“Excellence breeds character, and character breeds excellence. Demand excellence from your people, and they will develop into people who also demand excellence of themselves and the people they lead.”
– John C. Maxwell

John C. Maxwell’s book helps others reach their full potential by identifying and training potential leaders around you. It contains Maxwell’s invaluable experiences and anecdotes. The book is divided into ten chapters. The book preludes with the success story of John Wooden, a great basketball coach who brought ten national basketball championships to UCLA in a span of twelve years.

Maxwell finds three things that characterize disciplined leaders:

• They have identified specific long – and short-term goals for themselves.
• They have a plan for achieving those goals.
• They have a desire that motivates them to continue working to accomplish those goals.

Maxwell unfolds the ten qualities to become a dream team coach based on his three decades of leadership experience.

1. A dream team coach chooses players well. Red Auerbach, longtime Boston Celtics president said, “How you select people is more important than how you manage them once they’re on the job. If you start with the right people, you won’t have problems later on. If you hire the wrong people, for whatever reason, you’re in serious trouble and all the revolutionary management techniques in the world won’t bail you out.”
2. A dream team coach constantly communicates the game plan.
3. A dream team coach takes the time to huddle.
4. A dream team coach knows what his or her players prefer.
5. A dream team coach excels in problem solving. A leader should strive for excellence, but he should expect problems to occur. And believe it or not, he should welcome them. Problems almost always create opportunities – to learn, grow and improve. Leaders must anticipate problems before they occur. They must maintain a positive attitude while they occur.
6. A dream team coach provides the support needed for success.
7. A dream team coach commands the respect of the players.
8. A dream team coach does not treat everyone the same.
9. A dream team coach continues to win.
10. A dream team coach understands the levels of the players.

He unfolds that true leaders are able to attract potential leaders because:
• Leaders think like them.
• Leaders express feelings that other leaders sense.
• Leaders create an environment that attracts potential leaders.
• Leaders are not threatened by people with great potential.

Great Quotes from Book

“We grow by dreams. All big individuals are dreamers. They see things in the soft haze of a spring day, or in the red fire on a long winter’s evening. Some of us let those great dreams die, but others nourish and protect them; nourish them through bad days until they bring them to the sunshine and light which comes always to those who sincerely hope that their dreams will come true.” – Woodrow Wilson

“You can buy a man’s time, you can even buy his physical presence at given place, but you cannot buy enthusiasm .. you cannot buy loyalty ... you cannot buy the devotion of hearts, minds, or souls. You must earn these.” - Charles Frances

“If you are doing big things, you attract big men. If you are doing the little things, you attract little men. Little men usually cause trouble.” - Winston Churchill

“Men are developed the same way gold is mined. Several tons of dirt must be moved to get an ounce of gold. But you don’t go into the mine looking for dirt, but you go in looking for the gold.” - Carnegie said

“Great leaders are never satisfied with current levels of performance. They constantly strive for higher and higher levels of achievement.” - Donna Harrison

“One of the great discoveries a man makes, one of his great surprises, is to find he can do what he was afraid he couldn’t do.” - Henry Ford

“It is one of the most beautiful compensations of this life that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself.” - Ralph Waldo Emerson

Leadership Lessons:
1. Poor commitment equals poor development; great commitment equals great development.
2. When you look for potential leaders, select people with obvious strengths even if you see weaknesses.
3. A good team is made up of people with different talents playing different positions to accomplish one goal.
4. People must learn to do new things. When people do only what is comfortable for them, they get into a rut. They stop growing.
5. Great desire can overcome a multitude of natural deficiencies in a leader.
6. Leaders are abstract thinkers. They think in terms of intangibles like timing, morale, attitude, momentum, and atmosphere. They read between the lines. They anticipate the unexpected.

7. Leaders create and inspire new leaders by instilling faith in their leadership abilities and helping them develop and hone leadership skills they don’t know they possess.

8. Great leaders – the truly successful ones who are in the top 1 percent – all have one thing in common. They know that acquiring and keeping good people is a leader’s most important task.

9. Followers tell you want you want to hear. Leaders tell you what you need to hear.

10. Too often people limit their own potential. They think small. They are afraid of risk. People no longer willing to stretch are no longer able to grow. As author Henry Drummond says, “Unless a man undertakes more than the possible can do, he will never do all he can do.”

11. Hiring an employee is like skydiving: once you’ve jumped out of the plane, you’re committed. The key to making the right choice depends on two things: 1) your ability to see the big picture, and 2) your ability to judge potential employees during the selection process.

12. A potential leader who feels secure is more likely to take risks, try to excel, break new ground, and succeed. Great leaders make their followers feel bigger than they are. Soon the followers begin to think, act, and produce bigger than they are. Finally, they become what they think they are.

13. The very best leaders, the top 1 percent, take their people the next step and develop them so they can reach their potential. The growth and development of people is the highest calling of leadership.

Final Word

Maxwell differentiates between nurturing, equipping and developing. And he outlines the differences between winning by competitiveness and wining by cooperation. He says that often the departing leader don’t pave smooth way for their successors leading to debacle.

Maxwell conveys an emphatic message that leaders who don’t develop people will one day find themselves hitting a wall in their success. No matter how efficient and strategic they are, eventually they run out of time. He concludes the book by questioning the readers, “Are you developing the leaders around you?”

The book contains several research studies, quotations, illustrations and self-assessment tests to ensure effective takeaways about the content. It unfolds pearls of wisdom based on the rich experience of Maxwell. He has the uncanny ability to connect with readers by arousing and sustaining their interest towards the contents. It is worth reading not only to become a good leader but also to build leaders around you so that you can successfully pass on the leadership baton to your next generation.

Read more: http://profmsr.blogspot.com/2011/01/book-review-developing-leaders-around.html#ixzz1tAQaOt6w