

## **Becoming An Enlarger**

by **John C. Maxwell**

Before the NBA ever heard of Shaquille O'Neal, Dikembe Mutombo or Tim Duncan; back before anyone knew the name Hakeem Olajuwon; in the days before Kareem Abdul-Jabbar ruled the hardwoods, Wilt Chamberlain and Bill Russell changed the nature of professional basketball with the way they played the center position.

Chamberlain was a great scorer and Russell was known more for his defense, but no matter which end of the court they were on, they played above the rim like no centers before them ever had.

Russell, however, is best-known not for his offense or his defense but for something else - winning. His No. 6 jersey was retired by the Boston Celtics in 1972 to honor his contributions as the anchor to teams that won nine consecutive NBA titles. He added two more titles as a player/coach.

That's why it was such an honor to meet him at a recent NBA All-Star game, and that's why I wasn't surprised to hear what he said about great team players: "The most important measure of how good a game I played was how much better I'd made my teammates play."

One of the qualities of a great team player, you see, is that they *enlarge* others. Bill Russell isn't just a large man; he's a man who enlarged others. He made them better. Here are five characteristics of people who enlarge others.

### **1. Enlargers value their teammates.**

When you think about your teammates, place a "10" on their heads. If we think of others as 10s, we'll do everything to add value to them. Our behavior is totally different when we think of someone else as a two.

Seeing others in the very best light makes the entire team better because usually our level of performance equals the level of value placed on us.

### **2. Enlargers know and relate to what their teammates value.**

Here's how you can tell if you value people: Do you value people who won't benefit you or only those who might contribute in some way to your success? Great team players truly value others as people, and they know and relate to what others value.

When I want to know and relate to others, I look for five things. I want to know their dreams, values, skills, attitudes and life questions. We all have questions, by the way. If you can find the pathway to a person's questions, you can always find the pathway to a person's heart.

### **3. Enlargers add value to their teammates.**

Whatever the project, task or situation, enlargers find ways to make others around them better because they approach life as a win/win situation. They realize that making others better isn't just better for others, it's better for everyone. As the old adage goes, a rising tide lifts all boats.

### **4. Enlargers make themselves more valuable.**

You cannot give what you do not have, so self-improvement precedes team improvement. The first step toward improving the team is to improve yourself. I've been teaching leadership for



20 years and I've written twenty-some books. Here's what I know - the only way I can keep leading is to keep growing.

The greatest way that I can add value to my team is to make myself more valuable. If I can become a better player, if I can continually increase my skills, if I can continually become enlarged within myself, then I have the capacity to enlarge others. Too many people are still trying to give what they learned fifteen years ago, and they're in trouble.

## **5. Enlargers initiate.**

Enlargers believe in others before they believe in themselves, serve others before they serve themselves, and add value to others before they add value to themselves. See the common thread? The word "before."

They have the ability to see potential in another person before they even see potential within themselves. They have the ability to start action. They have the ability to start belief. They are initiators.

## **Initiate. Enlarge. Be a great team player.**

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