

Rock Solid Level 5 Leadership

December 2010 – FOLLOW THE LEADER!

If your days of youth were anything like mine, it was packed full of times playing “Follow The Leader”. I especially liked the BIKE version! My friends and I would saddle up on our Schwinn sting-rays (complete with banana seats AND baseball cards clothes-pinned on the spokes!) and take turns leading the way.

Launching off curbs. Popping wheelies. Slamming on the brakes to create fishtails. Creating imaginary obstacle courses. During the dog days of summer, we would ride for hours until the street lights came on signaling the close of business.

As I think back on this childhood game, it was a pretty equal opportunity endeavor. If you wanted to be the leader, all you had to do was show up and wait your turn. No interview needed. No qualifications required. No dotted line to be signed.

But what worked well on the streets of the neighborhood can turn into a fiasco in most other settings. Any serious undertaking requires more from its leaders than just showing up and waiting for their number to be called to run the show.

Every one of us has been in situations where we have tasted first hand the agony and ecstasy of leadership. We have seen those who have been handed the helm of leadership run the proverbially ship aground in short order; and we have seen those who have risen to the occasion and delivered top-shelf leadership.

In thinking about the various types of leaders, I have been helped decidedly by the language John Maxwell uses in his book *Becoming a Person of Influence* when describing five levels of leadership. Here’s how he frames the discussion:

- •Level 1 **Position**
People follow because they have to.
- Level 2 **Permission**
People follow because they want to.
- Level 3 **Production**
People follow because of what you have done for the organization.
- Level 4 **Personnel Development**
People follow because of what you have one for them.
- Level 5 **Personhood**
People follow because of who you are and what you represent.

Following Maxwell’s approach, this description of a Level 5 leader provides a clear snapshot of what it means to lead with your life. It’s inside out leadership. There is a weight to this

leader's personhood—something of substance. People are drawn to this type of leader, not so much because of what the person does but because of who the person is.

If you thumb through the pages of the Old Testament, you will find that Daniel was this kind of leader. In the middle of the book that bears his name, you find this telling statement: "Daniel began distinguishing himself...because he possessed an extraordinary spirit..." If you chase down the storyline of his life and leadership, you will learn a lot about this Level 5 leader who showcased an "extraordinary spirit". He had character that was uncompromising. He had convictions that were unwavering. And he had confidence in God that was unconditional.

Now THAT, my friends, is leading with your life.

So what kind of leader do you want to follow?

And more importantly, what kind of leader do you want to be?

Lord, do Your deep work in the interior of my life so that I am ready to step up and take on any assignment You may entrust to me.