

# Why Dr. John Townsend Says Not to Model Your Leadership Style After This Superhero

These days, superheroes are all the rage. And although he's not part of the Marvel series of comic-based movies, DC Comics' Superman remains a role model for many. But psychologist and bestselling author Dr. John Townsend says there's something about the mild-mannered reporter turned multifaceted hero that, especially as leaders, we shouldn't try to emulate.

"Anytime we talk about transparency, or, or we talk about authenticity, or we talk about vulnerability, that's what the next generation and further want because they're so tired of that perfect person who's not really perfect," Townsend told Dr. Steve Greene on an episode of the *Greenelines* podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network. "They're drawn to it. And what we found out is that [people want] leaders who are more vulnerable, who will say, 'I'm struggling, and I messed up here, and I'm going to learn from this,' as opposed to Superman.

"Nobody can relate to Superman. He comes from another planet," Townsend explained. "A leader who says, 'Yeah, I've got spots, too—people are drawn to that. And they did some studies that show that the employees are actually more loyal and walk over hot coals to the vulnerable leader.'"

In his recent book, *People Fuel: Fill Up Your Tank for Life, Love and Leadership*, Townsend discusses this and other qualities that will help leaders and others have positive relationships with others that move them into the lives God wants them to have. "You've got to do what the Bible says, in Ecclesiastes 4, 'Woe to you if you fall and there's not

another to lift you up,'" Townsend said. "In the Hebrew, that doesn't mean Jesus. That means another person; you've got to get what the book calls a life team. That's three to 10 people, not less than three, not more than 10, where they sit down with you and just have lunch, and you have your time to talk about what's going on in your challenges.

"And leaders are really uncomfortable with that at first because they feel selfish, and they want to be a giver, and they don't want to be high maintenance," Townsend said. "But I tell them, 'Your tank is not going to be full, and you have nothing to give somebody if nobody's filling your tank.'" This group can be local or spread across the country and connected via technology. For more of Townsend's insights on kingdom relationships for leaders and others, listen to the entire episode of *Greenelines* here. {eoa}