Tools for Wise Leadership

A programme of TWR-Africa, produced by TWR-Zimbabwe, presented by Rev Dr Roy Musasiwa

Series 11: Levels of Leadership
Talk 03: The Production Level of Leadership

Welcome to the programme Tools for Wise Leadership. We are focusing on Maxwell's view of leadership levels and how they relate to the kind of leader Jesus was. In the last two programmes we discussed the position level and the permission levels of leadership. According to Christian leadership guru John Maxwell the position level offers the least power of influence over followers. At this level people follow the leader only because they have to.

At the permission level, which is higher than the position level, people follow because they want to, not because they have to. Their motivation is therefore likely to be longer lasting than in the position level of leadership. Now this level is achieved through the leader being a people person, able to identify with the joys and sufferings of subordinates. However, we cautioned that experiencing a mere relationship without producing any results for the church or organization will eventually fail to motivate people to make sacrifices, take risks, and follow you. That is why today we move on to the production level.

This third level is appropriately named the production level because it draws attention to the need for a leader to produce results. You might have great rapport with your followers. They might respect your personal qualities and people skills. But if you were to end there the very purpose of your company or organization would not be fulfilled. At the end of the day your company or organization exists to produce results. A football team is there to score goals and win matches, not just to be entertaining. A commercial company is there to meet customer needs and become profitable. A school is there to educate children. The church is there to produce spiritual growth in its members and to fulfil the Great Commission.

A leader who leads his team to meet results is worth following. At the production level people will follow you because of what you have done for the organization or church. They like the results they have seen. At this level, they not only enjoy a relationship with the leader, but they enjoy the results he or she has produced. People love to follow a leader who gets things done. They love to be part of a team that wins.

As a leader you need to score small wins early on in the relationship, with celebrations to mark the wins. It can take lots of small wins before you have medium and large wins. In this way you are building momentum. Momentum is a great help to the leader. As you score wins momentum kicks in. Problems are fixed with little effort because of momentum. Momentum makes you look better than you are. It is the speed that smashes problems before you. It is also a friend because the more you achieve, the easier future achievements become.

In the Bible we have the example of David whose production built a momentum that came to his aid again and again. His passion for God was first exposed when he fought Goliath as a young teenager. Here David showed the example of leading even before he had the position of a leader. By the time he reigned as king over Israel, David had progressed well beyond the first two levels of leadership. He had built relationships with key people. He had proven himself in battle. He had learned team-building skills, he made decisions intuitively, and his vision energized the people. The result was strategic military victories. With each conquest, David gained more influence and respect. Momentum had kicked in. It had started with victory over the lions and bears that gave him confidence to stand before Goliath. In turn David's victory over Goliath caused the nation to pursue

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the Philistines and route them. That was momentum at work – momentum resulting from being productive.

Here are some production principles that David followed:

1. Good leaders offer a clear vision that unites the people.
2. Good leaders put God's agenda first and seek to please Him.
3. Good leaders solve problems and produce results.
4. Good leaders build teams who share responsibility and credit.

It is therefore not surprising to read in 2. Samuel 5:1-2:

> "Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and spoke, saying, 'Indeed we are your bone and your flesh. Also, in time past, when Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel out and brought them in; and the Lord said to you, 'You shall shepherd my people Israel, and be ruler over Israel.'"

What is that saying about David? He was a results producer. And those results generated for David the law of Momentum.

Now let us turn to Jesus and see how the level of production worked in his case. In Acts 10:37-39 Peter, one of Jesus' closest disciples, gives a witness concerning Jesus. He says:

> "You yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem."

Here Peter points out how Jesus' work had become known throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John did. The key thing Peter says is that Jesus "went about doing good." Jesus' focus was not on just on cultivating rapport with his supporters, but on being productive. It was in the process of "doing good" that rapport with his followers was established.

Now when it came to accomplishing the work of the Father Jesus was both intentional and intense. At one time Jesus was so intense about accomplishing the Father's work that he did not even have an appetite for food. He told his disciples in John 4:34-35:

> "My food is to do the will of Him who sent me, and to finish His work. Do you not say, 'There are still four months and *then* comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!"

So Jesus worked really hard. Whatever he did, he did with his whole heart. That's what Paul asks Christians to do, right? In Colossians 3:23-25 Paul says,

> "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving."

That was exactly Jesus' productive attitude to work. When he taught he did it with his whole heart. The same was true when he cast out demons, healed the sick or evangelized the lost. Being productive for the Father was indeed his food. He knew that time was limited. The fields were white unto harvest, as they still are now. Failure to harvest now, would mean losing precious crops.

What about you leader? How productive are you in your work? There are too many leaders who are more concerned about what they get more than they are about what they produce. At the end of the month they want their salary. But if you ask what they would have really accomplished there will be

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no satisfactory answer. They are not serving with their whole heart as working for the Lord and not for man.

No wonder such leaders do not progress on the leadership ladder like we saw in the case of David and Jesus. Let me challenge you leader to move beyond the first level of leadership, which is having a position, and beyond level 2 which is the permission level where you have established a strong rapport with your team. You need to move to the production level which we have been considering in this presentation. It is only when you are productive that you really start to be become effective. It is only then that you generate the momentum that will move you forward. So until we meet in the next programme, practice this tool of wise leadership.

Discussion Questions for: Series 11 - Talk 3 - The Production Level of Leadership

For this series of *Levels of Leadership* you can use the following study questions to guide you in deepening the impact of this series:

Study Question 1: for Personal reflection
What does this episode mean to you personally as a leader?

Study Question 2: for Group Discussion
What does this topic mean you as a group of leaders?

Study Question 3: for applying the topic
What can you apply from this topic in your role as a leader?

Summary:

On the Production level a leader needs to produce results. Personal qualities and people skills are not enough to reach one's goal or produce results. Successes lead to confidence and gather momentum. Problems are solved easier.

Discussion Questions:

Study Question 1: Personal reflection

Is my leadership style such that I am reaching goals and gaining momentum?

Study Question 2: Group Discussion

How do we as leaders accomplish our goals? Jesus had several goals: 1. doing good; 2. training people; 3. be a willing sacrifice for others on the cross. He was accomplishing His Fathers will.

Study Question 3: Applying the topic

How can we as leaders have passion to reach our goals by uniting our team with a clear vision, with sharing of responsibilties and by assisting with problem solving?

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