

**HOW TO
LEAD
WHEN YOU'RE
NOT
IN CHARGE**

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**HOW TO
LEAD
WHEN YOU'RE
NOT
IN CHARGE**

***LEVERAGING INFLUENCE
WHEN YOU LACK AUTHORITY***

STUDY GUIDE | 6 SESSIONS

CLAY SCROGGINS

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How to Lead When You're Not in Charge Study Guide

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ABOUT THE STUDY

I've always wanted to be a leader. I imagine you have as well. For me, it began in elementary school. I wanted so badly to be the captain of the Safety Patrol. There was something alluring about the bright sash I got to wear. There was something powerful about being able to stop tons of steel and plastic with a raised hand. I just knew if I was captain of the Safety Patrol it would change the way people saw me, and it would even change the way I saw myself.

When I was in high school, I ran for class president. I had this idea to mix up famous hip-hop songs with my campaign slogans. I did a mashup of “Back That Thing Up” and Vote for Clay for President. Unfortunately, it worked.

That intense desire to lead followed me into college and my first job. To a certain extent, that desire is natural. We all want it to some degree or another. And that's because we associate leadership with autonomy. If we're the leader, we get to call our own shots. We get to shape our own universe. We're answerable to no one. And only when we have that kind of total freedom can we reach our full potential as leaders. That's what we assume.

But here's the dirty little secret we're going to explore in this study: *autonomy is a myth*. Every person who climbs the leadership ladder must eventually face the truth that everyone is accountable to someone. Even the CEO with the corner office, corporate jet, and multimillion-dollar salary is accountable to the board of directors and the shareholders of the company he or she leads.

Autonomy is a unicorn. It doesn't exist. If you spend your life or career chasing it in your spheres of influence, you'll never reach your full potential as a leader. You just won't.

But here's the good news: there's a better way. When you abandon the hunt for autonomy, it can shift the focus of your leadership fundamentally. It can open the door to your full leadership potential.

That will require changing some of the ways you think about leadership, as well as some of the things you currently do as a leader.

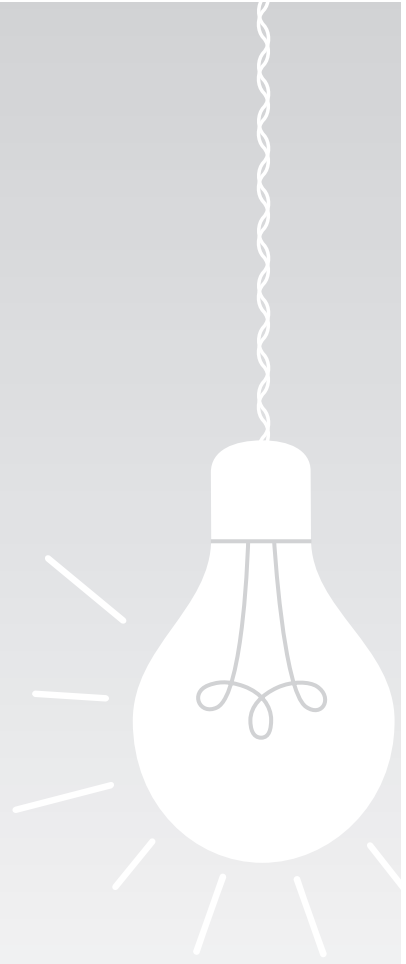
That's what we're going to explore during the six sessions of this study.

SESSION 1

THE ODDITY OF LEADERSHIP

Many people at the top of organizations are not leaders. They have authority, but they are not leaders. And many at the bottom with no authority are absolutely leaders.

SIMON SINEK



WELCOME

Welcome to *How to Lead When You're Not in Charge!* My hope in this study is to set the table for some terrific group discussion and exercises that will help you put action to the ideas in my book of the same name. My life experiences have taught me that the greatest growth usually comes in the context of relationships with others. And my hope is the same for you as you work through this study guide!

If you haven't met as a group, make sure to go around the room and introduce yourselves. And maybe even make an agreement with one another that might go like this: *I'm going to be as honest as I can be over the next several weeks. And if you agree to that as well, I'll agree to let what's said in here stay in here. In doing so, we can create something akin to the Las Vegas of leadership studies!*

SESSION OVERVIEW

Great leaders do not wait to be in charge before they start leading. By cultivating and leveraging influence, great leaders learn to lead before ever landing in any position of authority.

In order to begin to lead when you're not in charge, you must debunk the myth that authority is a prerequisite for influence. If having authority doesn't necessarily mean you have any influence, it must be possible to have influence before ever having authority. If this is true, it really changes everything about leadership.

CONVERSATION STARTER

Briefly describe your first memory of wanting to lead.

VIDEO TEACHING

Watch the video segment for session one. A summary is provided for your benefit as well as space to take additional notes.

Summary

Maybe you've always wanted to be a leader or maybe you've only led reluctantly. Maybe somebody—a parent, teacher, or coach—pointed out your leadership potential early in life or maybe you still don't think of yourself as a leader. Regardless of your specific circumstances, you *are* a leader in some sphere of your life—in your career, at church, or in your home.

Given the fact that you are responsible for leading someone, don't you want to lead as well as you can?

One of the most important things you can do to amp up your leadership is to understand the difference between *authority* and *leadership*.

Because of what we experience as kids, we associate authority and leadership. Growing up, whether your parents were good leaders or not, they had authority over you. They had all of the money. They put a roof over your head. They put food on the table. They had control.

So, it's natural for us to confuse authority and leadership. But one of the oddest truths I've bumped into in my career is that the more authority I've been given, the more clearly I've been able to see the difference between authority and leadership.

We may be tempted to believe that the people with the corner offices, parking spots, and highest positions on the organization chart must be great leaders. We may be tempted to believe that authority *is* leadership. But being given authority doesn't automatically make you a great leader.

Imagine a steering wheel. Now think about those grocery store carts for kids that are roughly shaped like race cars and have plastic steering wheels in them. When I take my kids to the store, I put them in that little cart and they hold that plastic wheel. They love that wheel. Why? Because it makes them feel like they have power. It gives them the illusion that they're in control. They turn the wheel left, and I turn the cart left. They turn the wheel right, and I turn the cart right. They love it. Their eyes light up.

But it's an illusion. I'm only humoring them. Eventually, we

need to get down to the business of getting the grocery shopping done. At some point, they try to turn right into the candy aisle, and the cart keeps going straight. They look up at me with disappointment, bewilderment, and dismay, as if to say, “Dad, you tricked us. You gave us this wheel and it doesn’t work. If we could trade you in for a new dad, we would.”

The thing is, I’ve felt that way at work before. I imagine that you have too. I’ve had times when I wanted to say, “Hey, you gave me this steering wheel but when I turn it, nothing happens. I try to make changes, but they don’t happen. I make decisions, but they don’t move the organization.” You don’t have to respond with apathy. There’s another option. And it starts with recognizing that authority is not the same thing as leadership.

Here’s what I want to convince you of: The steering wheel—*your* steering wheel—does work; it just doesn’t work based on authority.

We’ve been taught that leadership is about using the gun of authority. Leaders pull out the gun of authority and say, “If you don’t do what I say, then I’ll fire you or I’ll make life miserable for you.” But leaders who leverage authority to get things done aren’t great leaders. The greatest leaders leverage influence . . . even when they’re in charge.

No one gave Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. authority to lead the Civil Rights Movement. He leveraged his influence to lead the movement. With no official authority, Nelson Mandela leveraged influence to end apartheid in South Africa. And when Mahatma Gandhi led a revolution that changed the nation of India, he did so through influence, not by authority.

Notes

GROUP DISCUSSION

Choose the questions that work best for your group.

1. In thinking about your past, where have you learned the myth that authority and leadership always go hand-in-hand?

2. Consider someone who had influence in your life even though he or she didn't have authority over you. What was it about that person that made him or her influential?

MY LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

Complete this exercise on your own. Take up to 15 minutes.

In the space below, write down an area of your life in which you'd like to grow in leadership:

On the continuums below, indicate to what degree your leadership in the area you just noted is based on authority or influence (1 = least, 10 = most).

Authority

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Influence

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

There's nothing wrong with positional authority. In fact, sometimes it's absolutely essential. But having authority doesn't mean you don't need to cultivate influence. How might your leadership in this area of life look different if you were able to dial up your influence over the people you lead? Write down some thoughts in the space below.

SESSION WRAP-UP

Authority doesn't drive the car of leadership, but influence can. Whether you're an intern, a mid-level manager, or the one in charge, I hope you and your group can learn together how to cultivate more influence, so you become the leaders you've always wanted to be.

As you close, pray as a group about any issues addressed in this session.

SESSION 1

PERSONAL STUDY

If you want to enhance your session one group study experience, consider doing any of the following activities on your own before the next meeting.

Read “The Oddity of Leadership” chapter in *How to Lead When You’re Not in Charge*. Write down some of your key takeaways from reading the chapter.

Watch Simon Sinek’s talk, “Why Good Leaders Make You Feel Safe” (11:56), at Ted.com. Record some of your thoughts after watching the video clip.

Read Matthew 20:20–28:

²⁰ Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him.

²¹ "What is it you want?" he asked.

She said, "Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom."

²² "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said to them. "Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?"

"We can," they answered.

²³ Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father."

²⁴ When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers. ²⁵ Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ²⁶ Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—²⁸ just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Reflect on these questions:

When do you first remember wanting to be a leader?

Is there an area of your life in which you're currently waiting to be given authority? What would it look like for you to build influence in that area?

To what extent do you find your identity in the authority or position you've been given?



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Clay Scroggins is the lead pastor of North Point Community Church, providing visionary and directional leadership for the local church staff and congregation. Clay works for Andy Stanley and understands firsthand how to manage the tension of leading when you're not in charge. Starting out as a facilities intern (a.k.a. vice president of nothing), he has worked his way through several organizational levels at North Point Ministries. Clay holds a degree in industrial engineering from Georgia Tech as well as a master's degree and a doctorate with an emphasis in online church from Dallas Theological Seminary. He lives in Forsyth County, Georgia, with this wife, Jenny, and their five children.