



21 Laws of Leadership

HOW I APPLIED JOHN
MAXWELL'S 21 LAWS OF
LEADERSHIP AT MICROSOFT

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How I Applied the 21 Laws of Leadership at Microsoft

A lot of my early leadership lessons were from Stephen Covey (Principle-Centered Leadership is life changing).

I later found John Maxwell and I felt like I found the keys to an incredibly profound body of leadership knowledge.

I filled my shelves with John Maxwell's books and vowed to apply them at Microsoft.

Of all of John Maxwell's books, the 21 Laws of Leadership is the one that gave me the greatest scaffolding for my leadership journey.

This is how I applied the 21 Laws of Leadership at Microsoft...

#1. Law of the Lid

Leadership Ability Determines a Person's
Level of Effectiveness.

- This law helped me realize how without leadership ability, you're limited in work and life.
- I started by focusing on personal effectiveness, then shifted to leadership effectiveness.
- I practiced influence without authority to compound my impact, regardless of my role or level of authority.

#2. The Law of Influence

The True Measure of Leadership is Influence—
Nothing More, Nothing Less

- This law gave me incredible clarity into the essential concept of leadership.
- Once I realized that leadership is influence, I devoured all the books on influence I could find, from (Robert Greene, Robert Cialdini, Sun Tzu, Niccolò Machiavelli, Malcolm Gladwell, Dale Carnegie, etc.)
- I practiced building rapport before results, understanding concerns, and helping people get what they want aligned to vision, mission and values.

#3. The Law of Process

Leadership Develops Daily, Not in a Day

- This law inspired me to build better habits & practices to build better leadership skills.
- I prioritized habits that would “sharpen the saw”, build better execution, and compound personal growth through better feedback loops.
- I connected with leaders across Microsoft to learn their best practices and methodologies, especially their morning routines and how they lead teams.

#4. The Law of Navigation

Anyone Can Steer the Ship,
But It Takes a Leader to Chart the Course

- This law gave inspired me to create more clarity in any situation and Begin with the End in Mind.
- I focused on mastering Work Breakdown Structures, timelines and roadmaps, especially “Work Backwards Schedules.”
- I practiced giving people chances to steer the ship, which taught me how to chart the course better, and helped more people grow their leadership skills and abilities.

#5. The Law of E.F. Hutton

When the Real Leader Speaks,
People Listen

- This law gave me curious about why do some people wield power, when they don't wield the position.
- I eventually learned a phrase to help me internalize how influence works: Character trumps emotion, trumps logic.
- I studied comedians at live comedy shows to learn how they change the energy of a room and how they command a room (or don't).

#6. The Law of Solid Ground

Trust Is the Foundation of Leadership

- This law gave inspired me to better understand how to build trust and taught me how people value consistency in behavior (a blessing and a curse.)
- I learned two types of trust: 1) Trust in what to expect as in “I trust you’ll do xyz”) and 2) Vulnerability-Based Trust as in “I’ve got your back.”
- I practiced building vulnerability-based trust through transparency, defending people, and by not allowing people to talk behind each other’s backs or bad mouth when out of the room.

#7. The Law of Respect

People Naturally Follow Leaders
Stronger Than Themselves

- This law helped me see how people value expertise.
- In some situations, I didn't share my experience or expertise. I wanted to be evaluated on my immediate merit, not awards, accolades or credentials. But later I learned that people value experience and expertise when they choose who to follow.
- I learned to share my relevant experience and expertise to the challenge on hand so that people could better understand what I'm bringing to the table.

#8. The Law of Intuition

Leaders Evaluate Everything
with a Leadership Bias

- This law helped me learn how to balance gut-driven with heart-driven with logic and data-driven decisions.
- I read all the books I could on intuition: Blink helped me learn how thin slices of data tell us a lot, but we have to know when it's not relevant. Sources of Power taught me how experts make decisions under pressure through satisficing and Recognition Primed Decision Making.
- I practiced scenario planning and building trends for the future grounded in empathy.
- I learned how to think in systems and ecosystems, so I could better understand behavior in systems.

#9. The Law of Magnetism

Who You Are Is Who You Attract

- This law helped me see how values are the ultimate lightning rod.
- I learned that by living my values at work, I better connected with people who wanted to realize their full potential, make impact, and change the world their way.
- I learned that if you blend in or adapt too much, you can break yourself, or you can end up in places with people that don't bring out your best, or it's an in authentic journey.

#10. The Law of Connection

Leaders Touch a Heart
Before They ask for a Hand

- This law helped me understand just how deeply people need to know you care.
- I learned tough love can be extraordinarily tough, especially when people don't know you have good intentions or their best interests in mind.
- I learned that styles differences are easier to resolve than conflicts in values.
- I practiced connecting with people at vision, mission, and values, as well as topics of interest to find common ground.
- I practiced creating shared goals in any situation so that people could work better together in meaningful ways, where everybody wins.

#11. The Law of the Inner Circle

A Leaders Potential Is Determined
by Those Closest to Them

- This law helped me understand how real it is that you are the average of the five people you spend time with.
- I made it intentional to spend more time with interesting, inspiring, and capable people who brought out my best, and who I could inspire to new levels of greatness.
- I learned my speed of growth depends on deep feedback from those that know me best.

#12. The Law of Empowerment

Only Secure Leaders

Give Power to Others

- This law speaks to my core values, so it resonates deeply.
- I grew up with the philosophy to always work myself out of a job to avoid stagnation or getting stuck.
- I learned all I could about how to apply empowerment to decision making, leading teams, and creating a sense of ownership.
- I practiced teaching people how to fish, rather than just give them fish, so they could do anything I could do, and hopefully better.

#13. The Law of Reproduction

It Takes a Leader to Raise Up a Leader

- This law helped me see how work and life be like a game of chutes and ladders.
- I learned how valuable executive sponsorship is and how the right grooming can make a very real difference, especially when you can mirror great models of leadership.
- I made the development of leaders one of my highest priorities at Microsoft through coaching, mentoring, and teaching deep leadership wisdom.

#14. The Law of Buy-In

People Buy Into the Leader,
Then the Vision

- This law helped me see distinguish between the leader, the vision, and the execution.
- I learned to create better vision scope presentations by splitting the vision from the execution so each piece could be evaluated.
- I practiced being able to answer the question, why are you THE right person to lead this epic adventure.

#15. The Law of Victory

Leaders Find a Way
for the Team to Win

- This law helped me realize that the value of strategy is to figure out a winning position.
- It also helped me realize that people like to feel like they win, and to experience a sense of progress in their work and life.
- I learned all the frameworks, mental models and tools that I could use to win in work and life.
- I empowered and equipped leaders of all levels with extreme advantages through mindsets, skillsets, and toolsets to help them think better, feel better, and take better action.

#16. The Law of the Big Mo

Momentum Is a
Leader's Best Friend

- This law helped me appreciate how we are momentum beings.
- I learned how to create quick wins to build momentum, even when the challenge before us would be a long and winding road.
- I practiced chunking things down into chunks of change that would be easier to achieve and build momentum.

#17. The Law of Priorities

Leaders Understand that Activity is Not Necessarily Accomplishment

- This law helped me really distinguish between activities and outcomes.
- I learned how to focus on value over volume.
- I practiced prioritizing based on windows of opportunity, impact, and ability to execute.

Maxwell's 3 Rs help here:

1. Required?
2. Return?
3. Reward?

#18. The Law of Sacrifice

A Leader Must Give Up
to Go Up

- This law helped me really internalize Marshall Goldsmith's What Got You Here Won't Get You There.
- I learned how make conscious choices around delegation and outsourcing, as well as what to learn next to become a better, more capable Future Self.
- To find my North Star through my journey, I focused on my Golden Circle and my Signature Strengths and my deep purpose.

"For everything you have missed, you have gained something else; and for everything you gained, you lose something."

– Ralph Waldo Emerson

#19. The Law of Timing

When to Lead Is As Important As
What to Do and Where to Go

- This law helped me really focus on recognizing, appreciating, and exploiting windows of opportunity.
- I learned that time changes what's important.
- I created a productivity system, Agile Results, where time is a first-class citizen.

#20. The Law of Explosive Growth

To Add Growth, Lead Followers—
To Multiply, Lead Leaders

- This law helped me see and appreciate how leading leaders is a force multiplier.
- I learned that the return on leading leaders is a way to compound my time and energy for my greatest impact at scale.
- I studied success patterns of leaders far and wide so that I could help any leader leapfrog to new levels of leadership, better, faster, easier, and realize their full potential with skill.

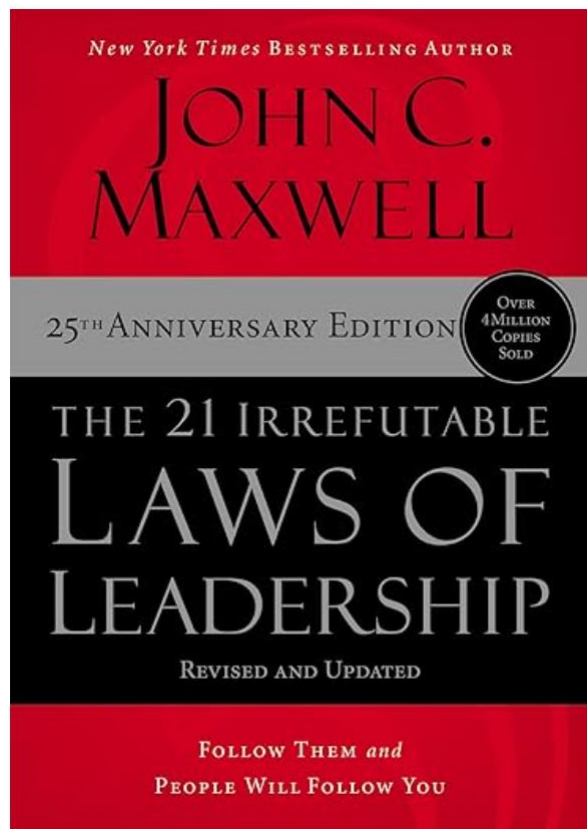
#21. The Law of Legacy

A Leader's Lasting Value Is
Measured by Succession

- This law reminded me to focus on building more leaders, creating protégés, and sharing and scaling libraries of proven practices with the world.
- I learned to distribute and federate leadership based on the book *The Starfish and the Spider*.
- I practiced scaling systems and methodologies through manifestos, principles, values, and practices.
- I built ontologies and information models so that more people could play in some of the more advanced arenas of work and life.

Where to Grow for More:

21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership: Follow Them and People Will Follow You



The book that helps leaders grow and build more leaders.