

# THE LAW OF THE INNER CIRCLE

A Leader's Potential Is Determined by Those Closest to Him

When we see any incredibly gifted person, it's always tempting to believe that talent alone made him successful. To think that is to buy into a lie. Nobody does anything great alone. Leaders do not succeed alone. A leader's potential is determined by those closest to him. What makes the difference is the leader's inner circle. Most people create an inner circle of people. However, they are usually not strategic in doing so. We naturally tend to surround ourselves with either people we like or people with whom we are comfortable. Few people give enough thought to how those closest to them impact their effectiveness or leadership potential.

To practice the Law of the Inner Circle, you must be intentional in your relationship building. You must give thought to the accomplishment of your mission and the success of the people who follow you. As you consider whether individuals should be in your inner circle, ask yourself the following questions. If you can answer yes to these questions, then they are excellent candidates for your inner circle:

1. **DO THEY HAVE HIGH INFLUENCE WITH OTHERS?** One key to successful leadership is the ability to influence the people who influence others.
2. **DO THEY BRING A COMPLEMENTARY GIFT TO THE TABLE?** Because of my leadership gifting, I naturally attract leaders. And I am also highly attracted to leaders. It's said of great baseball hitters that when they get together with other good hitters, all they talk about is hitting. It's similar with good leaders. When they get together, they share their experiences, ask each other questions, and test ideas.
3. **DO THEY HOLD A STRATEGIC POSITION IN THE ORGANIZATION?** Some people belong in your inner circle because of their importance to the organization. If you and they are not working on the same page, the entire organization is in trouble.
4. **DO THEY ADD VALUE TO ME AND TO THE ORGANIZATION?** I discussed in the Law of Addition how people add, subtract, multiply, or divide when it comes to others. The people in your inner circle must be adders or multipliers. Inner circle members should also add value to you personally. That's not selfish. If they have a negative effect, they will hinder your ability to lead well, and that can hurt your people and the organization.
5. **DO THEY POSITIVELY IMPACT OTHER INNER CIRCLE MEMBERS?** I am a big believer in team chemistry, and if your inner circle is going to work together and function as a team, then you need to take into account how members interact. First, you want them to have a good fit with one another. Second, you want inner circle members to make one another better, to raise one another's game.

There is one more question you need to ask about potential inner circle members. I did not list it as one of the five questions, because a yes in answer to the question does not automatically mean they should be in your inner circle. However, a no would definitely mean they should not. The question is this: do they display excellence, maturity, and good character in everything they do?

*"You can do what I cannot do. I can do what you cannot do. Together we can do great things."*

*"Be kind and merciful. Let no one ever come to you without coming away better and happier."*

Mother Teresa

*"Do you want to know who you are? Don't ask. Act! Action will delineate and define you."*

Thomas Jefferson

*"...the present moment is all you ever have."*

Eckhart Tolle