



# PHF ELITE SCHOOLS

EDUCATION SKILLS FOR ALL

Making Learning Easier

Tel / WhatsApp: +256789610816 E-mail: [info@palmhopesfoundation.org](mailto:info@palmhopesfoundation.org)

## THE FIVE LEVELS OF LEADERSHIP

I began studying influence more carefully, and I also drew upon my own leadership experience and what I observed in leaders I respected and admired.

What I discovered is that influence can be developed in five stages. I turned those stages into a tool that I call the 5 Levels of Leadership. It provides a model of influence that can help you better understand the dynamics of leadership, and it also creates a road map you can follow to develop influence with others. I've been teaching this model of leadership for more than thirty years, and I can't count the number of people it's helped. I hope it helps you in the same way it has others.

### The 5 Levels of Leadership

Let's examine each of the levels. You'll quickly get a handle on how they work.

#### LEVEL 1: POSITION

The most basic entry level of leadership is the Position level. Why is this the lowest level? Because Position represents leadership *before* a leader has developed any real influence with the people being led. In generations past, people would follow leaders simply because they possessed a title or position of authority. But that is not very common today in American culture. People will follow a positional leader

only as far as they *have* to. When I took my first job as a leader in 1969, people were respectful of me.

They were kind. But I had no real influence. I was twenty-two. They could see how little I knew, even if I couldn't. I found out how little influence I had when I led my first board meeting. I started the meeting with my agenda in hand. But then Claude started to talk. He was just an old farmer, but everyone in the room looked to him for leadership. Whatever he said held the most weight. Claude wasn't pushy or disrespectful. He didn't do a power play. He didn't have to. He already had all the power. He just wanted to get things done.

It's very clear to me now that in that first job, I was a leader living on Level 1. All I had going for me at first was my position—along with a good work ethic and a desire to make a difference. I learned more on Level 1 than at any other time in my early years of leading. I figured out pretty quickly that a title and position won't get a person very far in leadership.

People who have been appointed to a position may have authority, but that authority doesn't exceed their job description. Positional leaders have certain *rights*. They have the right to enforce the rules. They have the right to tell people to do their jobs. They have the right to use whatever power they have been granted.

But real leadership is more than having granted authority. Real leadership is being a person others will gladly and confidently follow. Real leaders know the difference between position and influence.

### **It's the difference between being a boss and being a leader:**

Bosses drive workers; leaders coach them.

Bosses depend on authority; leaders depend on goodwill.

Bosses inspire fear; leaders inspire enthusiasm.

Bosses say, "I"; leaders say, "We."

Bosses fix the blame for any breakdown; leaders fix the breakdown.

Bosses know how it is done; leaders show how.

Bosses say, "Go"; leaders say, "Let's go!"

Position is a good place to start in leadership, but it's a terrible place to stay.

Anyone who never leads beyond Position depends on territorial rights, protocol, tradition, and organizational charts. These things are not inherently negative—unless they become the basis for authority. They are poor substitutes for leadership skills.

Position is a good place to start in leadership, but it's a terrible place to stay.

If you've been in a leadership position for any length of time, how do you know whether you are relying too much on your position to lead? Here are three common characteristics of positional leaders:

### *Positional Leaders Look for Security Based on Title More Than Talent*

There's a story about a private during World War I who saw a light in his trench on the battlefield and shouted, "Put out that match!" Much to his chagrin, he discovered that the offender was General "Black Jack" Pershing. Fearing severe punishment, the private tried to stammer out an apology, but General Pershing patted him on the back and said, "That's all right, son. Just be glad I'm not a second lieutenant."

The higher people's level of ability and the resulting influence, the more secure and confident they become. A new second lieutenant might be tempted to rely on his rank and use it as a weapon. A general doesn't need to.

### *Positional Leaders Rely on Their Leader's Influence Instead of Their Own*

Baseball Hall of Famer Leo Durocher, who managed the Giants from 1948 to 1955, was once coaching at first base in an exhibition game played at the United States Military Academy at West Point. During the game, a noisy cadet kept shouting at Durocher, trying to get under his skin.

"Hey, Durocher," he hollered. "How did a little squirt like you get into the major leagues?"

Durocher shouted back, "My congressman appointed me!"

Just because people may be appointed to a position of authority doesn't automatically mean they can develop influence. Because some positional leaders

can't and possess no influence or authority of their own, they rely on the authority of their boss or the person who appointed them. Anytime they fear that their team members won't follow them, they're quick to say, "We need to do this because the boss says so." That kind of borrowed authority can wear thin after a while.

*Positional Leaders Can't Get People to Follow Them Beyond Their Defined Authority*

A common reaction of followers to positional leaders is to do only what's required and nothing more. If you've observed leaders asking people to do something extra, stay late, or go out of their way, only to have the people refuse or say, "That's not my job," then you might be seeing the results of positional leadership. People who define their leadership by position will find themselves in a place where people will do only what's required based on the *rights* granted by that position. People do not become committed to vision or causes led by positional leaders.

If any of these three characteristics describe you, then you may be relying too much on your position, which means you need to work harder at cultivating influence. Until you do, the team you lead will have low energy and you will feel as if every task is a major ordeal. To change that, you'll need to start focusing on the next level of leadership.