

# **Leaders' people skills reflect how they view themselves, Maxwell says\_53005**

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**By John Hall**

*Texas Baptist Communications*

Success and failure are direct results of how effectively leaders relate to the people around them, said John Maxwell, author of numerous leadership books.

Seventy percent of people fired from their jobs are terminated because of difficulties relating to people in their work, Maxwell said. Ninety-five percent of counseling is due to relationship troubles.

People skills can make or break a person's career, he said. Employees will want to work hard for supervisors they get along with.

"People will not go along with you unless they get along with you," Maxwell said during a Maximum Impact conference that was simulcast across the nation, including in several Texas Baptist churches. The Texas Baptist Leadership Center of the Baptist General Convention of Texas co-sponsored one of the simulcasts.

Maxwell suggested several principles to help leaders develop their skills. He called the first notion the mirror principle: "The first person you should get along with is yourself."

Individuals tend to see in others what they see in themselves, he said. Each person sees people through a "lens" of perception. If leaders view themselves negatively, they are more likely to see others in a poor light.

"Hurting people hurt people and are easily hurt by people," Maxwell said.

Damaging a relationship weakens a person's leadership, he said. Connections between people are more important than winning arguments.

"The moment you allow the situation to become greater than the relationship, the relationship disintegrates," he said. The author urged people to be leaders who encourage others. That attitude spurs a positive work environment and a more productive workforce. Before criticizing someone, this type of leader tries to look at the situation from that person's perspective.

The approach worked for Maxwell's father, who is a chaplain in a Florida mobile home park. He began by trying to encourage and help people as he could. He visited each home regularly and served as a positive influence.

Soon, Maxwell's father had a small team of volunteers who were helping him serve others. As the years passed, the number of volunteers grew. The group has developed into 600 people who now serve 37 mobile home parks.

Positive leadership encourages others to action, he added.

"Some people lift you up, and some people bring you down," Maxwell said. "The elevator principle says there are some people who give you energy because they lift you up."

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