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Making Your Mark: 9 reasons why influencing is more about YOU than you thought

Wanting influence?

I am guessing that like me, you want to have an influence on your world. You want your life to matter. Yet sometimes you wonder if you are making any difference at all. It is all too easy to just trudge through each day hoping to make it through and get at least some stuff done.

But you always thought life was more than this. You used to believe that it was worth gaining skills and experience so you could have more to offer. And then you got busy surviving the whirlwind of daily pressures and forgot about influencing. Something though, has made you remember. This time around - you want to have a clearer idea of what influence is really all about.

You probably have questions like these:

- What is influence?
- Why does influence matter?
- Where and how can you have more influence?

What is influence?

Influence may seem like an ordinary everyday word. We typically use it to mean "to affect or change someone or something in an indirect but usually significant way." If we are influencing someone or something then we are affecting them in ways that can be, and often are, unconscious.

The word influence comes from the Latin root *influere* to flow into, implying that the thing that flows in changes what it flows into.

That is what influencing does. It changes the pieces of the world that your life flows into.

We all influence each other: your very existence means you are probably influencing those who are around you whether you intend it or not.

But the influence I am talking about is an influence that requires us to be more intentional. You'll need to have something to say, someone to say it to and a place or places to spread your message.

You need to commit to connecting, engaging and inspiring.

So, step one, you need to make a move and connect with those you want to influence. This is straightforward but not easy. You need to be somewhere your messages can be heard by the people who will benefit from hearing them.

Step two, you need to engage the attention of people who will benefit from hearing your messages. This is straightforward too but not easy. You need to say interesting things that will attract their attention. Be remarkable.

Step three, you need to inspire them to act. Again, straightforward but not easy. Find out how the best leaders inspire and do likewise.

Why does influencing matter?

Influencing matters because by our very existence we are influencing. As responsible people we want to be intentional about the force and direction of our influence.

For decades I have explored different ways to explain to the people around me why intentional influence matters so much. I am passionate about influence, probably because of how it ties in with stewardship - creating and supporting flourish - not waste - in our lives.

What follows are 9 reasons why influencing is about you first.

9 reasons why influencing is about you first

You need to be:

I Interesting

There has to be something between you and the person you are speaking with that ignites a connection. A deep connection becomes an interdependent connection. The person you offer a benefit to responds by investing their time and money in your offer, thus returning value to you.

N Noteworthy

There has to be something important in what you are saying. People must want to respond in some way to what you are sharing.

F Forging forward

You need to be taking action. If you are not forging forward yourself, you won't be influencing anyone else to forge forward either. Forging forward is contagious!

L Likeable

You need to be a person that others like. Start by smiling a lot.

U Unconcerned by u-turns or other kinds of redirection

You need to be able to respond flexibly to those you serve.

E Engaging

You need to be able to sustain the conversation once you have attracted the other's attention.

N Networking

You need to be keen to make more connections to increase your network. This leads to more engagement which leads to more opportunities to be noticed as inspirational.

C Curious

You need to want to know more about those you influence, the things that interest them and the things you can do for them. Not only does this give you information, it also makes you interesting in return.

E Experimental

You need to be ready to try out new things. New experiences help you to keep growing. Influencers need to keep growing themselves.

Taking the voice

However, it is not enough to have the influencing voice - you need to have something to say.

When I began my coaching and mentoring business, I struggled to get clients. Now I turn clients away.

Initially I had not known enough about those I wanted to serve. I also had nothing to give that I could express in clear and compelling ways.

Influencing is typically not about the cost of following. Instead it is about the perceived value you offer.

So whether you are trying to monetize your expertise or whether you want to be an influencer as a parent or teacher, you need to help your clients or students, tribes or congregations appreciate what they are getting.

Sometimes we have to give people what they want and include what they need but first you must pull them in. This may be the real value we have to offer.

An example of this happened for me a few years ago when a neighbor asked me if I would help her son pass a math exam - the GCSE - taken by UK students at age 16.

I was not looking to teach math, though I love math. I was, however, keen to help the neighbor. So I agreed to the maths lessons.

I spent one hour every day with this young man for six weeks. He passed his exam.

But there was more.

He grew in confidence too - in fact our time together transformed this young man. His mother said, 'I can't believe the change in him - what did you do?'

What makes this interesting is that I did teach him math, and I taught the math well. That's the bit she wanted to pay me for up front, though I chose to absorb the cost of my time myself.

What she had not come to me for was all the other stuff I taught.

I have often wondered how I might have sold that to her and whether she would have bought it. My broader teaching on high performance was exactly what her son needed and so I gave it to him freely. I am not sure to this day whether she truly understands the field of diamonds made available to her son.

When we seek to influence with our content and/or business we need to be sure we are doing something that appears of value to those we seek to influence.

If you want to influence, people need to see:

1. What you give
2. What makes it matter
3. What makes that matter to them

Don't leave them to try to figure it out by themselves.

Where and how can you have more influence?

You can have an influence right where you are. You...

- * Need a voice
- * Need courage
- * Need something to say
- * Need someone to say it to
- * Need to give a valuable reason for people to move

In sum

Our lives are always touching other people's lives. We can't help it. And like a vector, our influence has force and direction.

We can be intentional about the force of our influence. We can decide how big an impact we want to make.

We can be intentional about the direction of the impact we make. We can decide what we will stand for and how we will help.

Influence is a pretty big deal. When you influence you are leading. Without influence there is no leadership.

I encourage influencing others to be their best selves and do their best work. Influencers are needed more than ever.

When will you step up?

Whenever you are ready, here are 3 more ways I can help you increase your influence:

1. Get yourself a copy of my eBook: *Let's Unleash Influence: 27 keys to Leadership for (Almost) Everyone*. [Dr. Lesley's eBook on Influencing](#).
2. Join *Dr. Lesley's Circle of Influence*. Here, alongside your peers, you'll find answers to common questions, motivation to stay purposeful about your mission, and ways to surmount the inevitable hurdles you'll face as an influencer. Learn more about [Dr. Lesley's Circle of Influence](#).
3. Work directly with me. If you would like to experience 1:1 coaching with me, then click here: [Dr. Lesley's High Performance Coaching](#). Once your email is received we'll set up a time for a conversation to talk about how this coaching program could work for you.