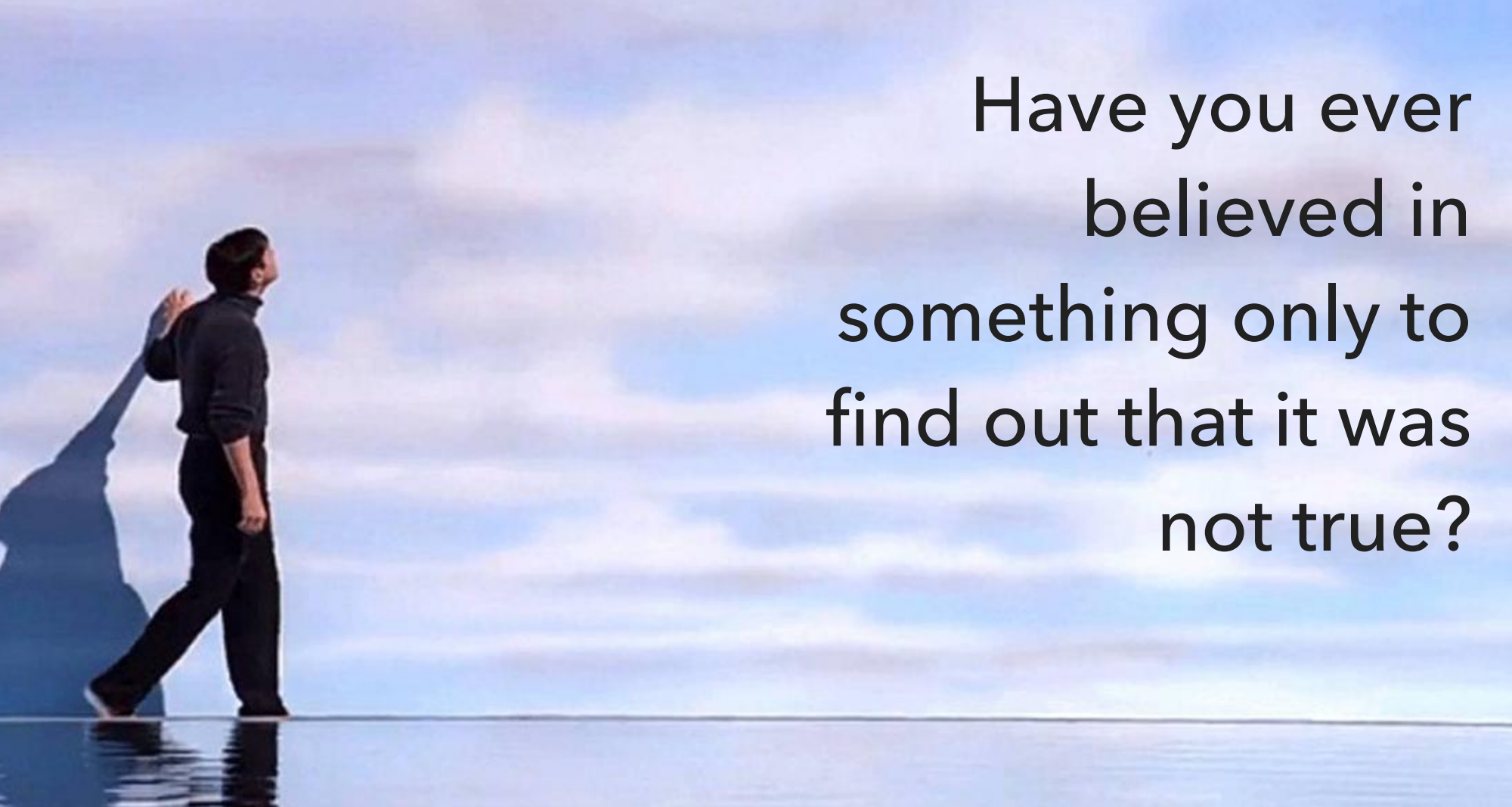




THE ENEMIES OF INFLUENCE

4 LEADERSHIP MYTHS PEOPLE BUY-IN TO

ZACH MALITO

A man in a dark shirt and pants is walking from left to right on a highly reflective surface, possibly water or a polished floor. His reflection is clearly visible below him. The background is a vast, open sky with soft, white clouds. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

Have you ever
believed in
something only to
find out that it was
not true?

If you have ever seen the movie *The Truman Show*, there is no better illustration of this. In case you have not seen the movie let me catch you up.

The Truman Show is a fascinating story of a man who has been the subject of a television show since his birth. Every aspect of his life is staged and all the people in his life are actors. Every day, millions of people tune in to watch *The Truman Show* to see how his life plays out. The thing is, he does not know is that people are watching him; Truman is clueless to the fact that his life is being lived out on an extra-large sound stage.

#SPOILERALERT

Eventually, Truman starts to realize that something is odd and begins noticing things that are not natural and starts asking questions. In the end, Truman discovers the truth and the movie ends with Truman leaving his façade of a life to go and live life in the real world.

Once Truman discovered the truth, although it was sad at first, it brought a new sense of freedom. In fact, the truth liberated him and allowed him to move on to a fuller life that he was not able to live before.

It is amazing what can happen when we receive truth after believing something false.

This is no different when it comes to leadership. It is amazing what can happen in a person's leadership when they **let go** of something that is false.

**FALSE BELIEF
WILL IMPAIR US.
TRUTH WILL
LIBERATE US.**

I have been a student of leadership for quite some time and I have discovered that there are certain leadership myths that people buy in to. As a result, many leaders are impaired and not leading to their fullest potential because they are holding on to these myths. Until these myths are exposed and dispelled, leaders run the risk of not operating to their fullest.

Perhaps you are in a leadership position or aspire to be in one. How do you avoid buying in to these myths? Even more important, what if you have already fallen victim to these myths? How can you re-frame your mind with the truth?

That is the subject of this book. In our short time together, I will dispel four common leadership myths that people buy in to. My hope is that by doing this it will help you WIN in your leadership like never before.

– ZACH MALITO –

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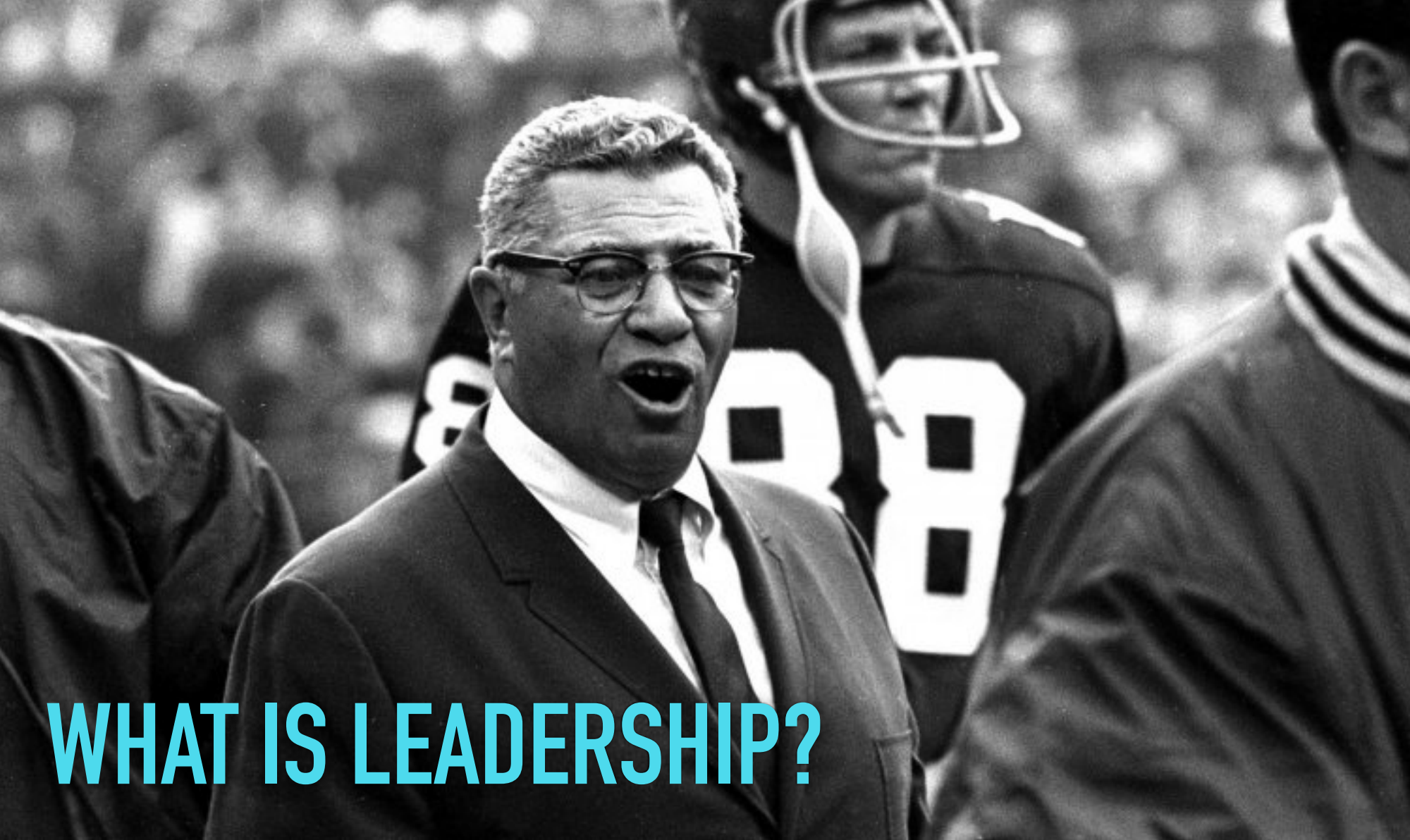
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WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?

The first thing that we need to do is establish a definition for leadership so that we can have a consistent framework as we go through this book.

I like what John Maxwell says about leadership. He describes it as the ability to influence other people. I think that this is one of the best big-picture definitions of leadership. At the core, leadership is about inspiring, moving, and challenging people in a direction and this cannot happen without influence.

INSPIRING | MOVING | CHALLENGING

The definition of the word “influence” is:

THE CAPACITY TO HAVE AN EFFECT ON THE CHARACTER, DEVELOPMENT, OR BEHAVIOR OF SOMEONE OR SOMETHING.

If you are a leader, or aspire to be one, influence is something that you certainly want to possess. If you are trying to lead without influence then you are not really leading and you will become very frustrated and discouraged.

When we talk about leadership in this book we are talking about influence.

And if you are going to be a leader of influence, then you are going to want to know what the four leadership myths are.

Why?
BECAUSE, THESE MYTHS ARE THE ENEMIES OF INFLUENCE.

If you buy-in to even one of these myths, your leadership influence will be compromised. You cannot afford this! There is too much at stake.



MYTH #1 – EXTROVERSION

“In order to be an influential leader, I have to be an extrovert.”

As a youth pastor for many years, I have had the privilege of working with some fantastic student leaders. I remember one of the student leaders who I worked with when I first started in student ministry. She was incredibly faithful and could be counted on for anything. She had a desire to be a good leader, but as I got to know her better I discovered that she had bought into this leadership myth.

I remember that we were talking about leadership one day and she made a comment indicating that she felt that she could not be a leader because she did not have an extroverted personality. Since she was quieter and was not the “life-of-the-party,” she felt that this disqualified her from being a person of influence.

There are many who feel the same way as this student did. Many people have bought into this myth and they have a false belief that extroversion is a pre-requisite for leadership influence.

Friend, let me tell you...

THIS IS COMPLETELY A MYTH!

WHAT IS AN EXTROVERT AND INTROVERT?

There is much confusion about what it actually means to be an extrovert or introvert. Let's deal with the stereotypes of these first.

The stereotype of an extrovert is a person who is super-talkative, loud, has a big personality, and is the life of the party.

The stereotype of an introvert is someone who is super quiet, anti-social, super-shy, or even socially awkward.

As with most stereotypes, these are overgeneralized and oversimplified. Not to mention, these stereotypes deal with external behaviors rather than internal wiring.

EXTROVERTS RECHARGE BY BEING WITH OTHER PEOPLE WHILE INTROVERTS RECHARGE BY BEING ALONE.

With this in mind, a person who exhibits stereotypical “extrovert” behavior in a social setting might actually be an introvert and vice-versa.

Remember, extroversion and introversion have more to do with mental re-charging than with social behavior.

A false understanding of this subject can lead to belief in the myth.

In the case of the student who I referenced above, she felt that because she did not fit the “extrovert” stereotype of being loud and super talkative with a big personality she was disqualified from leading.

Her personality was more reserved and quiet.

**“NO ONE WILL FOLLOW ME.”
SHE THOUGHT. “WHO WOULD
WANT TO?”**

She could not have been more wrong.

...can quiet people lead?

In a fantastic article by Scott Williams entitled, “10 Reasons People Will Follow a Leader,” he lists 10 qualities that people say make them want to follow a leader. Some of these qualities included integrity, care, and humility.

Do you know what did not even come close to making the list? **Anything having to do with whether the leader had a ‘larger-than-life’ or quieter personality.**

When it came down to it,

PEOPLE WERE FAR MORE INTERESTED IN THE CHARACTER OF THE LEADER THAN ANYTHING ELSE.

Can individuals with a quieter personality lead? Of course! As we will see in the next section, some of the greatest leaders of this generation fit this profile.

***WHAT CAN I DO IF I
HAVE BOUGHT INTO
THIS MYTH?***

**HERE ARE A COUPLE OF
TIPS TO HELP YOU IF HAVE
BOUGHT INTO THIS MYTH.**

1. Let your life be louder than your voice

The volume of your life is far more important than the volume of your voice! Leadership is about more than just being heard – it is about being observed and your life being consistent with what you are saying. Strive to be a leader that others can follow because of your actions. Remember, your character and the way you treat people are far more important! These are the things that will make others follow you.

**ACTIONS SPEAK
LOUDER
THAN WORDS**

2. Remember that being winsome does not require being loud.

What do Abraham Lincoln, Mother Theresa, and Ghandi all have in common? None of them would have been the life of the party, yet they were incredibly winsome because of who they were. Their convictions and their consistent life made them individuals that people wanted to follow and each of them had a profound impact on the world.

Now that this myth has hopefully been fully dispelled I hope that you can walk in a new freedom as a leader knowing that your character, integrity, and care for people are what make you more worth following than your social tendencies.

**THEIR
CONVICTIONS AND
THEIR CONSISTENT
LIFE MADE THEM
INDIVIDUALS THAT
PEOPLE WANTED TO
FOLLOW...**

Now we can move on and dispel the second myth that can stifle aspiring leaders.



MYTH #2 – POSITION

“A position or title is what makes me an influential leader”

“If only I was in charge. **THEN** I could have influence!” Have you ever said this before? I know that I have. Sometimes we can buy-in to this myth and we think that a title earns us the leadership influence that we need to make an impact.

When you buy into this myth it causes you to chase titles – “Boss,” “Captain,” “Manager,” etc. We think that title and leadership influence are one in the same.

But they are not!

Some people can get confused by this myth. They might say, “When my boss asks me to do something I am expected to do whatever she tells me to do. Isn’t that leadership influence? And doesn’t that come because of the position and title?”

THE ANSWER IS NO.

Let me explain.

There is a difference between positional leadership and influential leadership. Positional leadership means that because of your position/title you have a certain authority that you are given. If you have a supervisor of any kind they have positional leadership over you. This positional leadership grants them a certain authority.

**BUT JUST BECAUSE SOMEONE HAS
AUTHORITY OVER YOU IT DOES NOT
MEAN THAT THEY HAVE INFLUENCE
OVER YOU.**

I have had many supervisors in my life. Those individuals had authority over me and I submitted to it. However, they did not necessarily have influence over me.

AUTHORITY IS GIVEN, INFLUENCE IS EARNED.

I must submit to authority, but I can choose who I am influenced by.

The best leaders are able to influence regardless of their title. In fact, one of the best tests of true influence is this: when title is stripped away, are people still following that person?

A great example of this is the leadership influence exerted by former Presidents after their term is over.

The living Presidents today still exert a certain amount of influence despite the fact that they no longer carry the title, President of the United States.

In fact, many times they are called upon to endorse a candidate from their particular party or assist in campaigning because they still carry a certain amount of influence that can be used to the party's favor.

Remember, it is not the title that ultimately gives a leader influence. The title is simply an add-on to a life that is already influencing.

HOW CAN I GAIN INFLUENCE WITHOUT A TITLE?

Great question! I am so glad you asked. I will share with you three ways that I think you can gain influence even if you do not carry a title in front of your name.

#1 YOU GAIN INFLUENCE BY YOUR CHARACTER

We talked about this a little bit in the last chapter, but there is no better way to gain influence than to live a life that is full of integrity. People can excuse some of your short comings if they feel that they can trust your character, but even if you are the most talented leader in the world, **if people cannot trust your character you will lose any chance at influence.**

#2 YOU GAIN INFLUENCE BY YOUR CONVICTIONS

In today's world, the man or woman with strong convictions is rare. Leadership influence is gained when you have a strong sense of what is right and what is wrong. When you have values and principles that are uncompromising and you stand by these convictions no matter what, people notice and people want to follow.

#3 YOU GAIN INFLUENCE BY BEING COMPETENT

Whatever field of work you find yourself in, if you are competent at what you do people will want to follow you. When you set out to be excellent and work hard, you will gain a great amount of respect from those around you and your influence will increase.

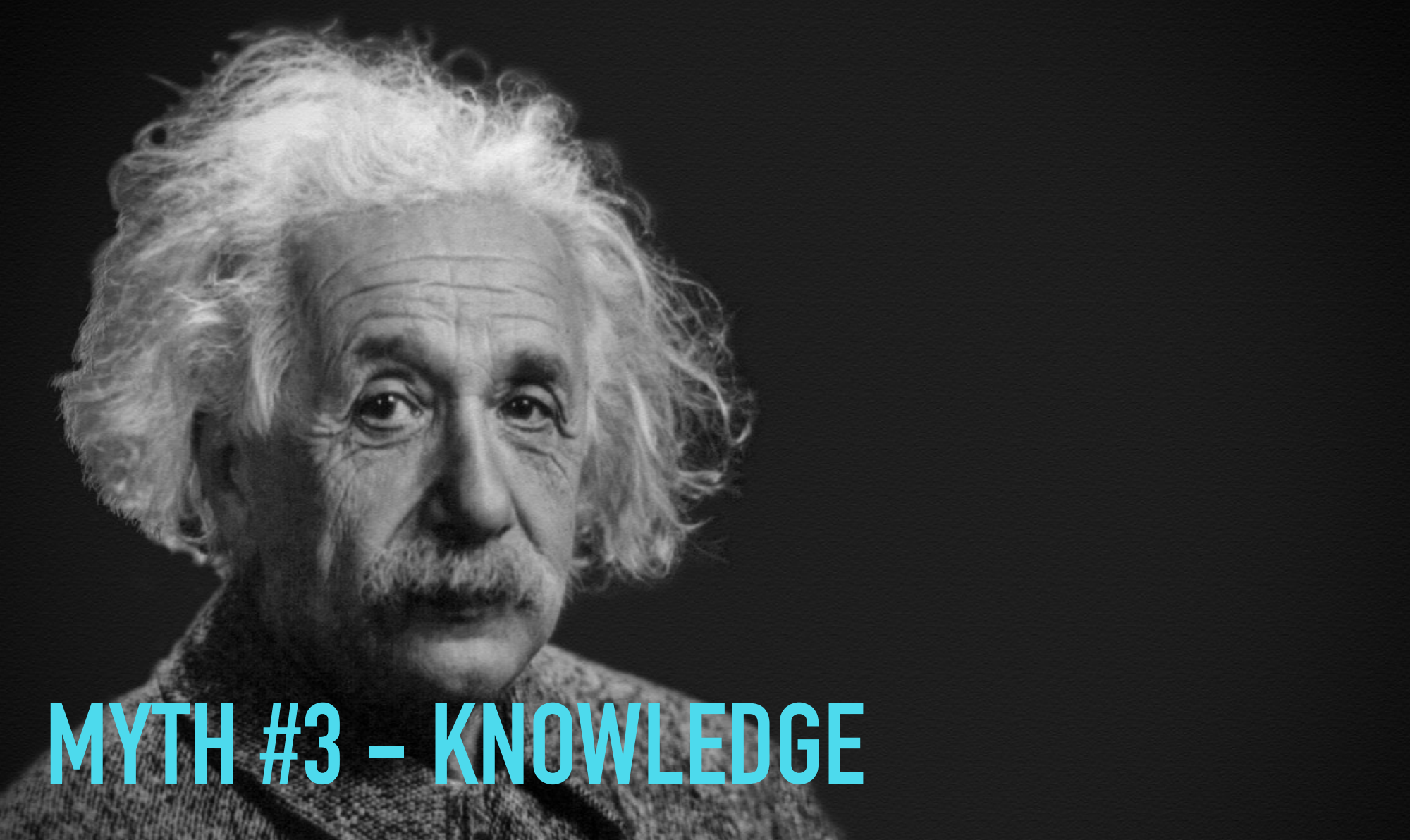
**JUST BECAUSE SOMEONE HAS
AUTHORITY OVER YOU DOES NOT
MEAN THAT THEY HAVE INFLUENCE
OVER YOU.**

#4 YOU GAIN INFLUENCE BY BEING COMMITTED

Commitment is hard to come by today. People who are willing to dedicate themselves for the long haul are becoming rarer. When you are a person who is committed and not bouncing from one thing to the next people will depend on you more. When this happens, your influence will grow.

Character, convictions, competency, and commitment are just a few of the ways that you can earn influence regardless of your title or position. Keep in mind that some of the most influential leaders in your school, work, or organization are not necessarily the ones who have the biggest titles.

**TRUE INFLUENTIAL
LEADERSHIP IS EARNED
APART FROM A TITLE.**



MYTH #3 – KNOWLEDGE

“To be an influential leader, I need to have all the answers and ideas.”

Some believe that in order to have influence they must be the smartest person in the room or have all the answers and ideas.

This is a myth.

Let me ask you a questions: “How do you respond to a person who thinks that they are the smartest person in the room or think that they have all the answers?”

I don’t know about you, but I am turned off by this approach.

The truth is,

LEADERS GAIN MORE INFLUENCE WHEN THEY REALIZE THAT THEY DO NOT HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS.

Leaders who do not need to be the expert are able to tap into the potential of the people that are all around them. They come to realize that they in fact do not have the best ideas – but the people around them do!

Andy Stanley is the pastor of North Point Community Church and he talks about the importance of influential leaders harnessing the ideas of others. He once said this to a group of leaders:

“You are not the smartest person in your organization. You’re just the leader. **If you are the smartest person in your organization you are not a very good leader.**”

His point is pretty simple...

IF YOU WANT TO BE A LEADER OF INFLUENCE, HARNESS THE IDEAS OF OTHERS AND LET THEIR VOICE BE HEARD OVER YOURS!

Not only does this demonstrate security and leadership maturity, but when a leader can admit that they don't have all the ideas it is an endearing quality that actually draws people to the leader even more.

How can I capture the ideas of the people I lead?

If you want to be a leader who gets the most out of those around you, there are some specific things that you can do that will harness the brain power of your team.

1. ASK QUESTIONS

Influential leaders ask a lot of questions. Answers create action, but questions force creative thought. Leaders will get more out of their followers if they have had to creatively think through a solution. They will feel smarter, more bought in, and respected. Questions allow the leader to push on different areas and force their teams to think critically. Be a leader who asks a lot of questions.

**ANSWERS CREATE ACTION, BUT
QUESTIONS FORCE CREATIVE THOUGHT.**

2. GIVE FEWER ANSWERS

When a leader gives an answer too quickly they can prematurely end the debate, discussion, or brainstorm. The best thing a leader can do is to sit back, listen, ask questions, and let the team figure it out. **Believe in the people on**

your team. Leaders should weigh in only when they need to. Be a leader who gives as few answers as possible.

3. LISTEN CLOSELY

The simple power of listening can yield miraculous results. Don't just hear what is being said – listen closely to what is being said. Listening means that your mind is fully engaged and absorbing what is being communicated. The opposite of this is hearing what someone is saying and planning a response. If you can learn to listen closely you will gain some incredible insights from those you lead.

LISTENING = ABSORBING COMMUNICATION



MYTH #4 – PLATFORM

“Influential leadership is only valuable in ‘large contexts’”

Some people think that unless they are leading thousands of people or have a “big platform” their leadership is not valuable or making a difference.

This is a huge myth.

The size of the leadership context means very little when it comes to value and impact. **Quality is what is more important and quality is what makes the biggest difference.** Too many leaders focus on the number of people they are leading or the “bigness” of the leadership context as the litmus test of value and success. This is misleading because true value is more about quality than numbers.

I want to use my wife as an illustration of this.

My wife is a stay-at-home mom and is raising our four children. One could say that on paper my wife's leadership context is pretty small. She spends most of her time with our four kids. She does a lot that is largely unseen by others.

No one would argue that the context of my wife's current leadership is smaller than other things she could be doing. But no one could ever argue that this context is less valuable or impactful.

I know that every day my wife is making a massive difference in the lives of our children. She works hard to make sure that she is leading and guiding them in the best way possible. She is training them to be people of honor. The quality of her leadership is top-notch.

The influence that she is exerting over our children is some of the most valuable leadership that they will ever experience in their lives.

Listen, it is so easy to look at your own leadership context and think that it is less valuable if it is not as “big” as you would like. It is even easier to compare your context with someone else’s context and get discouraged.

WHETHER YOU ARE LEADING ONE PERSON OR A THOUSAND, YOUR LEADERSHIP IS INCREDIBLY VALUABLE.

I want to remind you that whether you are leading one person or a thousand, your leadership is incredibly valuable. You owe it to whoever you lead to make sure that you are delivering the best quality that you can.

HOW CAN I HAVE CONFIDENCE IN MY CURRENT LEADERSHIP CONTEXT?

If you are going to overcome this myth you need to understand the value of your leadership context – no matter how big or small it is. These three thoughts will hopefully be of help.

#1 BE EXCELLENT IN THE **SMALL** AND **BIG**

Let me explain what I mean by this. Whenever I am going to speak, I prepare for an audience of 10 the same way that I would prepare for an audience of 1,000. For me, I want to give the same effort to the few that I would to the larger group. I think the same should apply in leadership. You should lead the few with the same effort and energy that it would take to lead hundreds. There is a spiritual principle in this that says that if you are faithful in little you will be given more.

#2 REMEMBER JIMMY BRELAND

Jimmy Breland was a door-to-door salesman in the early 1930's. He was also a Sunday School teacher at the Easter Heights Presbyterian Church. One day he was at the home of a family selling his Jewel Coffee and Tea when a little boy walked into the room. Jimmy invited the boy to come to Sunday School and picked him up the next Sunday. This little boy's name was Elmer Towns. Elmer Towns became a Christian.

Elmer Towns went on to become the co-founder of Liberty University, the largest, private, non-profit University in the world. Towns recalls the impact that Breland had on his life and the lives of the other boys in his Sunday School class. Of the 25 that he taught, 19 went on to some type of full-time ministry.

Jimmy Breland had no more than an 8th grade education, never had a high position in the church, and struggled financially all his life. Yet, he had an incredible impact because he was dedicated to leading his young Sunday School students with quality.

This is just one of literally thousands of stories from people who experienced some of the most life-transforming impact from the faithfulness and quality of a leader.

#3 NEVER STOP GROWING

The greatest gift that you can give your followers – no matter what the leadership context or size – **is to keep growing and becoming the best that you can be.** When a leader gets better, everyone gets better! Do not stop reading books, watching leadership videos, talking with more experienced leaders, and doing everything in your power to get better.

CONCLUSION

Thank you for reading this E-book. My hope is that this simple tool has helped to dispel four common leadership myths that hold people back from being the best leaders they can be.

Perhaps after reading this you will realize that you have fallen for at least one of these myths. Maybe it has taken root in your mind and it has stifled you from being the leader that you are meant to be. If this is the case, I hope that you walk away from reading this with a new mindset and a new paradigm from which to view your leadership calling.

**PEOPLE NEED GREAT LEADERS IN THEIR
LIFE AND THE WORLD NEEDS YOUR
LEADERSHIP!**



ZACH MALITO

www.zachmalito.com

FROM THE AUTHOR

I started Elevate Leadership Coaching because I want to see leaders WIN. When a leader wins, businesses, churches, and (most importantly) people win!

I hope that you will visit www.elevateleadershipcoaching.org and subscribe for free to receive relevant and applicable leadership resources that will help you become a confident leader that everyone wants to follow.



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