



# Draper Notes

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If you're like most of Michael's readers, you want to become a better leader. You want to grow. You want to be more productive. You want to develop your platform. In short, you want to increase your influence. But I have a question for you. *Why?*

I teach that leadership is influence—nothing more, nothing less. Increasing your influence means bettering your leadership. But if that is your goal, *why* is it your goal? What do you want to do with your influence? *Why do you want to lead others?*

This is one of the questions I pose in my new book, *Good Leaders Ask Great Questions*. I believe that as a leader, I need to ask myself tough questions on a regular basis. One of those questions relates to my motives as a leader.

There is a big difference between people who want to lead because they are genuinely interested in others and possess a desire to help them, and people who are in it to help only themselves.

People who lead for selfish reasons seek...

- **Power.** They love control and will continue to add value to themselves by reducing the value of others.
- **Position.** Titles are their ego food. They continually make sure that others feel their authority and know their rights as a leader.
- **Money.** They will use people and sell themselves for financial gain.
- **Prestige.** Looking good is more important to them than being and doing good.

As a leader, it's important to question your motives often, because the temptation to lead for selfish reasons is strong. I know it is for me. If you're naturally gifted in leadership, that temptation is even greater. Why? Because naturally gifted leaders have capabilities that they can easily use for personal advantage. They see things before others do, and they often see more than others see.

If I can see something before you do, I can get started before you, and that often guarantees a win. If I see more than you see, my decisions will likely be better than yours. I win again! Natural leaders enjoy the advantage of having good timing and seeing the big picture. That puts them in a position to make the most of opportunities.

So the question is not "Does the leader have an advantage over others?" The question is "Will the leader use that advantage for personal gain or for the benefit of everyone on the team?"

That is why I need to ask myself whether I am genuinely interested in others. It keeps my natural selfishness in check and purifies my motives. Leaders are always in danger of abusing their power.

Let me say one more thing about this subject: questioning your motives is not the same as questioning your character. If you have poor character, your motives will probably be bad. But you can have solid character and still fall prey to bad motives. That's because motives are usually attached to specific situations or actions. Character is based on values.

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**John C. Maxwell**

The good news is that if you have wrong motives in a particular situation, but your values are good and your character is strong, you will probably be able to detect your wrong motives. Taking the time regularly to ask yourself *why* you're leading allows you to discover where you're going wrong and correct it.

Someone once said, "People have two reasons for doing anything—a good reason and the real reason." What's your real reason?

The best leaders are genuinely interested in helping other people, and have the capacity to take them on a journey to somewhere good. If your good reason and real reason line up, you have the potential to become an outstanding leader.