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## Influencer: The Science of Leading Change. By Joseph Grenny, Kerry Patterson, David Maxfield, Ron McMillan, & Al Switzler

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good character, and having such a wise and insightful wife has already proven to me that I need to be open to feedback so that I can reflect the Christ-like character needed to lead my youth in the right way.

Because I am introverted, I've found it very difficult to open up and interact with others. I've been a worker-bee type for as long as I can remember, but once I was tasked with being a leader in various church positions, I learned fast that my success depended strongly upon how well I was able to inspire and motivate my team. That meant being around them and interacting with them more than sending e-mails and text messages—which is of course where I was more comfortable. But even more so, I learned that one-time events wouldn't cut it, either! Dr. Cloud states that “you can't grow a plant by dipping it into the dirt once a year. It takes an ongoing connection to build a root system” (loc 1156). Consistency in our interactions would make the difference in how well we gelled as a team and accomplished our established goals. I am still growing in this area, but I understand that I need it much more.

This book has solidified for me the almost terrifying but freeing truths of leadership, that I am “Ridiculously in Charge,” and it's up to me to get the team going where it needs to go. I'm still learning how to shift my mind from the worker-bee to that of the leader, putting first things first in establishing the goal of what we're trying to accomplish, and developing a road map for each step of how we'll be getting to our destination. I've learned that my personal boundary is that of not going into worker-bee mode, of staying in my lane and giving everyone the confidence that not only do I know where we're going but have come up with a way to get there,

of seeking input from my team on how to get there more effectively, of giving them direct impact on our success and not trying to do it all myself.

As I continue to strive to be a leader with boundaries, another one of Dr. Cloud's profound truths is that “leaders get what they create, or what they allow” (loc 2163). By God's grace, with input from the church staff as a whole, I have to literally create ahead of time what I believe God wants us to accomplish as a department.

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## **INFLUENCER: THE SCIENCE OF LEADING CHANGE**

*By Joseph Grenny, Kerry Patterson, David Maxfield, Ron McMillan, & Al Switzler*  
New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education (2013)  
*Paperback, 299 pages*

*Reviewed by GABRIEL GUTIERREZ, JR.*

The foundation and heart of this volume is found in the first few pages: “However, the short explanation for why they're successful is that they see themselves not simply as owners, managers, or leaders but as full-time influencers” (p. 6). “The lion's share of the problems that really bother us don't call for additional technology, theory, philosophy or data (we're up to our necks in that), instead, the problems call for the ability to change what people do” (p. 7). The data and scientific research of all these findings have been tried, tested, and analyzed and the positive results have been measured and reproduced. Every case using these theories has found flesh and bones that have become much

healthier as a result of their implementation.

The book is divided up into three general sections: *focus and measure*, *find vital behaviors*, and *engage in all six sources of influence*. Basically, the first idea elaborates on the fact that, “Influencers are crystal clear about the result they are trying to achieve and are zealous about measuring it” (p. 13). Then we have the second concept that focuses on “high-leverage behaviors that drive results. More specifically, they focus on the two or three vital actions that produce the greatest amount of change” (p. 13). The third aspect of bringing about change is found as we engage all six sources of influence. Instead of only using one or two tools, “influencers identify all of the varied forces that are shaping the behavior they want to change and then get them working for rather than against them” (p. 14).

True to a foundational tenet of the book, five authors write it, illustrating that the most successful influencers always work in teams. The approach here is very much in line with Relationship Theories. Most of their methods in helping people change are interdependent. For example, out of their six sources of influence, four are directly related to working in groups. Under *social ability* you find this kind of commitment: “The KIPP administration want the family to know there is nothing they won’t do to help the student succeed” (p. 32). KIPP (Knowledge Is Power Program) is a program that was founded in 1994 by Levin and Feinberg, which helps underprivileged youth. “A child attending a KIPP school is four times more likely to graduate from college than a child attending the public schools in his or her surrounding neighborhoods” (p. 29).

The balance between the applica-

tion of these methods, the heavy emphasis on teamwork, and the thorough research and or understanding that goes into helping someone with change is crucial to bringing about the abundant positive results. Many times there is a focus on the relational aspect at the expense of the collection of facts, or vice versa. You will not find that imbalance in this edition. This following portion is almost like hearing a “voice in the wilderness.” “Diagnose before you prescribe. Anything else is malpractice” (p. 295). On the other hand, you will read things like “No source of influence is more powerful and accessible than the persuasive power of the people who make up our social networks. None” (p. 146).

There are two suggestions that I would make that could have strengthened the *Influencers’* influence. In the area of leadership there is a vast audience that has some type of belief in God. I wouldn’t have hesitated to add biblical nuggets, especially since many of the principles presented can be found in the Scriptures. For example, Henry and Richard Blackaby, who have written comprehensively on the subject of leadership, reach both spiritual and secular audiences—and they unabashedly use the Scriptures. Here is a sample: “Therefore, the first truth in leadership development is this: God’s assignments are based on character—the greater the character, the larger the assignment (Luke 16:10)” (*Spiritual Leadership*, p. 82).

The five authors demonstrated that true leadership has primarily to do with change. Being able to change personally and helping others to change are at the heart of true leadership. It was clear that anyone with the desire to influence others toward positive change is able to accomplish this. The key is in following the three main ideas undauntedly and

consistently—*focus and measure, find vital behaviors, and engage all six sources of influence*—as closely as possible; in this you are almost always guaranteed success in influencing others to change.

One aspect that was repeated several times, which also helps in avoiding discouragement as one tries to implement change, was the importance of focusing on one or two vital behaviors at a time. Let's look for a moment at Dr. Mimi Silbert, founder of Delancy Street in San Francisco, California. In this semi corporate-residential therapy business, Dr. Silbert has helped more than 16,000 men and women come off the streets and drugs, with over 90% of them going on to become professionals. All this is done without professionals or therapists—they just simply use a great influence strategy. Dr. Silbert's "goal, remember, is to foster two vital behaviors" (p. 268). It's crucial to know what those behaviors are that are keeping one from advancing. It's not enough for a basketball player or a piano player to practice; it is even more important for one to know what the specific areas of growth are. The old adage, then, "perfect practice makes perfect," becomes a reality. "Influencers are universally firm on this point. They don't create methods for changing behavior until they've carefully identified the exact behaviors they want to change" (p. 35).

I strongly recommend *Influencer* to everyone—because everyone has influence. We are constantly influencing someone, either for good or ill. The wide variety of examples included in the book are not only from corporate America and American culture. They are principles that apply to everyone and everywhere. When ideas positively impact different parts of the globe—eradicating the Guinea worm disease, helping

troubled youth in the USA excel in academics, curbing the AIDS/HIV epidemic in Tanzania, and helping young people get off the streets and drugs—the value is significant.

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## LEARNING LEADERSHIP: THE FIVE FUNDAMENTALS OF BECOMING AN EXEMPLARY LEADER

By James M. Kouzes & Barry Z. Posner  
Hoboken, NJ: Wiley (2016)  
Hardcover, 272 pages

Reviewed by STEFAN DINU

*Learning Leadership* is a compelling, practical and excellent guidebook for anyone who is in leadership, who is considering leadership, or who is afraid to get involved in leadership, regardless of their age or experience. The authors have summarized, in an engaging and comprehensible way, the fundamentals of what it takes to become an exemplary leader, putting at the reader's disposal the results of more than 30 years of research in the field.

The central theme of this great book orbits around the message that leadership is everyone's business, pulverizing the five myths that keep people from boarding the vessel of leadership: talent, position, strengths, self-reliance and it-comes-naturally. "Leadership potential isn't something that some people have and other people don't" (p. 1).

Through this book, Kouzes and Posner create a strong bridge between the ideological concept of leadership and leadership practice by