

ASSESSING YOUR OWN LEADERSHIP SKILLS

When I was a kid, every once in a while my parents would back my brother, Larry, and I up to a doorframe, lay a ruler across our heads, and mark a line with a pencil to chart our growth. They would then write the date next to it. It was always exciting to see how much I'd grown since my last measurement.

If only measuring our effectiveness as a leader was so easy. Why is it so hard to get a clear picture of our own strengths and weaknesses? Self evaluation means:

- * Being willing to critique myself.
- * Asking for and accepting honest feedback from those who can most accurately assess our leadership-those who follow us.
- * Exercising self-discipline.

This last point is perhaps the hardest. I define self-control, in the beginning of life, as the choice of achieving what I really want by doing things I really don't want to do. Once this becomes a habit, discipline becomes the choice of achieving what I really want by doing the very things I now want to do! I really believe that a disciplined life becomes a joy - but only after we have worked hard to practice it.

All great leaders have understood that their number one responsibility is cultivating their own discipline and personal growth. Those who cannot lead themselves cannot lead others. Here's what I call the START plan for becoming a disciplined leader.

- * **START ON YOURSELF** - We'd all rather focus on changing everyone else to conform to us. The only problem with that is we end up with an organization full of people who reflect our weaknesses!
- * **START EARLY** - I'm grateful for parents who taught me the value of a disciplined lifestyle early on.
- * **START SMALL** - A simple plan will more likely bear fruit than anything elaborate will. Remember the value of small things, consistently practiced over time, in transforming a life.
- * **START NOW** - The will to prepare is more important than the will to succeed. The dream to succeed, apart from the will to prepare, is simply wishful thinking.
- * **START ORGANIZED** - Those who take time to organize have a special power. Organizational skills allow for the possibility of gaining stamina and momentum as your successes build. You gain a reputation as the person who always follows through.

Now that you've started down the road of self-evaluation, receiving constructive criticism, and self-discipline, you're ready to determine where you are as an effective leader. To help you in this ongoing evaluation, we've produced an online assessment that will help you identify how much you are internalizing each of "The 21 Laws of Leadership." We look forward to assisting you in any way that we can. Simply use the link below to utilize this free resource.

Dr. John C. Maxwell

<http://www.INJOY.com/21Laws>