

**“Becoming a Person of Influence: How to Positively Impact the Lives of Others”**

**Interaction**

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## **Becoming a Person of Influence Interaction**

### **Point #1. Everyone influences**

In the introduction, the authors state, “Everyone is an influencer of other people. It doesn’t matter who you are or what your occupation is” (p. 2). High profile people have greater influence, but everyone has some influence on others. Later, they elaborate: “Influence is a curious thing. Even though we have an impact on nearly everyone around us, our level of influence is not the same with everyone” (p. 4). They add depth to their claim with a quote from Jackie Robinson: “A life isn’t significant except for its impact on other lives” (p. 9).

### **Interaction with Point #1**

I have embraced this idea more fully in my last five years of ministry. I have been a reluctant influencer, not capitalizing on the moments with students. Gradually realizing the crucial and powerful nature of influence, I have ramped up my intentionality in influencing moments with students and staff. Maxwell and Dornan have reminded me of my lackadaisical years as an influencer, and I am determined to be more intentional and thoughtful.

### **Point #2. Integrity is key**

Maxwell and Dornan strongly emphasize the role of integrity and character on a leader’s influence in Chapter one. Pointing to our eroding culture, they said: “It seems that many people view integrity as an outdated idea, something expendable or no longer applicable to them in our fast-paced world” (p. 19). They counter this with results of a survey of 1,300 executives: “Seventy-one percent of them said that integrity was the quality most needed to succeed in business” (p. 20). The authors give us an insight into discovering a person’s character. “It has been said that you don’t really know people until you have observed them when they interact with a child, when the car has a flat tire, when the boss is away, and when they think no one will

ever know” (p. 29). Maxwell and Dornan elaborate on the power of our character and integrity to stabilize our lives. “Swiss philosopher and writer Henri Frédéric Amiel maintained, ‘The man who has no inner life is the slave of his surroundings’” (p. 32).

### **Interaction with Point #2**

I am learning the depth of this point as I grow older in ministry. The inner life is the foundation of our outer life. Without character our leadership is a shell and a sham, doomed to eventually crumbling. When we fail, we influence an entire generation of leaders negatively. Years of discipleship can be devastated through unresolved integrity issues.

I was surprised by Maxwell and Dornan’s findings about business leaders valuing integrity. I associate character and integrity with a Biblical worldview in opposition to much of the business worldview. I should not be surprised that God’s established principles work in all settings, but it caught me off guard. I expect business leaders to be more “Machiavellian” in their ethics and practices.

If our character and integrity are best revealed in unmasked moments while driving or working, we must provide our followers with opportunities to see us in daily life. We can put on a mask and preach a message or teach a lesson, but if we skin our knuckles when a wrench slips while our mentee watches, our character erupts to the surface.

Regarding the power of integrity to bring stability, Maxwell and Dornan said, “The best way to guard yourself against a breach in integrity is to make a decision today that you won’t sell your integrity: not for power, revenge, pride, or money – any amount of money” (p. 31).

Predetermine to maintain your integrity and you position yourself for success in adversity.

### **Point #3. Nurturing is necessary**

In Chapter two, Maxwell and Dornan insist that nurturing is necessary to positively influence others. “If you look around, you’ll discover that there are people in your life who want to be fed – with encouragement, recognition, security, and hope. That process is called nurturing, and it’s a need of every human being” (p. 38). They further claim that you must take the posture of a mother with a child to effectively nurture others. “You must have positive feelings and concern for them. If you want to make a positive impact on them, you cannot dislike, despise, or disparage them. You must give them love and respect” (p. 39).

The authors illustrate the power of encouragement on influence with a quote from William A. Ward. “Flatter me, and I may not believe you. Criticize me, and I may not like you. Ignore me, and I may not forgive you. Encourage me, and I will not forget you” (p. 47).

### **Interaction with Point #3**

As an introverted, task-oriented person, I am challenged by the necessity to nurture others. I have grown in nurturing capacity greatly over my 22 years of campus ministry, but Maxwell and Dornan have reminded me I have room for improvement. My father loved his children but was not a very vocal encourager or nurturer. I have grown beyond what my father modeled, but I must grow more. The generation of students in our ministry require far more nurturing than the generation before them. They are emotionally fragile, so I must be careful and deliberate nurturing them to resilience as disciples.

### **Point #4. Enlarging others**

The authors attest in Chapter six to the role of an influencer in enlarging others, thereby increasing their capacity. “To become a person of influence and to make a positive impact on people, you have to come alongside them and really get involved in their lives” (p. 121). Influencing others requires an investment of time and energy. Maxwell and Dornan assert that

enlarging others increases their potential (p. 123). They said, “Your goal should be to help the people you’re developing to stand strong in the midst of challenges. But you have to start with the little things” (p. 130). In fact, you should start by focusing on their strengths. “Sharpen skills that already exist. Compliment positive qualities. Bring out the gifts inherent in them. Weakness can wait – unless they are character flaws” (p. 131).

#### **Interaction with Point #4**

Though it seems counter-intuitive, I fully agree with the authors on focusing on strengths rather than weaknesses. In a conversation with our national Chi Alpha director several years ago, E. Scott Martin told me to minister in my strengths and staff my weaknesses. Since then, I have methodically surrounded myself with people having strengths in the areas I am weak. Our symbiotic relationships produce good ministry fruit every semester.

#### **Point #5. Influencers are navigators**

In Chapter seven, Maxwell tells a story of a flight that was delayed, providing him an opportunity to help the passengers navigate the situation in a positive way (pp. 139-141). His influence transformed a typically negative experience into a positive one for most of the passengers and the crew. The authors explain the process: “As you work with people, help them to figure out not only their long-term destination, but also the smaller steps along the way. Help them identify attainable goals that will give them confidence, and they’ll make progress” (p. 146). Maxwell and Dornan illustrate the journey of navigating for influence. “Finally, a good navigator takes the trip with the people he is guiding. He doesn’t give directions and then walk away. He travels alongside his people as a friend” (p. 153).

#### **Interaction with Point #5**

Clearly the plane flight in Maxwell's story was prior to September 11, 2001. The level of interaction with the gate personnel and the presence of a basket of snacks in the galley are relics of a former era of airline travel. I fully agree with the authors on the effectiveness of giving people a long-term destination and the manageable steps to get there. Often in mentoring sessions I am talking with miserable students trapped in a degree path chosen by their parents for the sake of "financial stability." Through conversation about their passions and dreams, a more desirable degree field becomes clear. Plotting out the small steps to get there often results in a student passionate and excited about their future – if their parents will agree. Small, manageable steps are the key to progress.

#### **Point #6. Influence through connection**

In chapter eight, Maxwell and Dornan elaborate on connecting with people as a way of influencing them. They indicate that loving people is an essential element of connecting. "You can never tell people too often, too loudly, or too publicly how much you love them" (p. 163). Rather than passive, good leaders are initiators. "To be effective, leaders must be initiators. If they don't go to their people, meet them where they are, and initiate the connection, then 80 percent of the time no connection will be made" (p. 165). Through his work in 26 countries, Dornan observed that people are generally the same. "Everyone wants to be successful and happy and is eager to learn from others who have gone ahead of them. But you can't make a significant impact in people's lives until you personally connect with them. Only then can you take them on a journey and really make a difference" (p. 171).

#### **Interaction with Point #6**

I practice the connecting aspect of influence every time I interact with my staff and students. As an introvert, connecting has historically been challenging, but I see the power of

love transforming lives. I watch them glow when I affirm them and speak highly of their performance. As I connect deeper, my influence grows. As an introvert, this is an area of great growth in my leadership. Early in ministry I struggled to express love, and therefore I struggled to connect deeply.

### **Personal Interaction with the Video on Influence**

#### **Point #1. Personal Discipline**

Dr. Blakney described a person of influence as a person who demonstrated personal discipline – in devotional life, church involvement, family life, self care, and study.

#### **Interaction with point #1**

I completely agree with Dr Blakney that personal discipline is a prerequisite to influencing others for good. Any shortcomings in these “hidden” areas will eventually come to the surface and compromise our influence on others. Too often we hear of pastors and missionaries experiencing a moral failure because of a lack of discipline in these crucial areas.

#### **Point #2. Timeliness**

Dr. Blakney stressed the role timeliness plays in influencing others, including starting and ending meetings on time, and conciseness in instruction.

#### **Interaction with Point #2**

I agree with Dr. Blakney wholeheartedly on timeliness. Time is our most precious commodity to invest in influencing people. I harp on our staff to begin and end our weekly worship services on time out of respect for people’s time. Even if we are not finished with our altar time, I ask our staff to close the service on time and release anyone who is pressed for time. Inevitably, most of the students stay and continue interacting and ministering in their small groups, but I want them to understand we value and respect their time.

**Point #3. Neatness and Order**

Dr. Blakney insisted that a messy environment would hinder a leader's influence.

**Interaction with Point #3**

I agree with reservations. The first impression sets the tone for influence. A cluttered desk or office would be off putting. A leader could, however, overcome this impression through proven wisdom and skills given enough time. Most of my mentoring occurs on campus in public spaces, so my home office does not play a significant role in my influence with students.

**Point #4. The Right Road**

Dr. Blakney sagely noted that a leader of influence will do the right thing even when it is not the easy thing.

**Interaction with Point #4**

We have a saying in Chi Alpha: "I care more about your future than I do about your feelings." Taking the "right road" with people means we sometimes must confront destructive behaviors. The "right road" means we must work through conflict biblically, with Matthew 18 in mind. Confrontation, forgiveness, and reconciliation are never the "easy road," but are always the "right road." I fully agree with Dr. Blakney on influencing by doing the right thing.

I, Ryan A. Ribelin, have read 100% of the book.