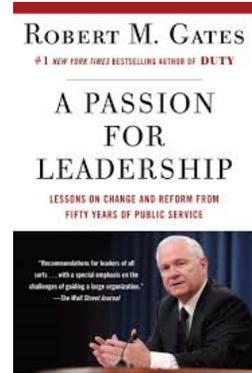




Read2Lead Module

A Passion for Leadership: Lessons on Change and Reform from Fifty Years of Public Service

by Robert M. Gates



Book Summary from Google Books: From the former secretary of defense and author of the acclaimed #1 best-selling memoir *Duty*, a characteristically direct, informed, and urgent assessment of why big institutions are failing us and how smart, committed leadership can affect real improvement regardless of scale.

Across the realms of civic and private enterprise alike, bureaucracies vitally impact our security, freedoms, and everyday life. With so much at stake, competence, efficiency, and fiscal prudence are essential, yet Americans know these institutions fall short. Many despair that they are too big and too hard to reform.

Robert Gates disagrees. Having led change successfully at three monumental organizations—the CIA, Texas A&M University, and the Department of Defense—he offers us the ultimate insider’s look at how major bureaus, organizations, and companies can be transformed, which is by turns heartening and inspiring and always instructive.

With practical, nuanced advice on tailoring reform to the operative culture (we see how Gates worked within the system to increase diversity at Texas A&M); effecting change within committees; engaging the power of compromise (“In the real world of bureaucratic institutions, you almost never get all you want when you want it”); and listening and responding to your team, Gates brings the full weight of his wisdom, candor, and devotion to civic duty to inspire others to lead desperately needed change.

What is Read2Lead?

Read2Lead is a series of book studies published by the Center for Junior Officers, a small Army research center dedicated to empowering junior officers to develop themselves and their teams. Read2Lead modules give junior officers a ready-to-use product that they can integrate into leader professional development programs.

What's in this module?

Every Read2Lead module contains:

- A short summary of the book that you can circulate to prime people for reading
- Advice for running your Read2Lead session
- A series of questions that can be used in multiple sessions, with options for using the questions over different lengths of time
- Additional resources that may be helpful for the facilitator

What do I need to provide to run a Read2Lead program?

First, the time. Read2Lead sessions work best when they're done over multiple sessions, so participants can digest books in small "chunks" instead of trying to cram them in all at once. Make sure you give your participants enough time to read the book and not fake the funk.

Second, the books. Books can be purchased with a government purchase card if they remain in the hands of the unit. Buying books for a Read2Lead session can be a great kickstarter for a battalion or even brigade library. You can also provide the books to Soldiers with the expectation that they pass them along to another Soldier when they are done with them. If you choose this approach, you should ensure you mark the books appropriately per the purchasing regulations and legal guidance of your organization.

Third, the space. Read2Lead sessions should be conducted in spaces where everyone can hear and see one another. Be creative: maybe you do them as hip-pocket training on a range, or at the end of motor stables. Or as a brownbag lunch in a barracks dayroom.

When you run the actual session, think of it as a time for your Soldiers to think outside the box, discuss something beyond the day-to-day concerns of the unit, and improve their communication skills. The questions provided on the subsequent pages are a starting point, but feel free to add or substitute your own to make the session more meaningful for your Soldiers.

A Passion for Leadership Five Week Program Questions

Five weeks is the optimal timing for this book. It minimizes the number of pages Soldiers have to read every week and breaks the book into meaningful chunks.

Strategic View

Week 1: Chapters 1-3 (59 pages)

- What bureaucracy are you a part of do you maintain the most sympathy for?
- What figures of history or recent national administration demonstrated a positive or beneficial legacy? How would you emulate them?
- When have you implemented or been a part of transformational organizational change? What factors led to the change?

Techniques for Change

Week 2: Chapters 4 (36 pages)

- Gates' techniques are not novel; what ones have you implemented or seen implemented? How well did they work?
- How often do you try to implement change? How long does it take to see progress?

People

Week 3: Chapter 5 (34 pages)

- Do you feel your organization possesses candor?
- Is your organization accountable?

Factors Outside an Organization

Week 4: Chapters 6-7 (55 pages)

- What lessons from Chapter 6 apply to your current job? Would you consider some of Gates' advice applicable to staff? Who are the stakeholders in your organization?
- What efforts does your organization make to encourage or elicit feedback? Who or what do you utilize for feedback or provide feedback?

Money and Mirrors

Week 5: Chapters 8-10 (45 pages)

- "Nothing focuses a mind like a hanging." Is your organization constricting or growing in regards to resources? Have you been influenced by resource cutting before?

- “Like the legendary captain of the ghost ship *The Flying Dutchman*, the reformer never makes port.” What do you think of this quote by Gates?

A Passion for Leadership Two Week Program Questions

If you are strapped for time, two weeks is the minimum recommended time to read this book. Timing and questions for that approach are listed below.

Strategic and Organizational View

Week 1: Chapters 1-5 (127 pages)

- What bureaucracy are you a part of or do you maintain the most sympathy for?
- When have you implemented or been a part of transformational organizational change? What factors led to the change?
- Gates’ techniques are not novel; what ones have you implemented or seen implemented? How well did they work?
- Do you feel your organization possesses candor? Is your organization accountable?

Factors Outside an Organization; Money and Mirrors

Week 2: Chapters 6-10 (100 pages)

- What efforts does your organization make to encourage or elicit feedback? Who or what do you utilize for feedback or provide feedback?
- “Nothing focuses a mind like a hanging.” Is your organization constricting or growing in regards to resources? Have you been influenced by resource cutting before?
- “Like the legendary captain of the ghost ship *The Flying Dutchman*, the reformer never makes port.” What do you think of this quote by Gates?