



## John C. Maxwell | Executive Summary

Everyone communicates, but few connect.

Connect: the ability to identify with and relate to people in such a way that it increases your influence with them.

If you could increase your influence with people, it's amazing what it would do for your leadership. As I've taught for many years, leadership is influence, nothing more, nothing less.

My favorite leadership proverb: He that thinketh he leadeth and hath no one following him is only taking a walk.

### **Connecting is all about others.**

If we're going to connect successfully, we have to understand that it's not about us. I discovered this in my 20's when I heard Zig Ziglar speak for the first time. He said something that absolutely changed my life, "If you help other people get what they want, they'll help you get what you want." His statement led to a eureka moment for me because, as a young leader, I had it turned around. I thought it was my responsibility to get other people on my team, following my train, bought into my vision. I was recruiting people to get on my team and to come to me. That day I understood the need to relate to others on their level and on their ground.

When you become a leader, you give up your rights to think about yourself first.  
In leadership, life is about how you add value to people and to whom you add value.

### **Connecting requires energy.**

You have to expend energy to forge a connection. If you're a connector today, I can promise you that you do it intentionally and that it's hard work. The reason so many people fail to connect is that they don't want to expend the energy required to do it.

### **Connectors find common ground.**

Connectors constantly look for a place where they can meet others. They understand that effectiveness in leadership and communication is based on similarity, not differences. Leaders look for common ground and use similarities to take people to higher ground.

Common ground choices I make in my life:

### **Walk slowly through the crowd.**

I make myself accessible to others. I care for people, and I give them my time.

### **Be open with my life.**

I let people in. We have a choice as leaders: We can let people into our lives, or we can stiff arm people and keep them at a distance. The good news is that anyone kept at a distance won't hurt you, but the bad news is that they won't help you, either.

Action Plan:

- ✓ Which relationship on your team tends not to be a natural connection? This week, find three ways to be intentional about connecting with that person, and expend the extra energy to invest in your relationship with him or her.
- ✓ Connecting is all about others. Approach one team member and ask how you can help them with a project or assignment. Listen intently to them and spend half of one day serving them with your time, energy, and resources.