

BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *LEADING FROM THE SANDBOX*

**T. J. ADDINGTON**



**DEEP  
INFLUENCE**

**UNSEEN PRACTICES THAT WILL REVOLUTIONIZE YOUR LEADERSHIP**

“We get formed from the outside in, but we lead from the inside out. T. J. Addington explains this process with clarity and conviction. In an age of superficiality, he will guide you to the deeper places of influence and change.”

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Author, speaker, and senior pastor of Menlo Park Presbyterian Church in Menlo Park, CA

“I’ve been a fan of T. J. Addington for a long time. I’m a wiser and better leader because of his writings. But *Deep Influence* is his most important contribution yet. Every young leader will gain decades of leadership wisdom forged in the painful trenches of reality. Veteran leaders will be inspired to finish strong.”

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Leadership mentor at Covenant EFC and founder of  
Global Alliance of Intentional Disciplemaking Churches

“As a wife, mother, and educator, I’ve been challenged and reminded through this book of what it truly means to live an authentic life in Christ. It begins with humility and honesty—seeking the heart of God and living out all that He calls us to be. It is through this personal relationship with Christ that we are then able to be molded and crafted to become effective in our leadership roles and to influence others. If your desire is to live out your calling with great effectiveness as you reflect Christ to a seeking world, *Deep Influence* is just the navigation you need!”

**MELISSA LARSON**

Adjunct professor of Biblical and Theological Studies at  
University of Northwestern

“If you are not yet convinced that the most difficult challenge you will face as a leader is in ‘self-leadership,’ then read *Deep Influence*. My dear friend T. J. Addington sharpened his ministry leadership out of the depths of life experience even as God granted and grew him into a major leadership role for the global church. Deepened by a vital spiritual relationship with God,

he enriches fellow leaders with practical wisdom toward deep influence for God's purposes."

**RAMESH RICHARD, ThD, PhD**

President of RREACH, professor at Dallas Seminary, and founder of Trainers of Pastors International Coalition (TOPIC)

"*Deep Influence* is an invitation to listen to a seasoned leader's voice dripping with the life-giving wisdom of Jesus. The practices in this book will lead to an exegesis of the heart and guide the reader into the lifelong journey of allowing God to mold 'who we are,' which informs 'what we do.'"

**TOM SMITH**

Pastor, husband, cofounder of Rhythm of Life, and author of *Raw Spirituality: The Rhythms of the Jesus Life*

"*Deep Influence* cuts to the core of leadership and returns character to the central place it occupies in God's eyes. I have shelves full of books on leadership, but this one leaves you knowing you can be better and lead better. It is significant without being tedious, direct but not discouraging. Buy it, read it, mark it up, and read it again. Addington ought to be on top of the pile."

**DAVID W. HEGG, DMin**

Pastor, adjunct professor, and author of *The Obedience Option*

"*Deep Influence*, every chapter, was a deep dive into my motives, methods, mind, mission calling, leadership style, and relationships that brought me to a place of unexpected and unconventional light, revealing a clear, fresh, exciting perspective to press forward. T. J. humbly said it well—"Depth matters"—as he carefully and biblically aimed at my life through the person

of Jesus Christ and hit my inner target: the sanctum of my heart. This book is a transparent, transformational leadership mirror that leads to intentional joy and freedom. Ephesians 2:10 came alive in me, and it will in you.”

**DOUG FAGERSTROM, DMin**

Senior vice president of Converge and author of *The Ministry Staff Member* and *The Volunteer*

“With skill and clarity, T. J. Addington argues that leadership is not about technique—it is about character. What matters most is not *how* we lead but from what *source* we choose to lead. Whether you are a ministry leader or a leader in the marketplace, this book describes the practices that will enable you to lead from the inside out. If you want to grow as a leader, this book is a great place to start.”

**GEORGE DAVIS, PhD**

Senior pastor of Hershey Free Church in Hershey, PA

“*Deep Influence* draws an effective map for exploring the inner life so often neglected by today’s image-conscious leader. T. J.’s emphasis on personal integrity, authenticity, and emotional intelligence offers a healthy antidote to the toxic influence of every leader’s shadow side. His practical, personal counsel encourages, challenges, and inspires every leader to pursue the slower, more intentional, inside-out path to deeper, lasting impact in ministry.”

**RUSS KINKADE, PsyD**

Psychologist and executive VP of Shepherds Ministries

T. J. ADDINGTON



# DEEP INFLUENCE

UNSEEN PRACTICES THAT WILL REVOLUTIONIZE YOUR LEADERSHIP

NAVPRESS 

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CHAPTER ONE

# FORGED ON THE INSIDE

Character, courage, wisdom, integrity, humility, spiritual depth, endurance, perseverance, kindness, and vision. What do all of these qualities have in common? They all come from a place deep inside our hearts—the hidden recesses of our souls, whose channels lead to deep veins of God’s work and molding. That which is most *central* to what we are and who we become cannot be directly seen by others, but its impact is felt by those we lead, and it determines the depth of our leadership, our character, our vision, and the philosophy from which we lead.

That’s why I call these qualities, collectively, *deep influence*. Too much attention is paid to leadership techniques

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and far too little to the kind of heart and mind from which the best leadership emanates. All the right techniques cannot make up for an absence of a deep inner core, molded and richly forged over time by Christ: the source of the best leadership because it reflects His mind and heart.

This book is about the *inner life* of a leader, the practices he or she cultivates, which leads ultimately to the most profound leadership of all—deep influence. There are many leadership styles, but in the end the leaders who have the deepest influence on their organizations and the people around them share a common theme: They have cultivated their inner lives around the person of Christ and allowed Him to handcraft and transform their hearts, minds, relationships, and priorities.

This inner transformation changes the leadership equation in numerous ways: It changes our understanding of Christ's grace (our hearts); it enhances our learning to think like Christ (our minds); it guides us to treat people as Christ would (our relationships); and it focuses our lives around those things that are most important to Him (our priorities). In other words, it touches all of what makes us, *us!* Such a spiritual metamorphosis allows us to lead out of spiritual, relational, and emotional health, as well as a reservoir stocked with *Him*, spilling out in our words, actions, and intentions.

Leadership opportunities have come to me since I was a teenager. What I did not realize then—or even in my twenties and thirties—was that the transformation that leads to

depth takes time. Nor did I imagine the cost of the leadership journey. While I would not want to do anything else, who I am today is the result of God's gracious and sometimes painful molding over several decades of leading in a variety of settings. Today my leadership is better—only partly because of better technique, but mostly because of what God has done in my interior life, which informs and influences all that I am.

My first significant leadership position as a pastor of a new church plant ended, from a human perspective, in a spectacular failure. I resigned—dreams shattered, clinically depressed—and then watched the church split after I left. What I did not know then was how God would use that event and its pain to make me who I am today. It was forging on the inside that I needed; God did an inner work that has directed the rest of my life.

His work in me over these years is like a vein of gold, of which miners dream as they work the bowels of the mountain. It is wealth attained with much hard work and at significant cost. But when the vein is struck, we know it was worth the effort.

At fifty-seven I have many battle scars from the leadership arena. My skin is thicker, heart softer, actions more measured, and wisdom deeper. The gains have been hard-won and worth each lesson learned and each facet of character etched. I enjoy deeper influence today because of the Spirit's work in the interior recesses of my life.

The best leaders—those who make the greatest impact

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over the longest period of time, who lead with the greatest wisdom and discernment for long-term results and the building of the best teams—lead from a spiritual depth. The more developed one's spiritual core, the greater one's influence to impact our world in significant ways for a cause greater than ourselves.

I am not minimizing the skill necessary to lead. Leadership clearly requires gifting. My conviction, however, is that the *best* leadership does not simply come as a result of cultivating skill alone but is significantly influenced by the men or women we have allowed God to mold us into. The best leaders are characterized by passionately held values, thoughtful reflection, and authentic humility. Many people have leadership skills, but fewer people have the *foundation* of truly deep influence.

The writer of Proverbs reminds us, “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it” (Proverbs 4:23). Jesus told His followers that our words, actions, and thoughts all come from the reservoir of our hearts (see Matthew 15:18-20). What has filled that reservoir spills over in our leadership. Fill it with Him and He will spill out.

The preponderance of books on leadership focus on what good leaders *do*, how they *act*, or the strategies they *implement*. Some of these books provide real insight into good leadership principles. But these are not the most *important* issues in leadership, nor are they where leadership *starts*. Great leadership starts deep inside, and the best leaders belong in a category

set apart. Their uniqueness lies not first in their ability, but in a set of intentional practices that they nurture. Those practices, combined with leadership ability, make the difference between the average leader and a leader of deep influence.

Much of what passes for leadership is simply a position of authority, but true leadership is not about authority. Those who declare “I am the leader and this is what we are going to do” are rarely true leaders; some situations require this approach, but they’re the exceptions. These are the words of people in authority who *think* that leadership is constituted by their telling others what they should do. They are not only wrong, but they do not understand that *influence* is far more powerful than *authority*.

Others think that if they adopt the latest leadership theory or the style of leaders they admire, they too will lead well. This flavor-of-the-month leadership leads to cynicism among staff as the leadership techniques and philosophy change with the winds.

Many believe that the core of great leadership is action; they are constantly on the move, looking for the next strategy or initiative to pursue. It’s true, leaders *are* people of action, but not thoughtlessly or frantically so. The most effective action comes out of deep thinking, spiritual insight, personal understanding, a defining internal compass, and the ability to connect the dots of opportunity, needs, organizational ability, and strategy. The question is not whether leaders are people of action but whether their action comes from a depth of inner conviction, rather than from an addiction to motion.



## WHO A LEADER IS COMES BEFORE WHAT A LEADER DOES

Great leadership starts with *who* we are and then extends to *what* we do. It stems from a rich combination of personal health, spiritual transformation, and intentional practices that allow us to influence others toward the fulfillment of a mission.

Think of those who have motivated you toward great things, who have brought out the very best in you. Was it their leadership skills or was it something about their character and vision that touched your life? Probably you saw in them authenticity, conviction, integrity, wisdom, vision, and spiritual depth, as well as ability. We have an instinctive desire to collaborate with people who possess these qualities. Our desire to follow is stirred by the deep influence of a transformed leader.

These qualities *cannot* be microwaved instantly into a person but are forged over time by a set of practices that eventually separate deep leaders from shallow leaders. The difference may not be visible when a leader is young and leading out of energy and fresh vision. It does become clear in later years when a depth of maturity is either evident or absent.

In my fifties, I believe that age has much to do with leadership depth. I thought I was a pretty good leader when I was young, and I believe that young leaders can be good leaders. But because spiritual depth and ability are developed and honed over time—and have so much to do with our leadership effectiveness—I believe that great leadership is usually

revealed in middle age and after. Those who lead well in early years and are intentional in developing personal depth can become great leaders in their latter years. Many who seem to lead well in early years don't end their leadership careers well. Often they've had innate leadership ability but haven't done the necessary work to nurture the qualities that would eventually make them leaders of deep influence.

If you are a leader in your twenties or thirties, let me say from experience: When we are young we are never as good as we think we are. But if we nurture the practices of highly influential leaders along the way, in later years we may become better leaders than we think we are. Most leadership implosions can be traced back to the *neglect* of certain practices. Those who lead well over the long haul and become leaders of deep influence can trace their success to the intentional nurture of those same practices.

If there is one thing you gain from considering these hidden practices with me, I hope it is that the core disciplines of leadership relate less to *what we do* (important as that is) and more to *who we are*, which informs what we do. If we keep these priorities in order, it will revolutionize our influence over time.

## **DEPTH MATTERS**

One of my greatest fears is that I would settle for a shallow heart, becoming distracted by strategies, activities, and “accomplishing the mission”—all good pursuits, but not the foundation of lasting influence. Growing deep with God

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and allowing His character to transform me ensures that my leadership emanates from a mature spiritual and emotional core. Shallow hearts and minds do not lead to deep influence!

King Saul in the Old Testament is an example of a leader who started well but neglected the practices of an influential leader, resulting in a terrible finish. In his early years he looked and acted like a leader. He was described as “an impressive young man. There was no one more impressive among the Israelites than he. He stood a head taller than anyone else” (1 Samuel 9:2, HCSB). In the early years of his reign he pulled off some impressive victories, but there were signs that all was not well.

Saul believed that his leadership was about him, rather than about a stewardship given him by God to manage on God’s behalf. He ignored the prophet Samuel’s instructions, and over time his leadership deteriorated and his heart revealed its true shallowness, until he lost first the blessing of God, and then his life on the battlefield.

While Saul started well, it was the lack of depth in his spiritual life—of wisdom and a moral compass in decision making, and of a transformed inner core—that resulted in his long-term decline. As a result he made poor decisions, listened to bad advisors, displayed low emotional intelligence, and undermined his own leadership. Saul operated from a *shallow* heart.

In an interesting comparison between the description of Saul as “an impressive young man,” the prophet Samuel was instructed by God to go to Bethlehem to anoint one of the

sons of Jesse as king in Saul's place (see 1 Samuel 16). He arrived and immediately assumed that Eliab, apparently the oldest or the most imposing, must be the one; he looked like kingly material. "But the LORD said to Samuel, 'Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart'" (1 Samuel 16:7). Instead of Eliab and the others, God had chosen the youngest, David, who was out tending sheep at the time, indicating his humble position.

God has an intriguing way of choosing leaders that seems counterintuitive from the world's vantage point. Consider Deborah in the time of the judges; Paul, a former persecutor of the church; the disciples, many of whom we would not choose to change the world; Joseph, a former convict; Moses, a has-been who came into leadership after leading sheep for forty years; and the list could go on.

What God is looking for is the depth of heart, faith, and wisdom that comes from inner maturity. The difference between Saul and David was the difference between a shallow heart and a deep heart. David's depth was evident at an early age—he was about sixteen years old or so when he took on Goliath—and deepened during the years between his anointing as king and the death of Saul, when he became the leader of Judah and then of Israel.

The books of 1 and 2 Samuel are instructive for those who want to lead well. Clearly David was a gifted leader. He engendered great loyalty from those he led; he was strategic

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in his leadership, was undaunted by adversity, and proved tenacious in achieving his goals. We know, however, from the Psalms that he also possessed an inner depth that came from his relationship and dependence on God. One wonders where David found the time to go this deep spiritually when he was also the CEO of Israel, but clearly he did. And the long-term effectiveness of David as compared to Saul is the proof that this matters.

### **A LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVE OF TIME**

Depth takes time. It cannot be hurried!

Many leaders mistake short-term success for long-term effectiveness. They are so concerned about their success in the moment and in proving their leadership ability that they don't think long-term toward becoming leaders of deep influence. This is often true of highly gifted ministry leaders who are so driven to prove they can succeed that they do not take the time to develop a deep core. They settle for surface wins.

Young leaders need to understand that God wants to bless your leadership. But more than immediate results, He wants you to press into Him and into those practices that will make your leadership successful and deep over the long run. Being persistently intentional about those practices rather than in a hurry for success makes the difference between those who settle for shallow leadership and those who develop deep influence.

Where did the depth of Moses' leadership come from? As a young leader he was impetuous and careless and ended up having to flee Egypt, even though he had been raised in the

royal household. God gave Moses *forty years* to develop his leadership heart and soul before He drafted him for *the* decisive moment in Old Testament redemption history! Moses looked like a leadership failure early on. Many of us do as well. But not to God. God used that failure to build into Moses a dependence on Him rather than on Moses' own wisdom. It took time, but an impatient and shallow leader became one of the greatest, deepest, wisest leaders in the history of God's people.

Where did David's depth come from? It came from his time as a young shepherd out with the sheep; there he developed his relationship with God. It also came through the pain of becoming the object of Saul's wrath, even after being anointed king by Samuel and serving Saul well. David had to live like a pariah, constantly on the run, relying on the only help he had—God. I am sure there were many moments in those years on the run when David felt like a failure. But his depth was forged in both joy and pain, and in choosing to press into God.

Or consider Joseph, who was sold into slavery at seventeen and spent ten years in God's waiting room (mostly in prison) before he emerged ready for God's leadership assignment at age twenty-seven. And not because he didn't love and trust God! God used the prison years to build into Joseph's leadership exactly what would be needed for his next assignment—depth that could not be forged in any other way than through hard times.

God is never in a hurry with His plans for our lives. *We*

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are often in a hurry, but *He* never is. In fact, it does not bother God to take eighty years to prepare someone for His mission (Moses), or years languishing in a jail (Joseph), or time spent on the wrong side of truth (Paul). God never feels rushed as He builds in us those qualities that make for a person of deep influence. What He desires from us is not hurriedness but humble, patient cooperation as He develops the very traits that will make us who He wants us to be for His purposes.

Wisdom, character, spiritual depth, perspective, and the lessons that come from deep wounds all take time to develop. It is possible to be theologically precise at a young age, but it is with the passage of years that we grow and add depth to our understanding.

As a young pastor I was well trained to exegete the biblical text and communicate God's truth, but I was shallow in real-life experience. My preaching and teaching is far better today, not because I have learned to exegete the text better but because my experience helps me to better exegete life and people. No amount of intelligence can make up for the schooling that comes only from negotiating the vagaries of life. Depth takes time.

In my younger days I was too easily discouraged in the face of opposition—and I had my share of opposition. The passage of time has taught me that I don't need to be anxious about many of the circumstances I face because God acts in His time. That lesson could only be learned in the fire of hardship and discouragement. Time, experience, perseverance,

and God's work in my life have given me a resolve that I did not have in earlier days.

God is more concerned about the depth of our leadership than about the outward success of our leadership. If we are intentional in our cooperation with His plan, He will build that depth into our lives. I've already mentioned the "great failure" that I faced early in my leadership career. God saw it differently. He used that episode to humble me, to teach me to rely on Him and to press into His grace; and that early "failure" has informed whatever success I have attained since. Depth comes more often from failure and pain than from success! It is in the tough times that we are invited, like Moses and David, to go deep with God. What looks like failure to us is often part of God's plan to develop us as leaders. It is a wonderful thing to come to the place where we have nothing to rely on but Him.

### **ABOUT ME OR HIM?**

A fundamental difference between Saul's and David's leadership was its focus. For Saul, leadership was about himself. *He* was king, *he* had the power, and he believed that *he* could make decisions without heeding godly advice. Or even God's advice. Essentially his leadership was self-centered and selfish.

Leaders who believe that everything is about them (and there are many) become arrogant, believing their own press and concluding that since they got into the position it must mean that they are pretty good and have adequate wisdom to make the right decisions. Christian leaders are not immune



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to this temptation. While we all claim (and perhaps believe) that we are serving Christ in our leadership, our pursuit of success is often at least as much about us as it is about the One we serve.

Many leaders in the Christian arena are indistinguishable from leaders in the secular arena, except that they impose a *spiritual vocabulary* on their leadership plans. The question of whether our leadership is truly centered around us or around God is one that requires careful reflection and heart analysis. We must question the motives of leaders who are so driven that they hurt people in their paths, intent on having their own way to reach their own dreams. Where there is arrogance in leadership—Christian or secular—leadership is more about the leader than the mission or the One behind the mission.

Every leader is building something; it is the nature of leadership. *For* whom we are building is the trickier question. Whether in business or in ministry, leaders who have not gone deep with God in inner transformation can only be building something for themselves: It is the default position of our lower, untransformed nature. We are fooling ourselves if we build on anything other than a significantly transformed inner life that has been so influenced with the priorities of Christ that they become our priorities.

God-centered leaders operate by a different set of practices that come from inner transformation. For them, leadership is a trust. Peter made this clear when he said to the elders of the church,

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*Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.*

1 PETER 5:2-4

What is intriguing in this passage is that Peter eliminates the motives that drive many leaders—money, power, and personal agendas. He makes it clear that our leadership is simply a trust given to us by the true leader of the church—Christ—and that the core of our leadership comes from who we are and the depth that has been developed within. It's from such character that a man or woman of God is to lead, by being an example to the flock. The most powerful influence we have as leaders comes from our conduct, which is the outward expression of our inner core.

Our life examples are even more important than our leadership ability because our lives are the authentication of our character, giving credence to our leadership. All of us have met leaders whose personal examples did not cause us to want to follow.

An example worth following is often the missing element in those who give leadership to the church. They may have leadership skills, but their lives do not reflect a deep inner core of spiritual maturity, wisdom, understanding, and attitudes

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that come from a transformed heart. Too often theirs is a shallow leadership that is more about their agenda for the congregation than God's agenda. Theirs is a leadership that has not been steeped in God. (For an extended discussion of what God looks for in church leadership, see my previous book, *High Impact Church Boards*.)

God has an agenda for how our ministries contribute to His work. Our awareness of that agenda and the ways we can serve His plan comes out of a relationship with God, out of dependence on Him, out of an understanding of what God wants to do in our world. This is not primarily about our wisdom but about His presence; our understanding of Him informs all that we do as leaders under His lordship.

The more our leadership is informed by God, by His agenda, and by His character within us, the deeper our influence. Our influence is actually His influence lived through us!

We become His agents of influence when our lives are deeply connected to and informed by Him. Our leadership is an extension of His leadership, which is precisely why Peter calls elders in the church "shepherds" who work *for* His "Chief Shepherd" (1 Peter 5:2-4). *Any eternal influence we exercise is an extension of His influence.*

The greatest compliment anyone can pay us is that the example of our lives influenced him or her to go deeper with Jesus. That is influence of the deepest kind. It is Christ lived through us.

## INSIDE OUT

We live in a time when the demands on leaders are weighty and complex. None of us has extra time to spare. Our calendars are so packed that we hardly have time to breathe, and we end up living on fumes.

This creates a dilemma for anyone who desires to become a leader of deep influence because that desire demands the one thing we have so little of—time. I have said that leaders of deep influence are fundamentally different from other leaders. They live differently, they prioritize differently, they think differently, and they use their time differently.

They understand that depth must be nurtured. They have the same amount of time as other leaders, but they *use* that time differently and more intentionally. They think long-term rather than short-term and are determined to go the distance, rather than win the sprint.

The typical out-of-control schedules that characterize many leaders' lives are not congruent with becoming leaders of deep influence. Nor are these kinds of schedules necessary. Often they reflect more a lack of wisdom and intentionality than successful leadership. A packed calendar page looks impressive, but it is often the prelude to personal trouble when lack of depth becomes a liability that not even the most frenetic energy can cover.

The question for us is not whether we will work hard or endure seasons of intense time commitment. The question is how we will allocate our time and priorities for long-term leadership success, over against short-term leadership wins.

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Will we make space in our busy schedules for God—so that He can inform our hearts and mold our character, so that we hear His voice?

Leaders of deep influence have developed habits that allow them to become what they are. For example,

- They are more reflective.
- They take the time to think more deeply.
- They spend more time understanding themselves and those they lead.
- They are more deeply committed to understanding God and His Word and discerning His direction.
- They ask more and better questions.
- They take more time to evaluate success and effectiveness in their own lives and in the ministries they lead.
- They do less so that they can accomplish more.
- They think long-term rather than short-term.
- They are more concerned about the quality of their inner lives than the success of their outer lives.
- They are deeply sensitive to the voice of God in their own lives and leadership.

The common denominator is that leaders of deep influence use their time differently in order to grow leadership from the *inside out*—leadership that reveals itself as wise, strategic, Christ-centered. Instead of focusing on the end product, they first focus on the source of their leadership.

They develop an inner reservoir of spiritual, personal, and emotional health that results in healthy leadership.

## **DEEP INFLUENCERS BEFORE US**

Each of us owes a debt of gratitude to those who have exercised deep influence on our lives. They helped shape who we are today. They paid the price to become people of deep influence, and their investments have paid off in our leadership.

It was 1970 when Rev. John Stott came to do a “mission” at the local Anglican church in Hong Kong. I had moved to Hong Kong in 1960 with my parents, who were missionaries with the EFCA (Evangelical Free Church of America).

At age fourteen, I was transfixed by Dr. Stott’s clear, exegetical, humble presentations of the gospel over the course of a week. I drank in his teaching and analyzed how he handled the text. But more significant were the personal conversations Dr. Stott had with me and my friends before or after the services. Sporting his friendly, disarming smile and rosy cheeks, he showed interest and honor to a group of teenagers.

That led me to follow Dr. Stott’s writing and ministry, which continue to this day. His character, wisdom, authenticity, and spiritual depth profoundly shaped my understanding of the character of a leader. His theological writing likewise shaped much of my theological understanding. It was clear to me that Dr. Stott’s preaching and leadership came from a depth of spiritual development over a lifetime.

At age fifteen, I returned to the United States with my family to finish high school and to attend the University of

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Minnesota. Shortly after I returned, Dr. Walter Kaiser Jr., then a professor of Old Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, came to our church to speak for the weekend. Again, as with Dr. Stott, I was drawn to the depth of character and spiritual understanding that he exhibited.

I was fascinated with Scripture, and especially the Old Testament. I struck up a conversation with Dr. Kaiser, and he became a friend and theological mentor to me through high school and college. When I entered Trinity for my master of divinity, he invited me to become his teaching assistant just as he became dean of the seminary. For four years I worked closely with him, filled in for him in his classes when he was out of town, and helped edit a few of his books. But most significantly, I was deeply imprinted by his character, wisdom, spiritual depth, and leadership ability.

Much of who I am theologically today can be traced to Dr. Kaiser. But far more important, much of who I am as a person and a leader has been influenced by him as well. He was my friend, mentor, supervisor, teacher, and a person of deep influence in my life.

I can name a handful of other individuals who were people of great influence to me. My father; my brother, Tom; my friend of many years, Ken, who is one of the wisest leaders I have met; my brother in Christ, Grant, who thinks more deeply than anyone I have ever met. There is my colleague in ReachGlobal (a global mission), Gary, who asks questions that help clarify issues; Arthur, a person of prayer and spiritual insight; and Wayne, my prayer and travel partner. And

of course, Mary Ann, my wife, who has been my best friend now for forty-one years and whose life has impacted mine in ways too numerous to count.

What do all of these individuals have in common? They became people of deep influence to me. They paid the price over a lifetime to cultivate depth in their inner lives, which then overflowed with influence into my life. I am sure that you can identify those of deep influence in your life. They were and are God's gifts to us and deeply influential in who each of us has become. They are Davids, not Sauls, to us.

Join me in the quest to become a leader of deep influence.

***For Reflection and Discussion***

1. Who were and are the people of deep influence in your life? What was it that made each a person of deep influence to you?
2. What are the ways that you are intentionally building spiritual depth into your life?
3. Which concepts in this chapter caused you to take a second look at your own life?
4. On page 18 is a list of the kinds of habits that characterize people of deep influence. Which of these characterize your life? Which do you need to pay more attention to?