

# Equipping 101

## John C. Maxwell

### The Big Idea

Don't settle for what you can accomplish alone.

"One is too small a number to achieve greatness," says *New York Times* best-selling author and leadership expert Dr. John C. Maxwell in this engaging primer on how to build and equip a team. *Equipping 101* offers valuable insight and practical tools in a pocket-sized format that delivers what you need to know on such topics as:

- The power of teamwork
- Why equipping is essential to a leader's success
- The qualities to look for in potential leaders
- Ten steps for investing in others
- How to become an "enlarger" of people
- Investing in your team for the future

### Why You Need This Book

In this book, not only will you learn why equipping others to lead is the most powerful method for success, but you will also learn how to identify potential leaders, equip them, and then take them to a whole new level once they've been released to lead.

Leaders with an equipped team possess an edge that will take them to the next level. Fulfill your vision by equipping other leaders to make it happen!

### Part I: Equipping for Success

## WHY DO I NEED TO EQUIP OTHERS?

C. Gene Wilkes, in his book *Jesus on Leadership*, observed that the power of teams not only is evident in today's modern business world, but it also has a deep history that is evident even in biblical times. Wilkes asserts:

Teams involve more people, thus affording more resources, ideas, and energy than would an individual.

Teams maximize a leader's potential and minimize his or her weaknesses. Strengths and weaknesses are more exposed in individuals.

Teams provide multiple perspectives on how to meet a need or reach a goal, thus devising several alternatives for each situation.

Teams share the credit for victories and the blame for losses. This fosters genuine humility and authentic community.

Teams keep leaders accountable for the goal.

Teams can, simply put, do more than an individual.

If you want to reach your potential or strive for the seemingly impossible – such as communicating your message two thousand years after you are gone – you need to become a team player. It may be a cliché, but it is nonetheless true: individuals play the game, but teams win championships.

## WHY DO WE STAND ALONE?

Knowing all that we do about the potential of teams, why do some people still want to do things by themselves? Here are a number of reasons:

1. **Ego** . There are no supermen or superwomen. So the question is not whether you can do everything by yourself; it's how soon you're going to realize that you can't.
2. **Insecurity** . Insecurity rather than poor judgment or lack of intelligence most often causes leaders to surround themselves with weak people. Only secure leaders give power to others.
3. **Naiveté** . Some leaders naively understand the difficulty of achieving big things. As a result, they try to go it alone.
4. **Temperament** . Some people aren't very outgoing and simply don't think in terms of team building and equipping. As they face challenges, it never occurs to them to enlist others to achieve something.

For the person trying to do everything alone, the game really is over. If you want to do something big, you must link up with others. One is too small a number to achieve greatness.

## HOW TO INVEST IN YOUR TEAM

Here is how to get started:

1. **Make the decision to build a team – this starts the investment in the team.** Deciding that people on the team are worth equipping and developing is the first step in building a better team that requires commitment.
2. **Gather the best team possible – this elevates the potential of the team.** The better the people on the team, the greater the potential. And you need to stick with those teammates through thick and thin.

3. **Pay the price to develop the team – this ensures the growth of the team** . You will have to dedicate time that could be used for personal productivity. You will have to spend money that could be used for personal benefit. And sometimes you will have to set aside your personal agenda.
4. **Do things together as a team – this provides community for the team** . The only way to develop community and cohesiveness among your teammates is to get them together, not just in a professional setting but in personal ones as well.
5. **Empower team members with responsibility and authority – this raises up leaders for the team.** If you are a leader on your team, don't protect your position or hoard your power. Give it away. That's the only way to empower your team.
6. **Give credit for success to the team – this lifts the morale of the team.** Talk up their accomplishments. And if you're the leader, take the blame but never the credit. Do that and your team will always fight for you.
7. **Watch to see that the investment in the team is paying off – this brings accountability to the team.** You need to observe whether you are getting a return for the time, energy, and resources you are putting into them. The main outcome you want to see is progress.
8. **Stop your investment in players who do not grow – this eliminates greater losses for the team.** It just means you stop spending your time trying to invest in someone who won't or can't make the team better.
9. **Create new opportunities for the team – this allows the team to stretch.** When a team has the possibility of taking new ground or facing new challenges, it has to stretch to meet them. That process not only gives the team a chance to grow, but it also benefits every individual. Everyone should have the opportunity to grow toward his or her potential.
10. **Give the team the best possible chance to succeed – this guarantees the team has a high return.** Investing in a team almost guarantees a high return for the effort, because a team can do so much more than individuals. When there's a will, there's a way; when there's a team, there's more than one way.

## Part II: Equipping the Right People

### QUALITIES TO LOOK FOR IN A LEADER

To find leaders to equip, you first need to know what they look like. Here are ten leadership qualities to seek in anyone you hire:

1. **CHARACTER** . You can tell much about a person's ability to lead others from how well he manages his own life. Look at his interaction with others too. You can tell much about a person's character from his relationships.
2. **INFLUENCE.** Leadership is influence. Every leader has these two characteristics: (A) he is going somewhere; and (B) he is able to persuade others to go with him. Influence by itself is not enough. That influence must be measured to determine its *quality*.
3. **POSITIVE ATTITUDE.** Attitude sets the tone, not only for the leader with the attitude, but for the people following him or her.
4. **EXCELLENT PEOPLE SKILLS** . Excellent people skills involve a genuine concern for others, the ability to understand people, and the decision to make positive interaction with others a primary concern. Your behavior toward others determines their behavior toward us.
5. **EVIDENT GIFTS.** One of your jobs as a leader is to make an assessment of those gifts when considering a person for employment or for equipping. God creates all people with natural gifts. But He also makes them with two ends, one to sit on and one to think with.

6. **PROVEN TRACK RECORD.** Everyone who breaks new ground, who strives to do something, makes mistakes. People without proven track records either haven't learned from their mistakes or simply haven't tried at all.
7. **CONFIDENCE.** Confidence is not simply for show. Confidence empowers. A good leader has the ability to instill within his people confidence in himself. A great leader also has the ability to instill within his people confidence in themselves.
8. **SELF-DISCIPLINE .** Great leaders always have self-discipline – without exception. Success doesn't come easily. Neither does the ability to lead. As general Dwight D. Eisenhower said, "There are no victories at bargain prices."
9. **EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS .** A leader's ability to convey confidence and his ability to communicate effectively are similar. Both require action on his part and a response from the follower. Communication is positive interaction. If you expect a person to lead, you must also expect him to be able to communicate.
10. **DISCONTENT WITH THE STATUS QUO .** Dissatisfaction with the status quo does not mean a negative attitude or grumbling. It has to do with willingness to be different and take risks. A person who refuses to risk change fails to grow. A leader who loves the status quo soon becomes a follower.

Good leaders deliberately seek out and find potential leaders. Great leaders not only find them, but transform them into other great leaders. They have an ability to recognize ability and a strategy for finding leaders who make it happen.

### Part III: Equipping for the Next Level

#### HOW TO BECOME AN ENLARGER

If you want to be an enlarging team leader, then do the following:

1. **Believe in others before they believe in you.** If you believe in others and give them a positive reputation to uphold, you can help them to become better than they think they are.
2. **Serve others before they serve you.** One of the most beneficial services you can perform is helping other human beings to reach their potential. And whenever possible, give credit to others for the team's success.
3. **Add value to others before they add value to you.** A basic truth of life is that people will always move toward anyone who increases them and away from others who devalue them. You can enlarge others by pointing out their strengths and helping them to focus on improvement.

There is nothing as valuable – or rewarding – as adding value to the lives of others. When you help others to go to another level, you go to another level yourself.

#### TO PUT PEOPLE IN THEIR PLACE

To take people to the next level by putting them in the places that utilize their talents and maximize the team's potential, you need three things. You must...

1. **KNOW THE TEAM.** You've got to start where the team actually is; only then can you take it somewhere.
2. **KNOW THE SITUATION.** Even though the vision or purpose of an organization may be fairly constant, its situation changes constantly. Good team builders know where the team is and what the situation requires.

3. **KNOW THE PLAYER** . It sounds obvious, but you must know the person you are trying to position in the right niche.

### **START BY FINDING THE RIGHT PLACE FOR YOU**

Right now, you may not be in a position to place others on your team. In fact, you may be thinking to yourself, *How do I find my own niche?* If that's the case, then follow these guidelines:

**Be secure** : If you allow your insecurities to get the better of you, you'll be inflexible and reluctant to change. And you cannot grow with change.

**Get to know yourself:** You won't be able to find your niche if you don't know your strengths and weaknesses.

**Trust your leader:** A good leader will help you to start moving in the right direction. If you don't trust your leader, look to another mentor for help.

**See the big picture:** Your place on the team only makes sense in the context of the big picture. If your only motivation for finding your niche is personal gain, your poor motives may prevent you from discovering what you desire.

**Rely on your experience:** When it comes down to it, the only way to know that you've discovered your niche is to try what seems right and learn from your failures and successes.

If you desire to pack the parachutes of your people, after you equip them, find the niche where they will flourish. That is the best way to empower them. They will grow to their potential, and your team will go to a whole new level.

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