

Chapter 7

Hero Making

My fruit grows on other people's trees.
~Bob Buford

Who doesn't want to be the player who scores 30 points in a basketball game? The hero of the team?

Heroes are celebrated.

Down deep, we each long to live lives bigger than ourselves. We're naturally drawn to the superhero role, putting ourselves at the center of the story. When you watch a movie, my guess is you rarely see yourself in the shoes of the supporting cast.

Being a hero is a good thing. But being a hero maker is a great thing—a role that shifts my focus from addition to multiplication, and from “me” to “others.” The shift is counter-cultural. Ultimately, it's a shift that makes me much more like Jesus!

Behind every hero is at least one *hero maker*. We've already introduced this concept (HeroMaker is Exponential's 2018 theme), but in this chapter we're taking a deep dive into what it means to be a hero maker and how we start to shed our “hero” role and become hero makers.

From Hero to Hero Maker

True hero makers die to themselves and are willing to live in the shadows of others, faithfully embracing the role of supporting character. They don't seek to be the central figure in the main plot. Instead, their main plot is to faithfully make heroes who make heroes who make heroes. I think of Barnabas, the hero maker to Paul and others. The scales had barely fallen from Paul's eyes before Barnabas had taken him to the apostles and vouched for him. Later, he took Paul to the Antioch church, ultimately setting

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him up for planting churches that would advance the cross and change the world. Barnabas shifted from hero to becoming the mentor who creates heroes that ultimately become mentors (for example, Paul to Timothy).

Hero makers have a pattern of continually investing in others to help them be all Jesus intends for them. As my mentor and friend Bob Buford says, “I want to be a cheerleader who gives permission, encouragement, and accountability to release the potential in others.”

Of course, Jesus is the ultimate hero maker. Throughout the Gospels, we see hero making consistently lived out in Jesus’ life and ministry. His death on the cross was heroic. He stretched out His arms and said, “Not my will, but yours be done” (Luke 22:42). He invested in us, through His death, so that the best of what God intended for us could be redeemed and made whole.

But Jesus didn’t stop there. He made heroes out of his closest followers. Jesus was pretty explicit about His desire to equip His followers to do the heroic: “Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even *greater things* than these because I am going to the Father” (John 14:12, emphasis added). Jesus told the disciples that He was setting them up so that they could reach *more* people, go to *more* places, write a book we call the Bible, and make *more* disciples than He *ever* would during His three years of earthly ministry.

You can’t study Jesus’ ministry practices without seeing Him as a hero maker, someone who puts the spotlight on others, who in turn do likewise for others. He modeled it in how He lived, calling us to be hero-making Level 5 Multipliers.

While Level 5 leadership requires that we embrace the right personal scorecard and deal with our misplaced personal motives, we can’t stop there. God doesn’t want us becoming mired in our internal tensions. Instead, we need to move forward and be

intentional about practices that will move us from Levels 1-4 to Level 5 leadership.

Level 5 leadership requires that we become hero makers. The personal scorecards of hero makers are measured not by what *they* do, but rather by how they release the potential in others. How can we move from being addition heroes of our story to multiplication HeroMakers for God's glory?

Becoming HeroMakers: 5 Essential Practices

Our 2018 theme book, *Hero Maker: 5 Essential Practices for Leaders to Multiply Leaders* by Dave Ferguson and Warren Bird (Zondervan – available early 2018) takes an in-depth look at what it means to make the shift from being a leader who's focused on "their thing" to a leader who multiplies and empowers others to go out and do "God's thing."

As Dave and Warren sat out to define what a hero maker is, they identified five essential practices we see in the life and ministry of Jesus and in the leadership of every contemporary hero maker. While a hero maker will use these five practices in developing an apprentice, they are also leadership values that will continually show up as leadership values in everything hero makers do.

The following is a preview of the 5 shifts in practice from our 2018 theme HeroMaker:

HeroMaking Practice 1: Multiplication Thinking

The first HeroMaking practice is a shift to multiplication thinking—a shift in *thinking*. You move from thinking the best way to maximize ministry is through your own efforts to understanding that it actually happens through developing the leadership of others. We see this in the life of Jesus in Acts 1:8 when He casts a vision for taking the gospel to the ends of the earth and explains to His followers that He's going to do it through them: "... and you will be my witnesses." Jesus didn't think the mission would happen just through Him during His time on this earth; He knew it would happen through others who

would equip others who would equip still others. Jesus practiced multiplication thinking.

HeroMaking Practice 2: Permission Giving

The second HeroMaking practice is permission giving—a shift in *seeing*. You take the focus off your leadership and begin to see the leadership potential in the people all around you. Looking for and identifying leadership potential in the people around you will cause you to begin to lead with a bias to “yes” and give them permission to fully engage in the mission. We see this in the life of Jesus when He says to a group of rag-tag working class fellows, “Come follow Me.” They never expected a rabbi to see them as worthy of teaching and leading. But Jesus saw in them a group that could change the world. He not only gave them permission; He also told them they could change the world!

HeroMaking Practice 3: Disciple Multiplying

The third HeroMaking practice is disciple multiplying—a shift in *sharing*. You begin to share not just what you know to help others follow Jesus, but to also share your life and invest in the development of leaders who do the same for other leaders. We see this in the life of Jesus as He spent three years with primarily twelve people. The way Jesus did apprenticeship is best explained by the *koine* Greek word *diatribo* meaning, “to spend time with.” Jesus spent time with the twelve and shared His life with them, and they, in turn, multiplied themselves into a movement of Jesus followers.

HeroMaking Practice 4: Gift Activating

The fourth HeroMaking practice is gift activating—a shift in *blessing*. Not only do you ask God to bless the gifts He has given you, but you also ask God to bless the leaders you have developed and send out at the end of their apprenticeship. The most obvious example of this is in Matthew 28. Jesus turns over the leadership of the movement to His closest followers and tells them, in effect, “I have all authority, and will work through you as you go!” Jesus activated their leadership gifts by giving them His blessing to “go.”

HeroMaking Practice 5: Kingdom Building

The last and fifth HeroMaking practice is Kingdom building—a shift in *counting*. You are no longer only concerned with who’s showing up at *your* thing; you also count who’s doing God’s thing! Jesus told His followers in simple terms, “Seek first the Kingdom of God.” They followed this admonition, and all that mattered was that God was keeping track of how the Jesus mission was being advanced around the world.

By this point, do you see the huge difference between being a hero and a hero *maker*? The following comparison chart from the authors of *Hero Maker* helps you understand the dramatic contrast:

Practice	Heroic Leadership	HeroMaking Leadership
Multiplication Thinker	I think ministry happens through my own leadership.	I think ministry happens through multiplied leaders.
Permission Giver	I see what God can do through my own leadership.	I see what God can do through others, and I let them know what I see in them.
Disciple Multipliers	I share what I’ve learned in ways that grow followers.	I share what I’ve learned in ways that multiply disciples.
Gift Activator	I ask God to bless the use of my own gifts.	I ask God to bless leaders I’m sending out.
Kingdom Builder	I count people who show up to “my thing.”	I count leaders who go out and do “God’s thing.” ¹

Multipliers: Leading Beyond Addition

Multipliers are hero makers. When you shift from being simply the hero of your church to helping others become the heroes, you provide the future mentors your church will need on the journey toward Level 5 multiplication. Level 5 Multiplier Ralph Moore is the first to say that multiplication lives and dies on leaders who are willing to pass the baton and empower others to lead.

If you focus on being a hero, you may do some great things on this side of eternity. However, if you focus on becoming a hero maker, you'll see great things happen through the people you invest in and the people they invest in and so on. That's Hero-Making. It's this kind of leadership that will move the needle on church multiplication.

Multipliers are heroes because they aggressively seek to make heroes of others. They've shifted their scorecard from being a hero to becoming a hero maker. They're moving from being a point scorer, to being the very best assist maker they can be.

Over the next few chapters, we'll look at what it takes to lead and manage multiplication as a hero maker.

Putting It into Practice

- *The shift from hero to hero maker starts in the heart of the leader. Why is this internal shift important in multiplication, and what does it look like for you, practically?*
- *What specific practices must you do to implement this hero shift in your leadership?*
- *If you exclusively focused on making this hero-making shift (and no other major initiatives), what actions would you need to take?*
- *What are the benefits and the consequences of full-time paid staff being the "heroes" rather than "hero makers?" How does this impact your church's ability to move to Level 5 multiplication?*

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- *Can you identify potential hero-makers in your church? Who are they? Are you releasing them for multiplication or retaining them to grow your church?*

Exponential Tools for Becoming Multipliers

Hero Maker: 5 Essential Practices for Leaders to Multiply

Leaders by Dave Ferguson and Warren Bird (Zondervan).

Exponential's 2018 anchor book takes an in-depth look at what it means to be a hero maker and explores five essential practices for making the shift from being a leader who's focused on "their thing" to a leader who multiplies and empowers others to go out and do "God's thing."

HeroMaker assessment This free online assessment takes 20 minutes to complete and gives immediate results to help you gauge your effectiveness at becoming a Level 5 HeroMaker. The results give you a solid indication of the scorecard you've embraced and the gap between where you are and becoming a Level 5 Multiplier. Use the assessment with all your leaders as part of your leadership development process.