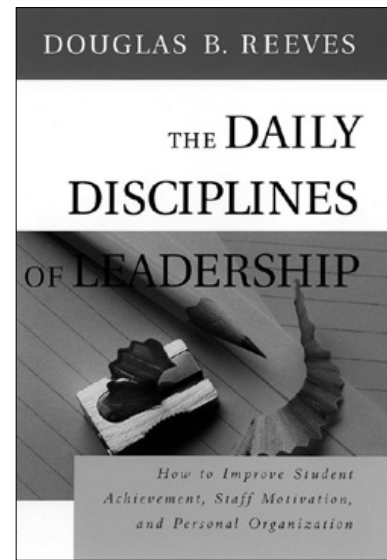


Study Guide for:

The Daily Disciplines of Leadership

How to Improve Student Achievement,
Staff Motivation, and Personal
Organization

Douglas B. Reeves



Suggestions for effective book studies:

1. Set the dates with specified readings well in advance.
2. Ensure that participants have a personal copy of the book.
3. Provide the book study guide before starting to read the book.
4. Select a location that allows for the participants to be able to spread out books and writing materials.
5. Provide a comfortable meeting place with plenty of light.
6. Beverages and snacks are always welcome.
7. The role of the facilitator is to ask open-ended questions and stimulate discussion, not to lecture. Consider changing the role of facilitator and being very clear about norms for participants and facilitators.

Advanced Learning Press provides study guides to complement your comprehensive professional development plan. These guides represent the author's suggested questions and activities to lead to full comprehension and implementation of the ideas in the publication. Focused group discussion leads to individual reflection as well as having the group develop common understandings and language regarding the book's content. For additional insights or questions, please email the author at info@MakingStandardsWork.com. You will receive a response within two business days.

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Chapter 1: Students Are Not Customers

1. Describe the bad news, worse news, and less obvious good news about leadership. List the truly successful leaders with whom you are familiar. What attributes do those leaders share?
 2. Construct a comparison matrix (refer to *The Handbook for Classroom Instruction That Works* by Marzano, et al., for excellent examples) to analyze the similarities and differences between customers and students. How do those distinctions impact educators and educational leaders?
 3. The most successful business and educational leaders understand that accountability is more than a mere recitation of numbers. How do these thriving leaders go beyond the numbers? Reflect on a particularly successful moment in your own educational practice and describe “the rest of the story” behind the numbers.
 4. Examine the definitions of leadership provided in this chapter. Using those criteria and your own beliefs, construct your definition of leadership on the back of a business card. Exchange your definition with colleagues and create a collective definition of leadership on the back of another business card.
 5. Envision yourself as the “leader as architect.” Describe what your actions would look like as you work to meet each of the three implications of that definition of leadership. How does that work help you build the connections necessary for enduring improvement?
 6. How does a focus on the antecedents of excellence foster a culture of continuous improvement? How do leaders discover those antecedents?
 7. Define the equity imperative. Analyze the results of your school or district. Do you face equity issues? Describe any equity issues in detail.
 8. What are your values and principles? Why is it important to define those values explicitly?
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Chapter 2: The Leadership Dilemma

1. Why is change so difficult? How do effective leaders support change? Reflect on a time of positive change in your own career. What factors made that change successful? What were the rewards of inertia and the rewards of pain in that situation?
2. How can a consideration of the “wiifm’s” (what’s in it for me) of all parties aid leaders striving to create change? How do the “wiifm’s” fit the human equation described in this section?
3. Does every student in a classroom need the same instruction and support? Does every individual in an organization need the same treatment? Delineate the difference between equity and equality. Is there a situation in your school or district where treating students equally is less effective than meeting the needs of the individual?
4. How can an acceptance of the human equation be consistent with values and principles? Consider a potential change facing your school or district. Describe the rewards of that change in a manner that outweighs the pain associated with the change as well as the rewards of complacency.
5. Why is it critical for leaders to consider the implications of change from other perspectives? How can a leader help constituents overcome their objections?
6. Analyze your school or district as a system. Describe the elements of the system that have changed in the last several years and those elements that have remained constant. Use this analysis to refute the argument that “things have worked just fine around here for years.”
7. Every teacher and leader has discussed the need for teacher “buy-in” before change can be implemented. What are the implications of focusing on popularity for successful change? List some of the previous reforms implemented in your school or district and the impact of a quixotic quest for “buy-in.” What should govern educational policy? Why?
8. How does an effective leader create change without consensus?
9. Analyze the systemic relationships that exist in your district. How could those relationships contribute to an organizational resistance to change?

10. Consider some cases of individual resistance to change. Evaluate that resistance using the hypothesis-testing model. What hypothesis did the resistant individual present? How could that hypothesis have been tested? What possible emotional causes were there for that individual resistance?
11. Why should you take time to celebrate and support change champions? Examine your school or previous experience. Do you know of any change champions? How could you support their efforts more directly?
12. Consider some of the goals of change for your school or district. What would the successful accomplishment of those goals look like? Describe the small wins on the way to achieving those goals. How could you celebrate those small wins?
13. Describe a data-friendly school. Compare that school to your own or one that you know. What specific actions could you take in your school to foster a data-friendly atmosphere?
14. Elaborate on the pebble in the pond metaphor. Think about a particularly effective classroom teacher and describe the multidirectional impact of her performance.
15. Think about the last ten minutes of your day. Name a person on your staff with whom you would choose to spend the last ten minutes of your day. What might that conversation sound like?

Chapter 3: The Leadership and Learning Matrix

1. Consider the Leadership and Learning Matrix (L^2) in Figure 3.1. Classify yourself using the matrix as well as other leaders that you know both in education and other fields. Justify your classifications with specific descriptors of leadership actions taken by those individuals.
2. What are the differences between the lucky leader and the learning leader? How does one become a learning leader?
3. Why is it important to search for leaders who occupy the right-hand side of the L^2 Matrix?

4. Three of the continuums described in the matrix have the potential to lead to failure. What are the critical differences between the resilience continuum and the other three? What essential characteristics must the resilient leader possess?
 5. Use forms A.1 through A.7 in Appendix A to conduct a self-assessment of your leadership aligned with the L² Matrix. Can you identify specific links between professional practices and student achievement? If so, describe those practices and actions you could take to broaden their use. If not, what information is needed in order to complete your self-assessment?
 6. Describe the three types of relationships between cause and effect variables to a member of your staff who despises statistics. Explain the possible cause for a lack of relationship between cause and effect variables. Describe the difference between causation and correlation.
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Chapter 4: Leadership Matters

1. Why is it important for leaders to distinguish between the two in-boxes on their desks? Describe some of the items in your in-box and sort them into the “no-influence” and “some-influence” boxes.
2. How does acknowledging that leaders can only influence behavior help you do your job better? How does this realization make leaders more effective? Consider some of the issues facing your school or district and the coexisting attitudes. What specific behaviors could you model and influence in order to modify those attitudes?
3. How does a leader’s focus on effective student feedback influence student achievement and teacher practice? Refer to the following resources to craft a rationale for your focus on effective feedback for students.
 - a. *Classroom Instruction That Works*, Marzano, Pickering, and Pollack
 - b. *Accountability for Learning*, Reeves
 - c. *Accountability in Action*, Reeves
 - d. “Classroom Assessment for Learning,” Chappuis and Stiggins, *Educational Leadership*, Sept 2002
4. Proactive and effective communication between leaders and parents is crucial. Create a draft parent letter describing your academic expectations using the guidelines provided in this section.

5. Why should leaders evaluate teacher professional practice according to the response to the question, “What does a student have to know and be able to do to succeed in your classroom?” How does asking this question create opportunities for collaboration?
 6. What are the consequences of failing to provide standards-based leadership? What are the risks of providing leadership in this area?
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Chapter 5: Initiative Fatigue

1. Describe the Law of Initiative Fatigue and its two corollaries. Is it in effect in your district? List the initiatives currently in effect in your district.
 2. How do strategic leaders avoid the Law of Initiative Fatigue? Review your list of initiatives from the previous question. Which of those initiatives are weeds and which are flowers? Compare your answers to those of several colleagues. Which of those initiatives have specific expiration dates and established times for evaluation? How does the number of initiatives relate to the tendency of teachers to say, “This too shall pass”?
 3. What is the functional difference between leaders and managers as defined by Kotter? What implications does this difference have for educational leaders?
 4. Define the relationship between unitary and strategic leaders. Can one function without the other? Which type of leader has a more enduring impact on a system? Why?
 5. Why do strategic leaders depend on values where unitary leaders depend on policies and procedures? Why is it important for strategic leaders to not only articulate values but to eliminate obstacles that prevent those values from becoming action? How can values be subjected to an evidentiary test?
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Chapter 6: Saving Strategic Planning from Strategic Plans

1. Why is it just as important for strategic leaders to choose what not to do as what to do?

2. Review your existing strategic plan. How many goals does your plan have? How many specific actions are listed? Does your plan meet the definition of strategic planning provided by the Internet Nonprofit Center on page 103? Do the actions listed in your plan meet the definition of strategy provided? Why or why not? If they do not, how could you revise the actions to meet the definition?
3. What is the mission of your school or district? How many ideas, concepts, and instances of jargon are included? Does that statement reflect divergence or convergence? Justify your answer with specific evidence from your mission statement?
4. Does your current mission statement meet the criteria provided on pages 108 through 111? How could it be improved using the criteria described?
5. Does a comprehensive reform model consist of a collection of strategies (as defined in this chapter) or can a strategy consist of a reform model? How does the statement that life is multivariate impact the implementation of any strategy or plan?
6. What is one example of a strategy, as defined in this chapter, that has been used in your district or school? Was that strategy effective or not? How did it relate to your mission, information, and results? If effective, what specifically occurred to make the strategy successful? If the strategy failed, what specifically contributed to the lack of results?

Chapter 7: Strategic Leadership in Action

1. “Confession of error is the price of improvement.” Why? What are the dangers inherent in a transparent system in which errors are freely admitted? What are the dangers inherent in a system in which mistakes “do not happen”?
2. Review your calendar for the last two weeks, or make a detailed record of your time for the next two weeks. What are your priorities as evidenced by your calendar? How could you reallocate your time to more closely align with your actual priorities?
3. What are your short-term objectives? What are your long-term objectives? Classify those objectives into the following categories: “directly related to my mission,” “not related to my mission,” and “in need of modification.” Are there any implications for your time allocation after this review?

4. Does each of your objectives require that specific actions be accomplished? Create a standard of action checklist for your objectives.
5. Do you have a clear picture of what success looks like for each of your objectives? Describe success for each objective on a continuum that clearly articulates not only your expectations but also the manner in which the objectives can be accomplished.
6. What variables are clearly linked to the strategies necessary for meeting your objectives? How could you regularly measure those variables? Why is the creation of these indicators vital to successful strategic leadership?
7. How is feedback different from a mere transmission of information? Why is that difference important for strategic leaders?
8. Many successful leaders are described on pages 129 through 132. Analyze each vignette and create a synthesis of their characteristics.
9. How does the use of a leadership journal contribute to strategic leadership? Create a journal entry for today.

Chapter 8: The Daily Disciplines of Leadership

1. Why is the identification of things that are within your control a leadership discipline? Review your recent calendar. How much time have you devoted to items that are outside your direct control or influence?
2. Compare the components of an effective time management system as described in this chapter to your own. Are all of the elements of an effective system present in yours? What modifications or additions do you need to make?
3. Evaluate your current “A” priority list. What percentage of that “A” list is devoted to student achievement?

Chapter 9: Accountability

1. A senior and respected faculty member has approached you about the new accountability system similar to the one in this chapter that the district has adopted. He expresses his concerns that the new system will be used as a “gotcha” mechanism tied to state test scores. How would you summarize a holistic accountability system for him?
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Chapter 10: Building the Next Generation of Leaders

1. How many leaders in your district are nearing retirement? How do you identify potential leaders to fill those future positions? What knowledge and skills do school leaders need to possess to be successful in your district?
 2. Does your district currently have a comprehensive professional development curriculum for leaders? Classify the professional development offerings according to their focus into the following categories: people, strategies, organizations, and systems. Are those courses and training opportunities effective in facilitating the development of necessary skills in personnel management, strategic planning, and data analysis? What training opportunities need to be added or modified?
 3. How many discussions have you had in the last six months with employees about their progress, development, and future? How many potential leaders do you know currently? What actions are you taking to support their growth and provide them with the essential skills and knowledge for successful leadership?
 4. This chapter recommends the development of a leadership pool that consists of people with complementary strengths. This requires that all leaders in the pool have an understanding of their own limitations. Describe the conditions that would need to exist in a district for such a leadership pool to be successful. Do those conditions currently exist in your district? What actions could you take to support such an environment?
 5. Consider a future scheduled meeting. Redesign that meeting using the guiding questions on page 171 and provide details of the newly planned meeting.
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Chapter 11: The Enduring Values of the Leader

1. Why is it so important to identify your enduring values? How do these values help the strategic leader?
2. What is your credo? What values do you hold so dear that they influence your daily decision making?

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- *101 Questions & Answers about Standards, Assessment, and Accountability*
- *101 More Questions & Answers about Standards, Assessment, and Accountability*
- *Accountability for Learning: How Teachers and School Leaders Can Take Charge*
- *Accountability in Action: A Blueprint for Learning Organizations*

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