

**Ep #12: The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership with
Will Bess Part 4**



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Allison Watts, DDS

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Welcome to *Practicing with the Masters* for dentists with your host, Dr. Allison Watts. Allison believes that there are four pillars for a successful, fulfilling dental practice: clear leadership, sound business principles, well-developed communication skills, and clinical excellence. Allison enjoys helping dentists and teams excel in all of these areas. Each episode she brings you an inspiring conversation with another leading expert. If you desire to learn and grow and in the process take your practice to the next level, then this is the show for you. Now, here's your host, Dr. Allison Watts.

Allison: Welcome to *Practicing with the Masters* podcast. I'm your host, Allison Watts, and I'm dedicated to bringing you masters in the field of dentistry, leadership, and practice management to help you have a more fulfilling and successful practice and life.

Once again, here we are for call number four. I can't believe it, Will, we're at the halfway mark.

Will: Oh!

Allison: Yeah. I'm excited to have you here again today, and today we're going to talk about laws ten, eleven, and twelve. I'm going to let you take it away, Will.

Will: Okay, well, thank you so much, Allison. Yes, this has been a very, very quick month. They say time flies when you're having fun, and this is enjoyable for me, so the time has flown. I hope that you guys are getting something from this. Before we get started on this week's call, I'm going to just recap last week and what we talked about. It was suggested by Allison, and thank you, I should have been doing that, and I haven't, but I'm going to do that.

Just briefly, last week we talked about three laws: The Law of Respect, that's the law that says people naturally follow leaders

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stronger than themselves. And we know that respect is earned, it can't be given, it can't be purchased, it has to be earned.

The second law that we talked about last week was The Law of Intuition. That is the law that Maxwell finds it kind of difficult for him to teach because it favors the gifted leaders, the leaders who have the natural tendencies, but it can be learned. It can be taught. You can improve it.

Last week, I talked about emotional intelligence as one of the ways to increase your intuition, your intuitive abilities, which will help you connect better with the people that you're leading.

The last law last week that we talked about was The Law of Magnetism. That's the one that says, who you are is who you attract. So we basically attract people who are similar to us, and our inner circles are typically people who are similar to us. So if you want to increase the level of individuals that you are attracting, then you have to grow yourself and increase the level of person that you are.

Those are the three that we talked about last week, and I didn't want to recap the whole thing because we have three to cover today. So we will jump right in with laws ten, eleven, and twelve.

Law ten is The Law of Connection. That's the law that says leaders touch our heart before they ask for our hand. John starts off this chapter talking about our former president, George W. Bush. There really were two incidents that kind of defined his—well, it was probably more than two—but these were two that really stood out, that defined his presidency during the first term and also the second term.

We remember, and neither one of them was a positive experience for American people. The first one was 9/11 and I

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believe that all of us can probably easily recall exactly what we were doing the morning that we heard that the Twin Towers had been terrorized and knocked to the ground. But at any rate, four days after it happened, George Bush went to New York City, and he went to Ground Zero. He walked among the people: the rescue workers, the firefighters, the police officers, the citizens standing around. He shook hands, he talked to people, he listened, he hugged, he personally thanked the people for their service.

There are many reports that said that the people, their spirits were lifted. They were. He is the CEO. If you've ever worked in a large corporation, you can imagine if something tragic happened and the CEO took time from his or her busy schedule to come down to personally visit you. That would lift your spirits. So the people were encouraged to see our commander-in-chief taking a personal interest in a tragedy that happened.

There was a pretty famous moment that most of us also probably remember, when George was standing with a firefighter, had his arm around him, and he was speaking to the crowd. Of course, he didn't have a megaphone or anything like that, he was just speaking to the crowd.

There were people in the crowd yelling, "We can't hear you! We can't hear you!" And Bush replied, "But I can hear you. And the rest of the world hears you. And the people who knocked these buildings down, will hear from all of us soon." The crowd just wildly cheered and it really was a proud moment.

As an American, whether you were there or watching it on television, you were proud of Bush. I was proud of Bush at that moment. I was glad at that moment that he was our commander-in-chief. That he was our president. I think most Americans felt during the 9/11 events and thereafter, that we

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were glad that George W. Bush was the commander-in-chief of the United States. Some say it was his finest hour.

Unfortunately, four years later, he had another moment in time that wasn't deemed his finest hour. That was when Hurricane Katrina struck the city of New Orleans and water flooded the city. Instead of visiting the city as he had done after 9/11, Bush actually flew over New Orleans in Air Force One, his airplane. Basically peering at the damage through the window in his airplane.

We've all flown on airplanes before, those little bitty windows, so there's limited stuff that you can see through there. So to the people of the Gulf Coast and other parts of the country, it was seen as indifference, that he didn't really care. As the tragedy unfolded in New Orleans, it didn't appear that anyone at any level of government had the ability to connect with the people of New Orleans. The people felt abandoned, they felt forgotten, they felt betrayed.

Adding fuel to the fire was the fact that Bush wasn't that popular—well, he's a Republican, so most Republicans as far as voting goes, are not that popular in African-American communities anyway. And then you couple that with the fact that the vast majority of those affected in New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina were African Americans. It didn't help the perception that he didn't care about that group of individuals.

And we know that perception is reality for a lot of people. The whole thing was a bit of a fiasco and his popularity rating took a severe hit during then because the general impression was that he doesn't care. He flew over in the airplane, looked at it, and he didn't really care.

You know, that whole thing was really a mess. I was with the federal probation office at the time that that happened, and

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really the federal government got caught with their pants down, so to speak. Figuratively, not literally.

Anyway, when that happened, it was chaos in New Orleans. The federal probation office was destroyed, literally, and many of the records were gone. So you had many offenders, including sex offenders and violent criminals, who were basically left unsupervised for a long period of time. Some got lost track of. You couldn't find them because once the building was destroyed, the records were destroyed, everything kind of went haywire.

The government started training, trying to get us together so in case something catastrophic happened, you still could conduct business without that actual building being there. I went to a training by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, you all know who they are, FEMA. FEMA did not do well during Hurricane Katrina. One of the directors from FEMA was conducting the training and of course he spent a great deal of the time in the training defending FEMA.

There's this one particular example he was giving us where they were at a particular place and they had pallets and pallets of food, supplies, medical things, all of these, and there was lines and lines of people waiting to get the supplies. But nobody was handing out any supplies because they were waiting for some paperwork.

He was trying to explain to us that, "People were upset with us, but they didn't understand that there's protocol, that we needed that paperwork in order to release the supplies." So the people were in desperate need but they were kept without because pieces of paper hadn't been signed.

He was genuinely puzzled why people were upset and didn't think highly of FEMA. He seemed surprised that the director of

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FEMA was fired. I was one of those students who asked him, "Why didn't you all just hand out the supplies and just sign the paper later? Because you knew the supplies were going to get handed out." I think he took offense that I even asked him the question. So that whole thing was a catastrophe.

Back to Bush, he did come back later and try to repair some things and do some good things. But that kind of image had been set of him during that time that he just had the inability to connect with certain people. Because when it comes with working with people, the heart always comes before the head. We connect on an emotional level. He did beautifully after September 11, not so well after Hurricane Katrina.

I love a quote from this chapter that John's talking about the African-American oratory leader of the 18th century, Frederick Douglass, who I happen to be a fan of. As a historian, Lerone Bennett said of Douglass, and this is a quote, "Douglass could make people laugh at a slave owner preaching the duties of Christian obedience. He could make them see the humiliation of a black maiden ravished by a brutal slave owner. He could make them hear the sobs of a mother separated from her child. Through Douglass, people could cry, curse, and feel; through him they could live slavery."

Frederick Douglass had the amazing ability to connect with people and make them feel the story that he was telling. And that's what good leaders do. They work all the time at connecting with people, whether it's a single individual or a group. Because the greater connection that you have with people, the more likely they will be willing to help you. That's human nature.

We are going to go over some ways of how we live the Law of Connection. The first thing you want to do is you want to

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connect with yourself. That's number one. Kevin Hall, the author of *Aspire*, had four belief statements: "I am worthy, I am capable, I am deserving, and I trust myself."

So, yes, you need to touch a heart before you ask for a hand, but the first heart we need to touch is our own. You have to love yourself in order to effectively love others. We cannot take people to places that we've never been ourselves. Thusly, we have to walk the walk. We have to understand that you are gifted, but you have to know what that gift is. You have to know what your God-given DNA is.

So in order to connect with yourself, you have to find your passion. Some people are lost when trying to determine their passion. It's a problem that I frequently run into when I coach people. I ask them to find that thing. You want to know what your passion is? You find that thing that you would do regardless of pay. You find that thing that you would do for free if you could afford to do it.

Ask yourself questions. What makes you happy? What makes you laugh? What makes you cry? What makes you sing? You find the passion in your life, coupled with your area of giftedness, and you execute the plan. That's how you live an intentional life. So connecting with yourself is the first thing that you need to do to live the Law of Connection.

The second thing is to communicate with openness and sincerity. Choose candor and caring as tools to keep you balanced. Be real with people. Be authentic with people. There's no need to be a chameleon. Those are those people that they shift and change depending on the environment that they're in.

No, be authentic, be who you are. Come from the heart, even if it's not something that's pleasing to them to hear, something

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that they don't want to hear. If you're authentic with people, and you're really coming from the heart, people can respect that.

The third thing you want to do, you have to know your audience. How do you know your audience? You learn about people. You get to know people. You learn their names, you find out what drives them, what motivates them. It's very difficult to motivate somebody if you don't know what it is that they care about.

Sometimes, especially in the business world, there's a tendency to think that money motivates everybody. Money. You give people a good salary, you give them raises, you give them promotions, and that's going to suffice. But that doesn't work for everybody. That's not the motivator for everybody. So you have to learn the people. Find out what they care about.

If you want to be of service to someone—which is what we're talking about, servanthood leadership—if you want to be a servant to someone, you need to know what it is that they need. You're not in the habit of giving them what you want them to have, but what it is that they need, what they desire. So you find out how they're doing, you listen to them, you share common experiences and common ground. And sometimes you recognize and respect the differences in personality. You don't have to be exactly alike in order to get along and connect.

The fourth thing you want to do, you live your message. You practice what you preach. You maintain credibility by practicing what you preach.

The fifth thing is, you need to go where they are. You need to be attuned to someone else's culture, their background, their education, and the like. We cannot continue to go through the world expecting the world to adapt to us. I love America, I proudly served this country in the military. There's no other

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country that I would want to live in. But there are some things that we can do better. There are.

I've heard some people, and some of you have probably heard some people, complain and talk about people in this country who don't speak English or don't speak English well. Saying things like, "Well, you're in America, you need to learn to speak English," and that sort of thing. I probably could understand that a little more if I hadn't had the opportunity to travel to foreign lands. Where I also witnessed Americans traveling, tourists, expressing the same frustration in foreign lands of the native people, their inability to speak English.

I recall when I was in Korea in the military. The Korean soldiers that we worked with, they would walk around with English translation books, asking Americans questions: "How do you pronounce this word? What does this mean?" Because it was so important to them to learn English.

That always struck me as odd, that we were in their country, but very few of us were walking around with Korean translation books. We expected them to adapt to us and learn to speak English, although we were in their country. Leaders truly understand that you have to go where someone else is. You don't expect them to come to you. You initiate contact.

The sixth thing, believe in people. You communicate not because you have something valuable to say, but because the person who is listening has value to you. John says that people's opinions of us has less to do with what they see in us, than it does with we can help them help themselves.

I'm reminded of one of my favorite quotes: "Treat a man as he is and he will remain as he is. But treat a man as he could be, and he will become what he should be." That's from Ralph Waldo Emerson. But basically it's saying, if you treat

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somebody, you believe in them, you have high expectations for them, and you let them know that, and you expect excellence, and you really believe that they're capable of it, that's where they're going to try to go. Whatever standard that you set, the person is going to strive to meet it. We don't want to take people for granted because anytime we devalue people, we're simply questioning God's creation for them. We want to believe in people.

Seventh, the last thing we want to do, we want to offer direction and hope. It's been said, without hope we have nothing. People expect leaders to help them get to where they want to go. That's what a leader does. That's why I invest in you, that's why I connect with you, because I want to go a certain direction in my life, in my work career, whatever the case may be.

I believe that you can help me get there. Leaders offer direction. They offer hope. Napoleon Bonaparte stated that leaders are dealers in hope; without hope, we have no future. So there are seven things that you can do to help yourself live the Law of Connection.

John mentioned that some leaders have problems with the Law of Connection because they think as a leader, it's a follower's job to come to them. I had a guy I was talking to one time, and I actually respected him as a boss. He had some good things going for him as a leader.

But we were discussing one day, he was talking about an open-door policy, and he said that anyone could come talk to him. But he didn't have time to be going around asking everybody how they're doing and seeing how they were doing. So he and I had a little discussion with that because leaders take the first step to connect.

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A lot of people say, "I have an open-door policy," but you don't know if people feel comfortable coming in there. So if you never see them, you assume everything is okay. No. Leaders take the first step to connect.

It's kind of like in a parental situation. Sometimes a parent will tell a child, "You can come talk to me about anything." And they really mean that. But the child never comes to talk to them about anything, so they assume things are okay. I personally think it's a good idea, you seek the child out. Although you've given them the avenue to come to you, you still seek them out to see if there's something they want to talk about.

Just because we tell somebody, "You can come to me," it doesn't mean that they feel comfortable in doing that. But when you go to them, you go where they are to go see how they're doing, see how you can be of service to them, you will be surprised to find that you will get more from them that way. That's what leaders do. Leaders initiate the contact.

Also, how are you as a public speaker? Because communication is very important. If you struggle in the area of communicating with people, you find yourself wanting to say things but not quite knowing how to phrase it, or how to put it into words, or if you're talking in front of a group of people, you tense up and you get nervous... I mean, some people, in a poll every year, public speaking is the number one fear of most people. Even outranks dying, which is amazing to me, but it's true.

So if you struggle in the area of communication, you have to work on that because a leader needs to have good communication skills. Read some books, take some classes, join Toastmasters, it's a wonderful avenue for learning how to better communicate. Those are some things that you can do.

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Now we're going to move on to the Law of the Inner Circle. A leader's potential is determined by those closest to him or her. I've talked about the Law of the Circle briefly in several other laws but we're going to break this one down thoroughly right now.

In the book, John talks about Lance Armstrong. We all know Lance Armstrong, and when John wrote this book, the Lance Armstrong that he knew was not the Lance Armstrong that recently admitted that he was cheating throughout the course of his championship riding. But even so, the things that John talks about in talking about Lance is still applicable, regardless of his reputation right now.

Now I'll go on the record as a sports fan of saying that with or without the doping, it's an incredible feat to win seven Tour de Frances in a row. And the principles that he used to win as a team, they still are applicable, whether or not there was banned substances being used or not. It's still applicable because he needed the team to win. He needed the team to do their parts. He had the right people on his team to do their roles to help him win those Tour de Frances.

So although public opinion has changed about Lance Armstrong, and some of the things that people thought about him may have changed, the principles still to me remain the same. In order to win an event like he won, it's a team sport and you need the team to help you win. So I do believe those are still accurate.

At any rate, John talks about when he wrote the *21 Laws* book, he realized that no single leader can do all 21 things well. And that's why leaders need a team of people around them. Mother Teresa once said, "You can do what I cannot do. I can do what

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you cannot do. Together we can do great things.” No one has ever done anything great alone.

You hear the term “self-made men” all of the time, and that kind of amuses me. I know what the implication is, I know what they mean. It’s that I did this—you know, my blood, sweat, and tears, nobody lent me any money, or nobody gave me any money. I didn’t get an inheritance, I worked hard and I did this. I get what that means. But when we say self-made, it’s really an anomaly because there’s no self-made. You don’t do anything by yourself. You need people around you with some capacity to help you get to where you want to go in life.

So even if you physically built your business from the ground up, you still needed assistance from someone in finances, to loan you some money, to finance it, to invest in it. You needed some laborers to help you actually do some work. You need a customer base to purchase your product. You need people to help you.

If you want to be great, you really, really have to surround yourself with the right people. When I started this new chapter in my life as a full-time speaker, trainer, and coach, I quickly realized that one of the key components of my success was to surround myself with the right people. That is so, so very important. To surround yourself with like-minded people who are growing themselves. That’s why I love mastermind group concepts so much. I would encourage you all to get into one if you haven’t thus far.

Most of us create an inner circle. Most of us do. But how many of us are really strategic in how we create our inner circle? I think we tend to basically gravitate to those closest to us, the people we see all the time, or to the people we like the most. They form our inner circle. I’m not saying there’s anything

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wrong with that, but see, not everybody in your life has to be in your inner circle.

It's kind of like Facebook. I love talking to young people, they have a thousand friends on Facebook. I'll tell them, "Are you really so silly as to believe that you have a thousand friends? You do not have a thousand friends. You don't want a thousand friends because everybody who is friendly to you is not your friend. There are some people who signed up on your Facebook page just to get into your business, to see what's going on, to see if there's anything that they can report to somebody else about your life."

John talks about the entertainers and the athletes, who many times, and we see it so many times in the world of sports, that athletes face personal destruction. If you look at them, you have to look no further than their inner circle to see what the major problem was. A lot of athletes, especially those from humble beginnings, the inner city athletes, they really have this problem. Because they have a bunch of their homeboys around them, the guys that they grew up with, and so they have a sense of loyalty to these guys. They end up putting them in their little entourage.

Sometimes they even want to make them a business partner because of the personal relationship. And they totally ignore the fact that their friend is totally incompetent for that job, but they have this mentality of, "Well, I have to keep it real. I have to make sure I remember where I came from. I can't be a sellout." So they need to keep these certain people around them and many times these people lead them to their doom.

You can stay humble in your life without needing to stay connected to the things that you worked so hard to overcome. If you want to know the kind of person that someone is, or the

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kind of person that they're aspiring to be, see who they're spending their time with.

It has been said that we are the sum of the five closest people to us. So if you want to be successful, spend some time with successful people. If you want to be broke, find you about nine broke people to spend some time with. I can promise you within a short period of time, you will have number ten broke person in that group, and that'll be you.

You have to be intentional in selecting your inner circle. Not for just professional reasons, but also for life reasons. We need to constantly ask ourselves these questions: Does the person in my circle add or subtract from my life? Is the person in my circle making me sick by exposing me to their weaknesses and their own limitations, their own judgment of people who they're looking to condemn?" Those are some questions that we can ask ourselves.

John lists five additional questions that you can ask when talking about your inner circle. Do the people in your inner circle have high influence with others? Are they lifters and multipliers? It's an easy question. What kind of influence do they have with other people? It's good that they are wonderful connecting with you one-on-one, but what kind of influence do they have with others?

The second question to ask, do they bring a complementary gift to the table? And that is so very important because sometimes people in positions of leadership tend to want people around them that think like them, act like them, want to do the things that they do. Which is fine to a certain degree, but if we're all strong in the same area, then who is going to complement those weak areas?

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It's just like a sports team. A team where everyone is strong in the same area and weak in the same area is a weak team. In baseball, and I'm talking about baseball other than football today, surprise, surprise. But in baseball, you need some power hitters on your team. You need some contact hitters on your team. You need some guys who are fast on your team. You need a combination of all of these people.

In basketball, you need some big guys who can rebound. You need some guys who can shoot the ball well. You need some guys who can dribble the ball well. You need all of these to have a complete team because everybody can't be strong in the same thing and weak in the same area.

You can't build a team if you're insecure that someone can do something better than you. You need somebody on your team that can do something better than you. I'll submit to you that if you're the best person on your team, in every area, then you need to reevaluate your team because your team will not be as strong as it could be.

Another question you want to ask: Do they hold strategic positions in your organization? That's the third thing. Sometimes people belong there because of the position they hold. Seriously, sometimes you have to have people in your inner circle not necessarily so much because of personal relationship, but the position that they hold in your organization requires that they be there. Sometimes it's necessary to include them on what's going on to make sure you're both on the same page.

If you're a president of a company and the vice president of the company isn't in your inner circle, it can be a problem. So your inner circle is not just necessarily people who you just love to death and you enjoy spending so much time with. That's a good

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thing if that can happen, but they also need to include some people who have strategic positions in the organization. People who are there because it's on a need-to-know basis.

The fourth thing: Do they add value to me and to the organization? We spent a lot of time over the last few weeks talking about leaders adding value to others. But the truth of the matter is, you also as a leader, you need some people who are going to add some value to your life as well. Iron sharpens iron. Always has, always will. The people in your circle, they need to be adders and multipliers, not subtractors and dividers.

They don't necessarily need to be there because you like them and they like you, but what value are they bringing to the table? What are they bringing to the table? If you are trusting them and empowering them with certain things, they have to be able to bring something to the table for the sake of the organization.

The last one is: Do they positively impact other inner circle members? These people should be an asset to the whole organization, not just to you. This is not the little flunky that is running around doing everything for the boss, doing laundry, or fetching laundry, and getting coffee and donuts and all this kind of stuff. They're just there as a valet.

No. The person in your inner circle should be an asset to everyone, not just you. We know, we've all been in the business world long enough. We know that we have those rear-kissers, those butt-kissers, we have those brown-nosers, who will do anything for the boss, for the top dog, for the leader, so they can shine and look good. But when it comes to their team, when it comes to helping others, that's a different ballgame. They don't have time for that.

You need to ensure that you have someone who is looking out for the entire team, and not just for you. It does you no good if

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you have somebody in your inner circle that you love, but nobody else can stand them. If there's no team chemistry, the team won't succeed. It won't.

Anybody who's ever watched any team sport recognizes that the team with the most talent isn't always guaranteed to win. It's normally the team that plays together the best that wins. It's just like that in life. It's not everybody is so ultra-talented, it's that people who work well together and play well together. They get the job done.

You want people who are making each other better. They're not trying to outshine each other, they're not trying to steal glory, and position themselves for future promotions and things like that. They're not trying to compete for your affection and for your attention, they're not doing those things. They're there for the simple fact of trying to make you better, the organization better.

It's a reciprocal relationship, because we know that you're a great leader. You're already investing that into them. You're sowing that into their lives, so in turn they're sowing that back into your life, into those around them. If you have somebody in your inner circle who is dividing your team, they are hurting you and they are hurting your organization.

Finally, John asks one question. He says, it may not automatically include someone on your team in your inner circle, but it should automatically disqualify them. The question he asks is that, "Do they display excellence, maturity, and good character in everything that they do?" We're not talking about perfect people. There are no perfect people. You're not a perfect leader, they won't be perfect. But do they do those things?

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If you have those people, but they're not in your circle yet for a variety of reasons, you should perhaps focus on developing them to get them into your circle at some point.

Sometimes we want to spend all of our time convincing a negative person to be positive. But you will find that many times that's kind of wasteful. It is. You invest your energy, your time, into positive people. They're your assets. If you have somebody negative in the organization, and they're saying, "The boss never spends time with me, they're always talking to such-and-such, they're always talking to such-and-such," and you're a negative person.

It would be lovely if somebody on the team said, "Well, there's a reason the boss doesn't spend time with you. Because you're a negative person. Why would somebody invest that much time and energy in you if you're not bringing anything back?" Invest in your assets.

You never want to stop improving your inner circle. Everybody in your circle needs to be on a journey of growth. It just needs to be that way. If you're striving to grow by going to seminars, reading books, listening to calls like this, being in mastermind groups... If somebody in your inner circle says, "I'm not really into that stuff," then you really need to consider and think about making a change. Because you guys are all not trying to go to the same place.

When we talk about the inner circle, it needs to be like-minded people who are striving to get to the same place. You're looking to grow together. Because if you have somebody in there who is not willing to invest the time, resources, and finances in some case, to improving themselves, do you really truly believe that they're going to do that for you and your organization?

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Most of us, we love us more than we love other people. We do. But if I don't love me enough to try to grow me, and get me to the level of excellence, I'm going to have a hard time convincing someone else that I'm going to do it for them.

So when you look at your inner circle, you look at people ... look at yours right now, and list the names of the people who you consider to be in your inner circle. Then you write down what that person contributes. You see if you have people in your inner circle that they're kind of duplicating what somebody else brings to the table. Or you have a gaping hole in there. So then you look to fill that hole in your inner circle. And to reduce the redundancy because you want to be as well-rounded as possible. You want your team as strong as possible. Everybody complementing each other.

If you identify those people, it would behoove you to spend extra time with them to develop those relationships. Give them extra responsibilities, place a higher expectation on them, give them credit, praise publicly always. Criticize in private and hold them accountable.

So when you're recruiting people, look for the traits of competence, character, and chemistry in mind. Make sure that they are good at what they do and they have the character that you're looking for, that matches up with your values. And that the chemistry, that they fit in with other people, because it's a team. If you're a one-man show, then your chemistry could be out of whack, whatever, it's just you. But if it's a team, it's important. The chemistry of the office is important.

And another thing I'm going to tell you before we move on to the last law, be constantly preparing yourself to be in another great leader's circle. While you're building leaders and looking at leaders around you, someone who is on a higher leadership

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level than you are, may be looking at you. They may need you to complement them in their inner circle.

Be ready for that. Be ready for the opportunity. And ensure the people that you have chosen to be in your inner circle, that you're doing things to develop them. That you're doing things to help them grow and to get better. Because when you get better, they get better, the team gets better.

Lastly, this morning, we're going to talk about The Law of Empowerment. This says that only secure leaders give power to others. In this chapter, John starts off talking about the automobile great, Henry Ford. And surprisingly he is one who struggled with The Law of Empowerment.

Not to rehash the whole story, but I need to lay down some of the groundwork for it. Ford cofounded the Ford Motor Company in 1903. His first automobile, the Model T, it changed the face of American life forever. By 1914, Ford was producing nearly 50 percent of all automobiles in the United States. That's amazing. But, because Henry was so in love with his Model T, he never wanted to do anything to change it. Not only did he not want to change it, he didn't want anybody else messing with his baby either.

There's a story that says a group of his designers surprised him one day with a prototype of a newly-designed model. Henry was so happy, he was so thrilled, that the man literally ripped the doors off the vehicle with his hand. He tried to physically destroy the vehicle. So for 20 years, Ford had only one design, until Henry grudgingly, reluctantly agreed to offer a new car to the American public, the Model A. But by this time, the competitors had surpassed Ford in technology. By 1941, Ford was producing only 28 percent of the automobiles in the United States. It went from 50 percent to 28 percent.

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Well, after Ford's grandson, Henry Ford II took over the company eventually, he originally did some good things. He hired some really good leaders and they turned the company around. The company's success started to rise again. They started selling a million cars a year. Then, Ford II did something that insecure leaders do: they get threatened and they start sabotaging those around them. That's how he led.

It's perfectly exemplified in a quote from Lee Iacocca, regarding a statement that Ford had made to him when Lee Iacocca worked for him. Ford told Lee, "If a guy works for you, don't let him get too comfortable. Don't let him get cozy or set in his ways. Always do the opposite of what he expects. Keep your people anxious and off-balance." In his mind, that was how you led people is to keep them guessing. They don't need to know exactly where they stand, keep them guessing, keep them off-balance.

So he and his grandfather, the original Henry Ford, their way of leading people, it wasn't to identify leaders and bring them up. It was to identify leaders and then undermine them. People who are insecure leaders, they do not like to give up power for fear that people will somehow surpass them. In order to lead well, we must reach out to people to make them better. The greatest leaders are always the ones who make everyone around them better. We do this by encouraging them, by empowering them, and helping them to succeed.

John does a visual exercise where he calls someone from the audience and he has them stand in front of him. He'll put his hands on their shoulders and he will start pushing them slowly to the ground. As the person gets closer to the ground, John is obviously bending over them as well as he's pushing them. The point of that exercise is to show that this is how it is in leadership. When you're pushing someone down, when you're

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keeping someone down, you must go down with them to keep them there. So when you go down with someone, you lose any power to help lift people up.

Briefly, let's talk about three barriers to empowerment. The one is the desire for job security. That is the fear of losing what we have. We worry that if we help somebody else get better, then we make ourselves expendable. The truth of the matter is that you make yourself more valuable when you empower others and help develop others. It's not even about making someone better than you. Some people fear that their work won't be recognized and they'll lose value.

Let me ask you guys something. Have you ever worked with someone, or for someone, who felt like they had to hold onto information that you could have used? They need to make sure that they always had something that they knew that you didn't know. So they would feel needed. They would train you but they wouldn't quite give you everything so you would need to keep coming back to them, so they would feel needed.

See, this is what's called the spirit of scarcity. This is the thought that there just isn't enough to go around for everybody, so I have to guard what I have. There's only limited promotional opportunities, so I need to make sure I keep myself in the position to get one of those positions. I need to make sure that I outshine this person. That's not the spirit that you're looking for. What we need is the spirit of abundance. That's the spirit that says there is plenty and more than enough for everyone. There's more than enough for everyone.

I recall when I was a supervisor at the federal probation office, and I had a young lady who was new to the job. One of my jobs was to review her pre-sentence reports. These were complicated reports, and they could be lengthy, and that really

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was like an 18-month learning curve in doing these reports. It took about a year and a half really for someone to get comfortable in doing it. So she would turn in these reports to me and I would read them, and I would recognize that she was really farther ahead than she should have been at that point. And I noticed that there's another female in the unit that she would constantly go in her office.

So I went into that female's office and I said, "Let me ask you a question, and you're not in trouble or anything. But is this person coming to you for help?" She said, "Yes, she's coming to me for help." I said, "Okay, that's good, I have no problem with that. I expect her to. Are you reading her reports before they come to me?" She was reluctant to tell me, but she said, "Yes, I have been."

I said, "Well, that's a problem for two reasons. Number one, that's very time-consuming, and you are very busy yourself. Be honest with me, that's wearing you out, isn't it?" She said, "It is. It is wearing me out. I'm taking work home because I'm reading her reports."

I said, "Okay, the second problem I have with that is, I cannot accurately gauge where she is and what she's weak at because I'm really reading your work instead of her work. So I can be tricked into giving her more complicated cases when she's not ready for that. So I'll go talk to her and let her know that I understand you want to give me great work, but I need to see your work. So bring it to me."

I told this employee, I said, "But I want to tell you something, that I am appreciative and grateful for you." She said, "Really? I thought you would be upset."

I said, "No, I'm not. I'm going to tell you why. Because you are helping her look good to me. You're doing that without even

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worrying whether I'm going to think she's a better writer than you. Or, she's a better writer than other people who have been here longer. You're not even concerned with that. You're trying to help her look good. I appreciate that, because a lot of people would not do that. They would have made sure that I knew that that person's work that they were turning in was their work. I appreciate that attitude, and I want you to mentor her." And this officer mentored her and she turned out to be an absolutely fabulous probation officer.

That's what empowerment is. You don't worry about the job security. If you're making the team better, you're making the organization better, it's going to be seen. It's going to be seen, it's going to be recognized. I mean, who is more valuable to the agency? The person who is really superior in their work, or the person who is not only superior in their work, but they also have the ability to help other people be superior in their work? Who is more valuable?

Okay. The second one is resistance to change. People like comfort, we don't like to change. We like our old habits because they are easy, we're used to them, it's easy to do what we've always done. Most people just don't like change, plain and simple. People get mad when there's a detour on the road that they travel every day and they have to go another way. I'm one of those people. It irritates me. We like things the way they are, unless we feel the need to change them.

But change is one of the most important things we can do as leaders in the organization, and as individuals. How many times, somebody in your life that you've seen, and they're the same person at 20 as they are at age 30, as they are at age 40. They never change.

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An organization never changes, they're doing the same things. And sometimes they're probably boasting, "We're doing the same thing we've been doing for 50 years." Well, that means if it's great customer care and treating people with respect, then yes. That's great, continue to do those things. But the world is constantly changing, so we should be prepared to change with that.

There is no status quo. You're either moving forward or you're moving backwards. If you're standing still, you're moving backwards because other people are moving forward and they're passing you. So in essence you are moving backwards, there is no status quo.

Lastly, the lack of self-worth. Self-conscious people rarely make good leaders because they spend way too much time worrying about how they look, what other people are thinking about them, about being concerned whether people like them. These are your people-pleasing leaders. They don't give away power because they really don't think they have any to give.

The best leaders believe in themselves. They're not arrogant, but they're confident. They believe in themselves, and they believe that they have something to offer. If you don't believe in yourself, then why on earth would anyone else want to believe in you?

As leaders, we shouldn't have problems encouraging people and lifting them up. But we know that it's hard to do all the heavy lifting by yourself. It's hard to continue to believe in people who refuse to believe in themselves. It's hard. You have to be very secure in order to give yourself away. You have to believe in yourself, your mission, and your team.

John uses Lincoln as an example of a leader of empowerment. Abraham Lincoln, when he won an election, he would fill his

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cabinet with people who were Democrats—he was a Republican—he would fill them with people who antagonized him. But he knew they were strong leaders, sometimes stronger than him in certain areas. He wasn't insecure.

Biographers say he was either very naïve or extremely secure. I like to think that he was very secure because he knew that he needed strong people around him. He needed people with strength. He wasn't concerned about them undermining him. He was willing to take that chance. He wasn't worried about losing his authority. He conducted himself like that throughout his administration, surrounding himself with great people.

Just to close out the empowerment, it wouldn't be a training if I didn't talk about football a little bit. Bill Walsh, the late, great coach of the San Francisco 49ers ... As a Cowboys fan, that was a mortal enemy of mine, but I respect that man's ability to coach and empower his coaches. Bill Walsh had six assistants at that time who became head coaches. Four of those coaches coached teams who played in Super Bowls.

More amazingly, from Bill Walsh's coaching tree, there have been 33 head coaches who have either worked, coached directly under him, or they've coached or worked directly under someone who was under Bill. Of those 33, seven of them have won Super Bowls. Bill Walsh ruled leaders. He knew that, "Yes, if I make this coach really, really great, someone else is going to scoop him up to lead their team. I recognize that."

But Bill wasn't worried about those coaches outshining him. He wasn't worried about them getting so big for their britches that they were going to be looking for his job. No, he understood that the stronger my coaching staff is, the better. The better my teams are going to be. He recognized that.

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Last week, I talked about Mack Brown a little bit, for University of Texas. But one of the things that Mack Brown does, is he empowers his coaches. A lot of times, Texas has a lot of turnover because their coordinators get head coaching jobs in other places. But Mack Brown absolutely loves that. He loves when his coaches come, do a great job, and get other jobs. He takes pride in that.

That's what leaders do. You take pride in making the people around you great. If they can end up better than you, then that's even better, because you know you've done your job as a leader. That's what the Law of Empowerment is. Being secure enough to give people power and allow them to shine.

That is our time for the day. I appreciate you guys listening, and if anyone has any questions, I will be more than happy to answer them.

Allison: I do have a quick question.

Will: Okay.

Allison: My question is, and I can ask it to you another time. I'm just thinking, I thought the inner circle was a group that you chose personally to be your ... almost like your personal advisors or, I don't know how to explain it. When you talked about it today, is it more related to your work, to your business? Or do you have one for your work and one for personal?

Will: That's a great question. When you say inner circle, your inner circle doesn't have to be just one. Depending on where you work, the kind of job you have, you may have an inner circle that you just use for work purposes. You may have an inner circle that you use as far as your spirituality, churchgoing kind of people.

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It's like professional coaches. Some people have six or seven different coaches to help them in different areas of their life. You're not just limited to just one inner circle. The inner circle that you have in whatever area of your life that you have them in, they need to be able ... the principles will remain the same.

If you have an inner circle just at work, somebody to help your organization grow, and to get you to the next level, then the principles of them adding value to each other. Looking out for the team as a whole. Then yes, absolutely, those principles are there.

If it's in your personal life, and you have a couple of people who you're trying to grow together with in whatever area. The principles are still the same. There are some people, Allison, that I've known, that they want you to be friends with everybody that they're friends with, or if there's somebody that they don't like, then they don't want you to like them either.

When you're talking about an inner circle, if you have somebody who ... they like you, they love you, but they're constantly talking about other people, they're putting other people down in your life, people that are close to you. That's not somebody that you probably want to have in your inner circle. Because yeah, although they are supporting you and stuff, they still are impacting the other people around you.

Allison: Okay.

Will: So everybody doesn't have to be your friend, everybody doesn't have to be in love with everybody. But that inner circle is somebody who is going to support you unconditionally. Whether it's at work, or whether it's through your personal life, your inner circle should always be somebody who is looking to add value to you. Somebody you're looking to add value to.

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Allison: Okay.

Will: So you can have a few Allison if you want to.

Allison: Okay [laughs]. I think I need to get one first.

Will: You need to get one first? [Laughs]

Allison: Yeah.

Will: You can start with one. That's always good.

Allison: My team at my office is probably, you know, that would make sense to me that they would be my inner circle at my office. Then personally, I've got to work on that one.

Will: Sometimes, we separate work from personal life. Sometimes the people that we really, really love at work and work well together and we share with. We don't necessarily want to involve them in all of our personal lives or vice versa. And sometimes we do.

If you have a person who supports you personally and with work, that's wonderful. I'm just saying that the person that we go to for a work-related problem may not always be the person that we're going to go to if our kid is acting crazy, or our husband or wife is acting crazy. They may not be the same person.

Allison: Right. Okay.

Will: Regardless of whatever situation that you're in, the people that you choose for your inner circle, they need to be people-positive. People who are looking to help you get better as a person.

Allison: Thank you.

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- Steve: Will, you did a good job. I looked at the book list at Maxwell. They had the 15 laws. Is there a special book with 21 laws?
- Will: The book that we're going over right now, is *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*. I think you're talking about *The 15 Most Invaluable Laws of Growth*.
- Steve: Yes.
- Will: Yes, that's his most recent book. And that's really a good book. But the book that we're talking about is one of his older books, and it's one of his most popular. I think it's probably his most popular book.
- Steve: You recommend both, or just one?
- Will: Do you own your own company, are you self-employed, or how do you work there?
- Steve: I have my own company.
- Will: You have your own company? Okay, great.
- Steve: And basically, I volunteer Allison as your advisor or whatever, okay? One of the areas that we do, we sort of divide it where we start with trying to get them set a lifestyle. Then we go into the practice and what-have-you. We do a whole approach on that. It's worked out well for us because Peter Dawson said to me a long time, "Help people with their lifestyle first, before you start working on your practice." That's basically what we do.
- Will: Okay, that's wonderful. I would recommend both for this reason: *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, that's really a book that's geared to helping you in your interaction and relationships with other people. And how to really lead people. *The 15 Laws of Invaluable Growth*, those are really laws to help us with us. To help us individually grow as people.

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Steve: Okay.

Will: I would recommend both of them, because they both serve different purposes. One is trying to help us learn how to influence and grow multiple people, the laws of growth a lot of times focus in on us. What can we do, individually, when we look in that mirror every morning to help us be better people?

Steve: Yeah, I can't thank Allison enough for starting on this because the two biggest things that we find when we get down talking in the practices... what's missing great is leadership. The second one, which is natural, is communication.

Will: Yes, sir.

Steve: And plus I loved one time she had a person come on and say, "What's more important, is it the patient or the team?" And it's the team.

Will: Yes, sir.

Steve: And putting that all together. Thank you, Allison. You're a doll.

Allison: Aww, thanks Steve.

Will: She is a doll, I concur.

Steve: Have a great week, all right?

Allison: Okay, you too.

Steve: Bye, now.

Will: Bye.

Allison: Bye-bye.

Thanks for listening to *Practicing with the Masters* for dentists, with your host, Dr. Allison Watts. For more about how Allison Watts and

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