Sheila Love IMPACT-ology Mastermind

“Sheila Love — Where Everything Is Possible”

LESSON 17

Leadership

Position	Lesson 17 of 20
Duration	40–50 minutes
Age Group	12–18 years, Liberia, West Africa
Core Idea	Leadership has evolved. Today's leader leads with care and clarity, not just authority, and doesn't need to see the whole path before starting.

1. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Explain how leadership has changed from an older model to a newer one
2. Describe leadership through care and clarity rather than authority alone
3. Identify one place they are already leading, even informally
4. Practice taking a next step without needing the whole path visible first

2. OPENING HOOK (5 minutes)

Ask: “Think of a leader you respect. Not because you have to, because you actually do.”

> “What do they do that makes you respect them?”

Take a few answers. Notice how few of them mention rank or title.

3. CORE CONTENT

An Old Idea of Leading

For a long time, a leader was mostly someone with authority. Someone whose word was followed because of position, not necessarily because of trust.

That model still exists in places. It is not the only model anymore, and increasingly, it is not the most effective one.

Leading With Care and Clarity

Today's most effective leaders lead with more than authority. They lead with genuine care for the people around them, and clarity about where things are actually headed.

Care without clarity is just kindness without direction. Clarity without care is just instructions nobody wants to follow. You need both.

You Don't Need the Whole Path

You don't need to see the entire path before you start leading, or before you start doing anything worth doing.

Go as far as you can currently see. The next step usually shows up only once you've actually arrived at where you can see it from.

4. STORY: ‘THE CAPTAIN WHO ASKED FIRST’

THE CAPTAIN WHO ASKED FIRST

Varney, the old captain of the school football team, had led the way most captains before him had. Loudest voice on the pitch. Final word on every decision. Respected because nobody dared argue with him.

When he graduated, the team was quietly relieved and quietly worried at the same time, unsure who would step into the role, or how.

The coach chose Jeremiah, a quiet defender who rarely raised his voice, which surprised most of the team, including Jeremiah himself.

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In his first practice as captain, Jeremiah did something none of the previous captains had done. Before setting the formation, he asked the team what they thought was going wrong with their defense.

The pitch went quiet, waiting for the trick, or the correction that usually followed a question like that from a captain.

It didn't come. Jeremiah actually listened, adjusted the drill based on what two defenders said, and only then explained his own read on the problem.

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A few players tested him early, the way teams test any new authority. One striker openly ignored an instruction during a match, expecting the old kind of confrontation.

Jeremiah didn't shout. He pulled the striker aside at halftime, asked him directly why he'd ignored the call, and actually listened to the answer, which turned out to be a genuine tactical disagreement, not disrespect.

They adjusted the plan together for the second half. It worked better than either version alone would have.

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By the end of the season, the team hadn't gotten louder under Jeremiah. It had gotten steadier. Players started bringing him problems before they became conflicts, not because they feared him, but because they trusted he'd actually hear them.

“You're a strange kind of captain,” one of the older players told him after the final match.

“Strange how?”

“You ask more than you tell.”

Jeremiah thought about that for a moment. “Seemed to work,” he said, and left it there.

5. ACTIVITY (10 minutes)

Materials: any paper, any pen or pencil.

1. Write down one place, however small, where you already lead, in your family, your class, your team, your church.

2. Write down whether you currently lead more through authority, or through care and clarity.

3. Write down one question you could ask, the way Jeremiah did, instead of an instruction you'd normally give.

4. Write down one next step you can see clearly right now, even if you can't see the whole path beyond it.

6. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who is a leader you respect, and what specifically earns that respect?

2. Where have you seen the old, authority-only model of leadership fail, or succeed?

3. What's the difference between care without clarity, and clarity without care?

4. What is one place you could start leading with a question instead of an instruction, this week?

7. FACILITATOR NOTES

Some students will not see themselves as leaders at all. Help them find informal leadership, an older sibling, a group project, a younger cousin who copies them.

Jeremiah's story deliberately contrasts with a louder, older model without condemning the older captain by name. Keep the same tone: evolution, not villainy.

If a Marshall Goldsmith reference or reading is available for this lesson, introduce it here as further reading rather than required content.

This lesson connects forward to the Mastermind concept in Lesson 19, where leadership becomes shared rather than singular.

8. BRIDGE TO LESSON 18

Before students leave, ask:

“If you found the thing you love, the thing you're good at, what the world needs, and what you can be recognized for, all overlapping in one place, what would you call that?”

Let them guess.

“We name it next time.”