

BECOMING A PERSON OF INFLUENCE

by John C. Maxwell and Jim Dornan

How to Positively Impact the Lives of Others

Reading Guide and Journal for Teens

How To Use This Journal

Welcome

This journal is designed for students who are not only reading *Becoming a Person of Influence*, but also stepping into real-world leadership by creating a podcast and applying what they learn.

You won't just be taking notes, you'll be processing ideas, practicing influence, and sharing your voice in meaningful conversations.

This is more than reading a book. It's training to lead, speak thoughtfully, listen deeply, and lift others higher.

What You'll Do

Each chapter of this journal includes several sections, each with a distinct purpose.

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| Purpose | a short description of what this chapter is about and why it matters |
| Before You Read | questions to get you thinking about the ideas you'll read about in the chapter and connect the ideas to your life |
| While You Read | a mindset or focus to hold as you read the chapter; what to notice and consider |
| Quote Tracker | lines from that chapter that challenge you, inspire you, or make you pause and think |
| After You Read | reflection questions to help you internalize and apply what you've learned |
| Podcast Prep Reflection | guided prompts to help you prepare for your podcast discussions, because good conversations don't happen by accident |
| Closing Reflection | a final question to carry with you, the kind that shapes character over time |

How to Get the Most Out of This Journal

- Be honest, even when the answers surprise or challenge you.
- Sit with the hard questions; growth usually hides there.
- Don't rush, leadership isn't a sprint.
- Listen well when you podcast; influence begins with presence.
- Look for ways to practice each lesson in your everyday life.

This journal isn't about getting it "right." It's about becoming someone worth following.

You already influence people. This journal and podcast journey helps you do it on purpose—with integrity, humility, confidence, and care.

Introduction (pages 1-14)

Purpose

To recognize that everyone has influence (though not all influence is equal) and to explore how integrity, growth, and a desire to add value can help your influence become positive, lasting, and multiplying.

Before You Read

1. What does “influence” mean to you? How is it different from control or power?

2. Do you think influence can be learned, or is it something you’re born with?

3. Do you think everyone has influence, or only certain types of people? Explain your view.

4. Do you believe someone your age can be a person of influence? Why or why not?

5. Do you believe influence can grow or change over time? What might cause someone’s influence to increase or fade?

2. What do the authors mean when they say your influence is not equal with all people?

3. How does the **Model → Motivate → Mentor → Multiply** structure show the way influence grows and spreads?

4. What does it mean to “add value” to others? Why is this so central to a positive influence?

5. How can understanding the stages of influence help you become more intentional about your impact on others?

Podcast Prep Reflection

1. What's one story or real-life example that illustrates how influence can be positive or negative?

2. How does understanding that everyone has influence change how you view your role in relationships, school, or your community?

3. Describe the five stages of influence. How do you see each one showing up in your own life or relationships? Which one do you most identify with at this point in your life?

4. What's one piece of advice you'd share with your podcast listeners about using influence wisely?

Closing Reflection

When people think about your influence, what do you hope they remember? And what are you doing today to shape that?

Chapter 1 (pages 15-34)

A Person of Influence Has . . . Integrity with People

Purpose

To discover how real influence starts with integrity—being honest, consistent, and trustworthy in both small and big moments. You’ll see how who you are inside determines the trust you build, the respect you earn, and the kind of influence you have on others.

Before You Read

1. When you think of someone you trust deeply, what qualities make you feel that way?

2. Can somebody be influential without being a person of integrity?

3. What does “integrity” mean to you? How is it shown, or lost, in daily life?

4. Have you ever seen someone’s influence grow, or collapse, because of their character? Describe what happened.

2. What arguments do the authors make for integrity being essential to influence?

3. What are some small, everyday ways to build trust and integrity in your relationships?

4. Did anything in this chapter challenge how you think about leadership or influence?

5. Which of the three contrasts (circumstance, credentials, reputation) feels most relevant to your life?

6. How can integrity be both private and public?

Podcast Prep Reflection

1. Where do you see integrity tested most in student life: academics, friendships, sports, online?

2. Can someone ever recover trust after losing it?

3. Is it possible to “fake” integrity for a *good cause*?

4. How can your podcast group model integrity in how you prepare and share your episode?

Closing Reflection

If your influence depends on your integrity, what does your daily life say about who you are becoming?
What would “living with integrity” look like for you this week?

Chapter 2 (pages 35-58)

A Person of Influence . . . Nurtures Other People

Purpose

To understand that influence grows when we intentionally nurture others—giving love, respect, security, recognition, and encouragement so they develop confidence, belonging, perspective, and hope.

Before You Read

1. Who in your life has made you feel genuinely supported or encouraged, and what did they do that made it feel real?

2. What makes some people easier to nurture than others?

3. What's the difference between helping and fixing someone?

4. Why do you think so many people are hungry for encouragement, even when they seem confident?

5. Is it possible to nurture someone you don't like or agree with? Why or why not?

2. How can you nurture peers without overstepping or making them feel small?

3. Which of the six "natural nurturer" actions would most impact your friendships if practiced consistently?

4. How can you nurture others without becoming overbearing or losing healthy boundaries?

5. What prevents people from nurturing others—fear, pride, time, insecurity, or something else?

Podcast Prep Reflection

1. Describe a moment when someone's encouragement changed your perspective or confidence. What made their words or actions believable?

2. Which of the author's five "gifts" (love, respect, security, recognition, encouragement) do you think your generation needs most right now—and why?

3. What do you think stops people your age from showing encouragement more often?

4. In what ways can social media either help or hurt the idea of nurturing others?

5. What does it look like to "believe in someone" your age without trying to fix them?

Closing Reflection

When people leave your presence, do they feel smaller or stronger—and what does that reveal about your influence?

Chapter 3 (pages 59-75)

A Person of Influence Has . . . Faith in People

Purpose

To see how influence grows when you believe in others—seeing their potential before they see it themselves. Faith in people means turning belief into action by noticing their strengths, celebrating progress, and helping them rise after failure.

Before You Read

1. What does it mean to “believe in someone”? How is that different from simply trusting them?

2. Do you think most people believe in themselves? Why or why not?

3. Why is it sometimes hard to believe in others?

4. How can you show belief in someone without trying to fix or control them?

5. Has anyone ever believed in you before you believed in yourself? What changed because of that?

2. Why do the authors say most people don't have faith in themselves? How have you seen this play out in real life?

3. Which of the "belief in action" step feels most natural to you? Which feels hardest?

4. What difference can it make when someone believes in you before you succeed?

5. How could practicing faith in others change your approach to leadership, friendship, or teamwork?

Podcast Prep Reflection

1. Which of the "belief in action" steps feels most powerful or realistic for your generation to practice?

2. Why do you think so many people struggle to believe in themselves? What role does community or friendship play in changing that?

3. How can you continue to believe in a friend who's made mistakes or let you down, while still setting healthy boundaries?

4. What are some ways belief in others can multiply, spreading through a team, class, or community?

Closing Reflection

When others look back on your influence, will they remember someone who pointed out their flaws or someone who believed in their potential?

Chapter 4 (pages 77-96)

A Person of Influence . . . Listens to People

Purpose

To understand how genuine influence begins with listening—showing respect, building relationships, and gaining understanding before offering opinions or advice. Listening is more than hearing words; it's an intentional act that communicates value, deepens trust, and creates space for others to grow.

Before You Read

1. Who in your life makes you feel truly heard? What do they do that makes you feel that way?

2. What's the difference between *hearing* and *listening*?

3. Do you think good listeners are born that way, or is it a skill you can develop?

4. What does it communicate to someone when you listen carefully to them?

5. Why do you think it's hard for people to truly listen—without interrupting, getting distracted, or planning what they'll say next?

2. What listening barrier do you most relate to, and how can you work to overcome it?

3. Which of the nine listening skills do you already practice well? Which one needs more attention?

4. How can active listening make someone feel seen or valued in ways that words can't?

5. How could becoming a better listener impact your influence at school, in friendships, or in leadership roles?

Podcast Prep Reflection

1. How can listening create deeper connection or healing in a friendship or team?

2. Which of the “listening barriers” do you see most in your generation, and why?

3. How can leaders or influencers lose credibility when they fail to listen?

4. What does it look like to listen with empathy instead of listening to respond?

Closing Reflection

When people speak to you, do they leave feeling understood or simply heard? What does your listening say about the kind of influence you want to have?

Chapter 5 (pages 97-116)

A Person of Influence . . . Understands People

Purpose

To understand that influence grows when you take the time to truly understand others—their needs, motivations, fears, and perspectives. Real understanding replaces judgment with empathy, allowing you to connect, encourage, and help others reach their potential.

Before You Read

1. Who in your life makes you feel genuinely understood? What do they do that helps you feel that way?

2. What happens in relationships when people stop trying to understand one another?

3. Why is it easier to expect others to understand *you* than to try understanding *them*?

4. Why do you think fear or pride can make it hard to understand someone different from you?

5. How might a desire to understand others change the way you lead, listen, or handle conflict?

2. Which of the “truths about people” do you think matters most for your generation? Why?

3. What does it take to really see people as individuals rather than categories or labels?

4. How can empathy help you lead or influence others more effectively?

5. Why is it easier to talk about understanding people than to actually do it?

Podcast Prep Reflection

1. Why do you think so many conflicts come from a lack of understanding rather than a lack of information?

2. How can understanding people build influence faster than trying to impress them?

3. What gets in the way of empathy among teens today—competition, image, busyness, or fear?

Closing Reflection

What would change in your relationships if you focused less on being right and more on understanding others?

Chapter 6 (pages 117-136)

A Person of Influence . . . Enlarges People

Purpose

To understand that influence multiplies when you intentionally invest in helping others grow. Enlarging people means seeing their potential, fueling their passion, and guiding them toward personal success, not for your gain, but for theirs.

Before You Read

1. Who has helped you grow or reach new potential? What did they do that made a difference?

2. How does helping someone else succeed change the way you view success?

3. Why do you think some people are hesitant to invest their time or energy in others?

4. How could helping someone else develop their strengths help you become a better leader or friend?

5. When you think about “mentoring,” what words or images come to mind?

2. What's the difference between encouraging someone and truly enlarging them?

3. Why do you think addressing character is just as important as developing skills?

4. What do you think stops people from investing in others' success—and how can you overcome that?

5. What would it look like for you to intentionally invest in one person's growth this semester?

Podcast Prep Reflection

1. What's one area where you could intentionally help someone else grow right now?

2. How can you invest in others without making them feel like a project or responsibility?

3. What's the difference between mentoring and managing people?

Closing Reflection

When people spend time with you, do they walk away discouraged—or do they leave believing they can become something more?

Chapter 7 (pages 137-156)

A Person of Influence . . . Navigates for Other People

Purpose

To understand that people of influence help others find direction through encouragement, wisdom, and example. A true navigator doesn't just point the way but walks alongside others, helping them face problems, grow through challenges, and stay the course toward success.

Before You Read

1. Who do you naturally turn to for advice or direction, and why do you trust them?

2. What qualities make someone a reliable guide through difficult decisions?

3. Why do you think it's easier to notice where others are headed than to recognize your own direction?

4. Why might it be tempting to take over someone's journey instead of simply helping them navigate it?

5. What makes you respect advice from one person but ignore it from another?

2. Which part of navigation (plotting the course, thinking ahead, making corrections, or staying with people) do you find most challenging?

3. What qualities separate a wise navigator from a controlling one?

4. How can helping someone through challenges also develop your own leadership?

5. How can you become more intentional about guiding, mentoring, or supporting others in your life?

Podcast Prep Reflection

1. What kinds of problems do you think teens today most need guidance navigating?

2. How can you offer guidance to others without acting like you have all the answers?

3. What's one example of a time you adjusted course after someone gave you wise advice?

Closing Reflection

When someone feels lost, are you the kind of person who criticizes their direction—or helps them find their way?

Chapter 8 (pages 157-172)

A Person of Influence . . . Connects with People

Purpose

To understand that influence grows through connection—seeing people as valuable, finding common ground, and communicating from the heart. Real connection inspires trust and helps others rise to new levels of confidence and purpose.

Before You Read

1. Who are you naturally drawn to connect with? Why?

2. What's the difference between *talking to* people and *connecting with* them?

3. Why do you think connection is important in leadership or friendship?

4. How can you find common ground with someone very different from you?

5. What happens when you take people for granted instead of valuing them?

2. Which of the nine connection steps resonates most with you? Why?

3. How can recognizing and respecting differences actually strengthen connection instead of creating distance?

4. How can you apply the idea of “communicating from the heart” in your daily life?

5. When have you experienced a moment of genuine connection that changed a relationship?

Podcast Prep Reflection

1. What does authentic connection look like in friendships, teams, or families?

2. Which of the nine connection steps could make the biggest difference in your generation?

3. How do you know when someone is connecting with you out of genuine care versus for personal gain?

4. How can technology both help and hurt real connection?

Closing Reflection

When people interact with you, do they feel noticed and valued—or simply part of the background?

Chapter 9 (pages 173-191)

A Person of Influence . . . Empowers People

Purpose

To understand that true influence multiplies when you empower others—giving them the confidence, authority, and opportunity to succeed. Empowerment is not about control but about trust: believing in people so much that they begin to believe in themselves.

Before You Read

1. What does the word *empower* mean to you?

2. When has someone trusted you with real responsibility? How did that make you feel?

3. What do you think makes it hard for some people to share authority or control?

4. Why is it important to let others take ownership instead of always stepping in to help?

5. What might happen if more people made it their goal to empower others rather than impress them?

2. Which qualification of an empowerer—position, relationship, respect, or commitment—do you think carries the most weight?

3. Why is public confidence in others a powerful motivator?

4. What's the hardest part about transferring responsibility or control to someone else?

5. How can giving feedback and releasing people to lead both be acts of empowerment?

Podcast Prep Reflection

1. What's the difference between helping someone and empowering them?

2. How does empowerment change the way a team, class, or friend group functions?

3. How can empowerment turn mistakes into learning moments rather than failures?

4. In what ways can empowerment ripple outward—how does empowering one person influence others around them?

Closing Reflection

Do the people you influence feel controlled or capable?

Chapter 10 (pages 193-206)

A Person of Influence . . . Reproduces Other Influencers

Purpose

To understand that the highest level of influence is not leading others but developing leaders who lead others. Reproducing influencers means multiplying impact, investing in people who will carry forward your example, values, and vision long after you're gone.

Before You Read

1. What kind of impact do you hope to have on others in the long run?

2. Who in your life has influenced you in a way that made you want to influence others?

3. Why do you think some leaders focus on followers instead of developing other leaders?

4. Why is it important for teams to think about long-term growth rather than short-term results?

5. What do you think motivates people to pour into others instead of keeping the spotlight on themselves?

2. How does multiplying leaders differ from simply managing or teaching others?

3. Which of the “team-first” habits resonates most with you? Why?

4. How can you help move a group from *maintenance* to *multiplication*?

5. What risks come with empowering others to lead, and why are those risks worth taking?

Podcast Prep Reflection

1. Who in your life models “multiplying leadership” — investing in people who then invest in others?

2. Why do you think it's easier to maintain what exists than to build new leaders?

3. How can reproducing leaders bring more significance to your life and work?

Closing Reflection

Does your influence end with you—or continue through the people you've helped grow?

Final Reflection

A Journey of Influence

Purpose

To reflect on how each chapter connects to the bigger picture of influence, and to identify how you'll live out what you've learned beyond this reading experience.

Looking Back

1. Of the 10 chapters, which challenged you the most? Which was most interesting? Which was most impactful?

2. If you had to explain "true influence" to someone in one sentence, how would you define it now?

3. Which quality of an influencer came most naturally to you? Why?

4. What habits or behaviors do you want to build because of what you learned?

5. How did learning about influence change how you see the people around you: friends, classmates, or leaders?

6. Which skill changed your perspective the most — listening, understanding, empowering, or reproducing leaders?
