LEADERSHIP | PERSONAL GROWTH | PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT | VALUES

# The Leader's Leader—

## Authority in Action

*Proper empowerment is a function of wisdom. Learn from one of history's most awe-inspiring leaders*

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Here is a working definition of empowerment: **empowerment takes place when a leader gives others the knowledge, the responsibility, the authority, and the opportunity to do their jobs independently of the leader—and interdependently with the other members of the team—in order to perform to the very best of their abilities**.

I must stress that the Leader's Leader does *not* indiscriminately delegate authority to any and all untried and untested staffers.

> ***Proper empowerment is a function of wisdom.***

Those who are appointed to work independently of the Leader's Leader are those who have demonstrated the **character**, the **competence**, the **commitment**, the **consistency**, and the **caring** that will enable them to live out the organizational *logos* and keep the organization moving in the right direction.

The story of one of history's most awe-inspiring leaders is found in the pages of the Old Testament. Moses led the people of Israel away from their lives of wretched slavery in Egypt and shepherded more than two million men, women, and children on a forty-year trek to freedom in the Promised Land. Moses was not a man who lusted after the positional power of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. To the contrary, Moses was

described as the most humble man on the face of the earth.[1] Moses had no desire to acquire power or possessions for himself; he put his life on the line in order to gain freedom for the people who had been placed under his care. As soon as the people of Israel were free from the oppressive bondage of Pharaoh's despotic rule, Moses immediately set about teaching the people the *logos*—known today as the Mosaic Law—and began to delegate authority. Moses was wise enough to listen to the advice of an older man and put his plan into action. We read:

Moses' father-in-law replied, "What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people's representative before God and bring their disputes to him. Teach them the decrees and laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform. But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens... That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you."[2]

After ***logos*** and **example**, the third success strategy for effective leadership is to give others the **authority** to live out the *logos* (i.e., the organizational philosophy) in the organizational arena.

> ***True power is the power that makes other people powerful; logos leadership is the leadership that gives others the freedom and authority to achieve at their highest levels of excellence***

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[1] Numbers 12:3. All Scripture quotations are taken from the *Holy Bible, New International Version*®. NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved.

[2] Exodus 18:17-22.

***within the parameters established by the logos.***

This is precisely what Moses' father-in-law outlined almost 3,500 years ago; it is the model our Founding Fathers used more than two hundred years ago to construct our republican form of government; and it is the model that the Leader's Leader uses today to equip an organization to rise to the highest levels of success.

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**Jack Lannom** is an internationally known speaker, author, and consultant. He has served as a corporate coach for several Fortune 500 companies, including Citibank, R&R Donnelly and Sons, Jefferson Pilot Communications, Caterpillar, and also Knight-Ridder Newspapers and is featured on the PBS television program, "Lannom Memory Methods".

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