

The Making of a Leader

Title: *The Making of a Leader: Recognizing the Lessons and Stages of Leadership Development*

Author: J. Robert Clinton

Copyright: 2012

Book Description:

By studying the lives of hundreds of historical, biblical, and contemporary leaders, author Robert Clinton has determined six stages of leadership development to help you determine where you are in the process.

Book Quotes:

In response to both the lack of and the new wave of leaders, there is an urgent need for the cultivation of godly and spiritual leadership. (7)

Leadership is a dynamic process in which a man or a woman with God-given capacity influences a specific group of God's people toward His purposes for the group. (10)

Leaders are shaped by deliberate training and by experience. (10)

Leaders influence followers in different ways. Direct, indirect, and organizational influence are three main ways of a leaders influences. (17)

Leadership emergence theory does what a good map is supposed to do. It is a set of well-integrated ideas to help us:

- Organize what we see happening in leaders' lives
- Anticipate what might happen in future development
- Understand past events so as to see new things in them
- Better order our lives (21)

My leadership emergence theory can be stated in relatively simple terms:

God develops a leader over a lifetime. That development is a function of the use of events and people to impress leadership lessons upon a leader (processing), time, and leader response. Processing is central to the theory. All leaders can point to critical incidents in their lives where God taught them something very important. (22)

Leadership emergence theory begins with the concept of formulating a timeline. (26)

There are five development phases.

- Phase 1: Sovereign Foundations
- Phase 2: Inner-Life Growth
- Phase 3: Ministry Maturing
- Phase 4: Life Maturing
- Phase 5: Convergence (26)

In Phase 1, God providentially works foundational items into the life of the leader-to-be. Personality characteristics, both good and bad experiences, and the time context will be used by God. (28)

In Phase 2 an emerging leader usually receives some kind of training. Often it is informal in connection with ministry. (27)

The real training program is in the heart of the person, where God is doing some growth testing. (27)

Phase 3 the emerging leader gets into ministry as a prime focus of life. He will get further training, informally through self-study growth projects or non-formally through functionally oriented workshops and so on. The major activities of Phase 3 are ministry. (27)

The amazing thing is that during Phases 1, 2, and 3 God is primarily working in the leader. Though there may be fruitfulness in ministry, the major work is that which God is doing to and in the leader, not through him. (27)

But God is quietly, often in unusual ways, trying to get the leader to see that one ministers out of what one is. God is concerned with what we are. (27)

During Phase 4 the leader identifies and uses his gift-mix with power. There is mature fruitfulness. (28)

During Phase 5 convergence occurs. That is, the leader is moved by God into a role that matches gift-mix, experience, temperament, and so on. (28)

In convergence, being and spiritual authority form the true power base for mature ministry. (28)

In the long haul, God is preparing you for convergence. He is conforming you to the image of Christ (see Romans 8:28-29), and He is giving you training and experience so that your gifts may be discovered. His goal is a Spirit-filled leader through whom the living Christ ministers, utilizing the leader's spiritual gifts. The fruit of the Spirit is the mark of the mature Christian. The gifts of the Spirit are a mark of a leader being used of God. God wants that balance. His approach is to work in you, and then through you. (28)

The terms *patterns*, *processes* and *principles* are foundational to understanding the analysis of a person's life. Patterns deal with the overall framework, or the big picture, of a life. Processes deal with the ways and means used by God to move a leader along in the overall pattern. Principles deal with the identification of foundational truths within processes and patterns that have a wider application to leaders. (35)

In Convergence, Phase 5, God moves the leader into a role that matches his gift-mix and experience so that ministry is maximized. (39)

As a leader, you should recognize that God is continually developing you over a lifetime. His top priority is to conform you to the image of Christ for ministry with spiritual authority. Enduring fruitfulness flows out of being. In addition to transforming your character, God will increase your capacity to influence through developing

your spiritual gifts. (45)

The right to influence comes from the ability to clarify God's truth to others. (56)

Godly leaders display love for truth. They study the written Word to feed their own souls as well as to help others. (57)

God uses His Word in a variety of ways: to give inner conviction, to assign ministry, to solve problems, to motivate toward vision, to encourage faith, to give divine assurance, and to clarify guidance, to name a few. All are important to an emerging leader. (61)

Faithfulness is the yardstick by which God measures ministry maturity. (65)

As a potential leader moves into ministry, God develops his leadership abilities by taking him through four stages. (1) God challenges the leader into ministry. This is called *entry*. (2) He develops skills and spiritual gifts to enhance the leader's effectiveness. This is called *training*. (3) He enables the leader to relate to people in ways that will motivate and influence them. He also teaches him how to set up the means to accomplish these goals. This is called *relational learning*. (4) He helps the leader see spiritual principles that govern ministry that pleases Him. This is called *discernment*. (67)

A major responsibility of leadership is the selection and development of potential leaders. Mature leaders should openly and deliberately challenge potential leaders about specific needs and ministry opportunities. (74)

This faithfulness pattern is built on repeated instances of the little-big principle: *Faithfulness in a small responsibility is an indicator of probable faithfulness in a larger responsibility*. (82)

In order to influence and motivate people, a leader must learn how to relate to people effectively. He must also learn how to work within existing organizational structures and create new structures to enhance ministry. (87)

The ultimate goal in authority development is to help a leader understand that spiritual authority is the primary authority base in leadership influence. (88)

The most important relational insight I have learned is that subordinates must be very careful in their correction of those in authority over them. One needs to be more than just right on issues to correct such a leader. Rightness or wrongness is not the whole matter. Sometimes being right on certain issues is less important than maintaining a positive relationship. (91)

Ministry conflict, like general conflict, tests a leader's personal maturity. What we truly are is revealed in a crisis. Conflict processing is important not so much for learning problem solving, but for its value in revealing character. What we are in the conflict is much more critical than what we do. (93)

Leadership backlash test a leader's perseverance, clarity of vision, and faith. (94)

You can see that discernment is necessary in spiritual warfare, and that one must avoid the twofold spiritual warfare problem. Maintaining dynamic balance between the two extremes takes discernment. A leader must heed two cautions concerning the spiritual warfare process item. Don't *underestimate* and don't *overestimate* the spiritual warfare behind every situation. God will give the necessary discernment as the leader is open to learn. (97)

A faith challenge involves three elements: (1) a revelation from God concerning some future plan, (2) a realization by the leader that God is challenging him to act on the basis of this revelation, and (3) a mindset that determines to make leadership decisions based on this firm conviction. (101)

The basic guidance pattern is simple. A leader first learns about personal guidance for his own life. Having learned to discern God's direction for his own life in numerous crucial decisions, he can then shift to the leadership function of determining guidance for the group that he leads. (111)

Mentoring refers to the process where a person with a serving, giving, encouraging attitude, the mentor, sees leadership potential in a still-to-be developed person, the protégé or mentoree, and is able to promote or otherwise significantly influence the protégé in the realization of potential. (114)

A mentor is someone who helps a protégé in some very practical ways: by giving timely *advice* that encourages the protégé; by *risking* his own reputation in backing the protégé; by *bridging* between the protégé and needed resources; by *modeling* and setting expectations that challenge the protégé; by *giving* tracts, letters, books, or other literary information that open perspectives for the protégé; by *giving financially*, sometimes *sacrificially*, to further the protégé's ministry; by *co-ministering* in order to increase the credibility, status, and prestige of the protégé; and by having the *freedom* to allow and even promote the protégé beyond the mentor's own level of leadership. (116)

The major lessons of this chapter are: (136)

- Mature ministry flows from a mature character.
- A mature character comes through difficult processing.
- Many leaders go through such processing without realizing the benefit of it.
- Spiritual authority is not a goal but rather a byproduct.

Conflict, though fraught with negative implications, has its positive creative side, which is very important. Most leaders do not benefit from the positive side. Humanly speaking, it is bad enough to go through conflict processing. But it is even worse to go through it and not profit from it. Conflict is a common means for God to stimulate a leader in terms of the reflective and upward development maturity patterns. (142)

Quality leadership does not come easily. It requires time, experience, and repeated instances of maturity processing. Mature ministry flows from a mature character, formed in the graduate school of life. Ministry can be successful through giftedness alone; but a leader whose ministry skills outstrip his character formation will eventually falter. A mature, successful ministry flows from one who has both ministry skills and character that has been mellowed, developed, and ripened by God's maturity processing. Character formation is fundamental. Ministry flows out of being. (146)

Spiritual authority is not a goal but rather a byproduct. It is a delegated authority that comes from God. It is the major power base of a leader who has learned God's lessons during maturity processing. Leaders have various power bases that give credence to their ability. Spiritual authority comes out of experience with God. A leader does not seek spiritual authority; a leader seeks to know God. Maturity processing enhances this desire to know God. Spiritual authority results from a leader's experience with God. (146)

From these insights I developed a further specific principle: *I will give as much as I can to one who chooses to have it.* If a person really wants my help I will be available to give it as long as he responds. (158)

I learned in home Bible classes that *truth discovered by the learner sticks longer.* (156)

Lessons learned in life situation become underlying assumptions that guide leaders. They become part of a ministry philosophy. All leaders operate from a ministry philosophy. Let me repeat. All leaders operate from a

ministry philosophy. However, that philosophy may not be adequate, or it may be simplistic. It may be implicit and not explicit. Effective leaders can articulate much of their ministry philosophy. (157)

Means and methods may be good, but Wiersbe went beyond them: *I learned never to adopt a method until I understood the principle in it.* (169)

Remember Goodwin's expectation principle: A potential leader tends to rise to the level of genuine expectancy of a leader he respects. (182)

Not all leaders finish well. I have observed four patterns concerning the response of leaders to processing in the ministry development phase. These patterns include: (183)

1. Dropouts – quite a few
2. Plateaued leaders – the majority of leaders
3. Discipline – a few
4. Those who continue to grow and finish well – some

In my comparative studies of biblical leaders, I gave four observations. The first one surprised me. (186)

- Observation 1. Few leaders finish well.
- Observation 2. Leadership is difficult
- Observation 3. God's enabling presence is the essential ingredient of successful leadership.
- Observation 4. Spiritual leadership can make a difference.

In this research, I saw that thirteen of forty-nine Bible leaders who had data indicating their finish, finished well. That means that only one out of three or four finished well. (187)