John Maxwell’s most recent book, *The 5 Levels of Leadership: Proven Steps to Maximize Your Potential*, is an excellent source for understanding leadership growth and how to progress in your leadership abilities and ultimately your expanding your influence. John provides a great paradigm for understanding leadership and some great tools for understanding where you fit on the 5 Levels of Leadership.

As John moves through the levels he details the pros and cons of each level and the limitations that are found at that level. He gives clear direction on how to ascend the levels as you grow and develop your leadership abilities.

Here is a chart that summarizes the 5 Levels of Leadership.

### Overview of the 5 Levels of Leadership

#### Level 1: Position

- Position is lowest level of leadership
- Your only influence comes by way of your job title
- People follow because the have to.
- Based on rights granted by the position and title.
- Everything is wrong with using position to get people to follow you.
- Position is a poor substitute for influence.
- Never a leader at this level, only a boss
- Have subordinates not team members
- Rely on rules, regulations, policies and organization charts to control their people.
- People will only follow within stated boundaries of their authority
- People do only what is required of them.
- Don’t get discretionary effort.
- Usually have difficulty working with volunteers, younger people, and the highly educated.
- Have no influence
- Tend to be more independent
- Does not require effort or ability to achieve this level.
• Anyone can be appointed a position.

Level 2: Permission

• Based entirely on relationships
• People follow because they want to
• When you like people and treat them like individuals, you begin to develop influence with them. You develop trust.
• Agenda is not preserving position but instead it’s getting to know their people and figuring out how to get along with them.
• Leaders find out who their people are.
• Build solid, lasting relationships.
• You can like people without leading them, but you cannot lead people well without liking them.

Level 3: Production

• Danger of getting to permission level is that leader might stop there.
• Good leaders don’t just create pleasant working environment, they get things done.
• Level 3 = Results
• Leaders gain influence and credibility and people begin to follow them because of what they have done for the organization.
• Results of hitting level 3: work gets done, morale improves, profits go up, turnover goes down, and goals are achieved and momentum kicks in.
• Leading others becomes fun
• “When you are winning nothing hurts” Joe Namath
• Leaders can become change agents at this level
• Tackle tough problems and face thorny issues.
• Make difficult decisions that will make a difference.
• Take people to the next level of effectiveness.

Level 4: People Development

• Leaders become great not because of their power but because of their ability to empower others.
• Use their position, relationships, and productivity to invest in their followers and develop them until those followers become leaders in their own right.
• Reproduction
• Level 4 leaders reproduce themselves
• Production may win games, but People Development wins Championships!
• Teamwork goes to very high level here.
• High investment in people deepens relationships, helps people know one another better and strengthens loyalty.
• Performance increases at this level
• You now have more leaders on team
• These leaders help improve everybody’s performance.
• Level 4 leaders change the lives of people they lead.
• Their people follow them because of what their leaders have done for them personally.
• Relationships are often lifelong.

**Level 5: Pinnacle**

• Highest and most difficult level of leadership
• Levels 1-4 can be learned
• Level 5 requires not only effort, skill and intentionality, but also a high level of talent.
• Only naturally gifted leaders ever make it to this level.
• Develop other leaders to become level 4 leaders.
• Developing followers to lead on their own is difficult.
• Most leaders don’t do it because it takes so much more work than simply leading followers.
• Developing leaders to the point where they are able and willing to develop other leaders is the most difficult task of all.

This is a great book to use to teach your team members the path of leadership development and what it really takes to grow as a leader. I highly recommend you study this book and use it as a teaching tool to grow the influence and power of your organization.