education and Leadership at Dallas Theological Seminary, is a person who has marked my life profoundly. After all these years, it doesn't take much to upload his sustained influence in my life and leadership.

As one of my professors, Prof has had formal influence in my life—organizational influence, if you would. During grad school, like so many other students, I lined up to get into his classes—how to study the Bible, leadership, discipleship, marriage and family, and more. If Prof taught it, I took it. End of story.

But far beyond the formal influence of the classroom was Prof's personal influence in my life—influence that to this day sits deeply in the core of who I am. I can remember many hallway conversations. I can remember long walks at school retreats. I can remember Pattie and I having dinner with Prof and Jeanne. I can remember waking up early for 16 weeks for an intensive, weekly discipleship group. I can remember traveling with Prof to Colorado Springs for a conference and all the conversations tucked into those memorable days. And I can remember the day he came to our home to do the honors of dedicating our firstborn.

This walk down memory lane points out something very significant if you want to make a difference in someone's life. You see, there is often a sizeable gap between ORGANIZATIONAL influence and PERSONAL influence. It's more the exception than the rule to have the SAME person bring both organizational AND personal influence into your life (thank you, Prof).

Think with me about the difference, the contrast between organizational and personal influence.

Organizational influence usually says, "I'm in charge." **Personal influence** always says, "I'm here to serve."

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Organizational influence is transactional ("Meet your quota and I'll give you a commission"). **Personal influence** is transformational ("I believe in you and by God's grace, whatever He's taught me, I want to share with you").

Organizational influence doesn't require (and rarely celebrates) character. **Personal influence** is all about

character.

Organizational influence is usually confined to the workspace. **Personal influence** knows no limits.

> **Organizational influence** offers policies for the complexities of life. **Personal influence** offers wisdom.

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Organizational influence speaks to the head—to inform. **Personal influence** speaks to the heart—to inspire.

Organizational influence is about striving to be at least a box above everyone else on the o-chart. **Personal influence** is about seeking to walk alongside another person.

> **Organizational influence** is about positions and titles and power. **Personal influence** is about relationships and investment and moral authority.

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Organizational influence seeks to hoard information. **Personal influence** seeks to give it away.

Organizational influence often boxes you in. **Personal influence** always lifts you up.

> **Organizational influence** often has a short shelf-life. **Personal influence** lasts a lifetime.

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And finally, **organizational influence** is granted by corporate headquarters to those who finished the obligatory coursework. **Personal influence** is granted by God to those who have opted to enroll for a lifetime in His schoolhouse of heart transformation.

Chuck Olson
Founder | Lead With Your Life