# The Daily Disciplines of Leadership
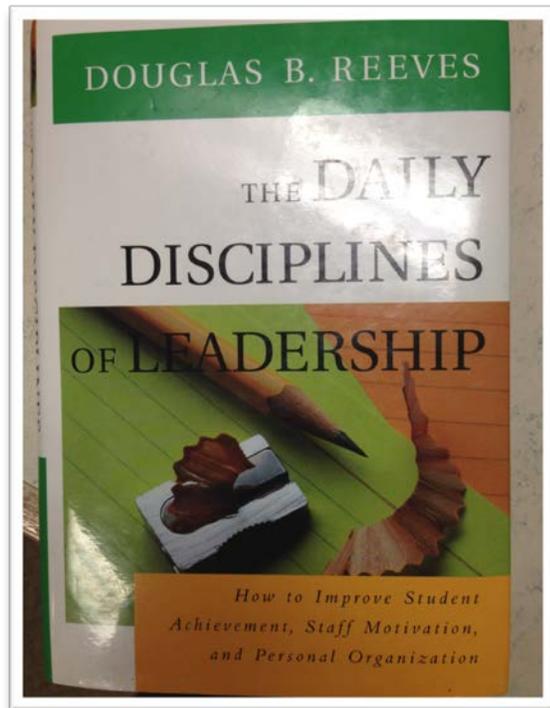
*How to Improve Student Achievement, Staff Motivation, and Personal Organization*

## Contents

# The Book Introduction

This book is a comprehensive and down-to-earth manual for school leaders that addresses the daunting challenges that today's principals, superintendents, and teacher-leaders face on a daily basis. The book shows five critical insights that every senior leader and policy maker must have. Firstly, how to create change even if there is initially no consensus in favor of change. Second, how to create a leadership profile of yourself, using the Leadership and Learning Matrix. Third, how to master management of your most valuable resource and your own time. Fourth, create a new accountability system that goes far beyond the traditional litany of test scores. Finally, to identify the next generation of leaders and begin the mentoring process immediately.

# The Author-Douglas B. Reeves

Douglas B. Reeves, PhD, is author of 30 books and many articles on leadership and organizational effectiveness. Dr. Reeves has twice been named to the Harvard University Distinguished Authors Series. He was named the Brock International Laureate for his contributions to education and also received the Distinguished Service Award from the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the Parents Choice Award for his writing for children and parents. He is the 2010 recipient of the National Staff Development Council's Contribution to the Field Award.

# The Leadership Dilemma: Building Consensus or Creating Change

*The learning leader does not create meaningful change by attempting to orchestrate a marching band, but by casting some pebbles into the pond.*

## Change is essential

We approach leadership from the perspective of standards, then every educational organization in the world must acknowledge the need for improvement as there is not a single one that produces completely exemplary results. Moreover, because the very nature of an organization is that the people involved in it are lifelong learners, there is always a distance between our achievement today and our potential tomorrow.

## Understand the sources of individual and organizational resistance

Resistance to change implies that there is a choice between changing and not changing. In fact, the system changes every day as students, communities, the economy, the culture, and the world all make changes, some of which are incremental and some of which are violent and dramatic.

When an organization must change-and every organization must change at one time or another-then its leaders must be guided by vision and principles, but they must also manage the tasks at hand.

Individual resistance to change may stem from several causes, notably disbelief in the effectiveness of the proposed change, or a set of personal experiences that make the proposed changes appear unwise, or a fear of personal impact. Each cause of the individual resistance can be dealt with respectfully and effectively if it is accurately identified.

## Create a Data-Friendly Environment

A data-friendly school uses numbers not as a weapon but as a guide. The data-friendly leader uses a measurement not only to suggest how children can improve their performance but more important how the adults in the system can improve their leadership, teaching, and curriculum strategies.

## Pebble in a Pond: an Alternative vision of Change

It is far more likely that change occurs like a pebble in a pond. The first pebble cast into the water makes a few skips, and then settles into the pond with a few skips, and then settles into the pond with a few ripples around it. The second pebble lands in a slightly different place, making some additional ripples. Some of the ripples of the second pebble intersect with those of the first pebble, while other ripples enter new territory of the pond. But before too many pebbles have been cast into the pond, the number of ripples is incalculable.

# The Leadership and Learning Matrix



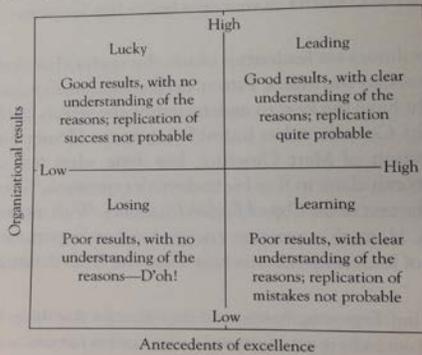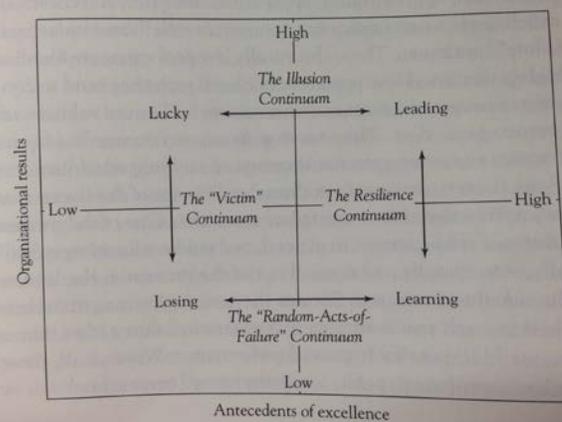Figure 3.1. The Leadership and Learning (L²) Matrix



Figure 3.2. The Leadership and Learning Matrix Continua

The matrix is a map for a journey that can be either circuitous and futile or clear and fruitful. The central lesson of the matrix is that we must avoid the search for the perfect leader and focus instead on the search for the leader who consistently occupies the right side of the matrix, the continuum between learning and leadership.

To gain value from the leadership and learning matrix, we must not only label the quadrants but also consider the continua that connect them. This continuum offers neither perfection nor platitudes, but resilience. Systematic learning from both success and failure is essential for the resilient leader.

*Every failure is an investment in learning, provided that the underlying causes are rigorously examined, understood, and applied to future decision making.- Douglas B. Reeves*

*The resilient leader is sustained not by easy victory but by the challenges associated with linking her efforts and those of her colleagues to improved results. .-Douglas B. Reeves*

## *Apply the L² Matrix to your own Leadership Decisions*

*Step one: Identify measures of student achievement.*

*Step two: Define specific measures of teaching practice, leadership, or curriculum.*

*Step three: Create ordered pairs using the information in step two, and plot the ordered pairs on a graph.*

*Step four: Determine the relationship between the cause and effect variables.*

*Step five: Plot the relationship between cause and effect along with the student achievement on your*

       *Personal Leadership and Learning Matrix.*

# Saving Strategic Planning from Strategic Plans



*Strategy does have value, but only when it is the work of senior leadership. The leader who regards himself as a big-picture thinker delegating the details to someone with appropriate technical skills is missing an opportunity if he does not take personal responsibility for development, consideration, and acceptance or rejection of strategy.*



*Strategy is a decision and it is as good or as bad as the mission and information to which it is linked.*

*Strategic leadership involves the acts of many team members who not only execute plans well but have the organizational and emotional support necessary to challenge one another and themselves as they evaluate and reformulate their strategies.*

**Effective Strategy without a strategic Plan**

Reeves suggested that so many of the activities and documents that bear the label "strategic" are not really helpful. He further pointed that although there were many types of strategic planning model, including those facilitated externally by experts and those created internally by the staff of a school system, all the plans he had examined had one characteristic in common: they are very, very large.

**Criteria for an Effective Mission Statement**

A mission statement has the potential to help an organization gain focus and clarity. Moreover, an effective mission statement allows every person involved with an organization to understand what it is about and makes conscious decision.

1. **The Value of Brevity**. An effective mission statement shares two criteria: it is brief and it is passionate.

2. **The Essence of Passion**. Second, an effective mission statement is compelling. It engages the emotions of people.

# The Daily Disciplines



**Discipline One: Define Objectives on the Basis of the Mission.**

The mission of the organization must be brief and passionate, displaying the very reason for its existence. The objectives must be established by the leader, who engages every element of the organization to focus on those objectives that support the mission.

**Discipline Two: Create Standards of Action.**

A standard of action is a requirement. Creating standards of action sets up a binary evaluation system allowing the leader to answer yes or no to the question of whether the action standard is achieved.

**Discipline Three: Develop an Assessment Tool.**

For each objective, the leader must know in advance what success looks like. An assessment tool creates a vision of success for a specific organizational activity.

**Discipline Four: Implement an Accountability System.**

The strategic leader focuses on causes as well as effects and thus uses accountability as a daily guide to improved student achievement and leadership decision making. In the context of the daily disciplines of the strategic leader accountability simply means identifying and focusing on just a few variables that are clearly linked to the most important strategies of the organization.

**Discipline Five: Provide Continuous Feedback.**

Inextricably linked to constructive use of accountability is provision of feedback that is timely, accurate, and meaningful. By linking accountability measurements to feedback, the strategic leader can demonstrate the link between strategies, information, and decisions. Feedback is not about transmission of information. It is about using that information to change us.

# Accountability
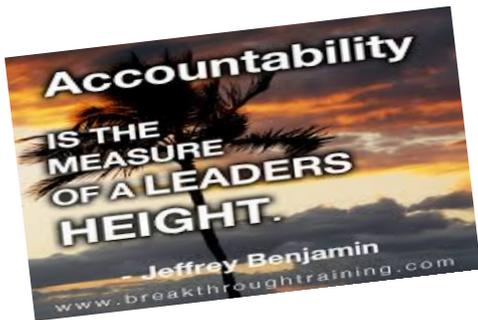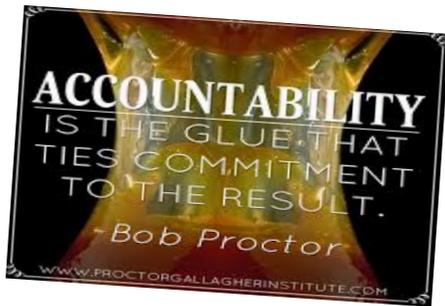








An accountability system that contains only test score is inherently insufficient. An effective accountability system must integrate the principles of the Leadership and Learning Matrix.

Reeves suggests that a holistic accountability system includes three distinct tiers of data analysis.

The first tier includes systemwide indicators-test scores, attendance, dropout rate, safety, and other matters that apply to every school throughout the system, state, or district.

The second tier of accountability indicators includes six to ten school-based indicators, measuring strategies that are uniquely suited to the needs of that school and the students it serves.

The third tier of a holistic accountability system explores the connection between the first two tiers of data using a school narrative.

*Whether or not your state or district embraces the principles of holistic accountability, each individual school leader has the opportunity to make accountability a constructive force for improving student achievement rather than an aimless exercise in reciting scores.-Reeves Douglas B.*

# Building the Next Generation of Leaders



### Identify Prospective Leaders

Most school systems are far better served by identifying and developing leaders from among their own colleagues than by hiring from other systems.

Moreover, schools must create a low-risk way for a prospective leader to pursue an internship, gain leadership experience, and confront the possibility that the path of leadership does not suit the person.

In addition to developing prospective leaders among the teaching ranks, a school system should also identity leaders from a growing number of second-career educators, notably those with military, business, and nonprofit organization experience.

### Create an Educational Leadership University

Another way to expand the pool of leadership candidates is to completely transform professional development for leaders. The school system could become a center of leadership training, providing skills in personnel management, strategic planning, and data analysis that are needed by the leader.

### Identifying the Next Generation of Leaders

To identify the next generation of leaders, we must cast a wide net, finding people who display potential for organizational leadership and for instructional leadership. The essential strategy must be identifying not a single pool of ideal leaders but rather a pool of leaders with complementary strength.

### Create Synergy by Blending Leadership, Learning and Teaching

The synergy between leadership and learning is so powerful, so important, that it cannot be overlooked. Developing a new generation of leaders demands that our best teachers lead and that our best leaders teach.

To develop the next generation of school leaders, you must create a wider pool of applicants and take personal responsibility for training that pool.

# Critical Analysis

First of all, this guide is helpful for me to know how the education leaders can meet the daily challenges of school leadership. Although the book seems to be intended to write for the senior leaders in the school, there are still many good things to learn. The book focus on five important areas for senior leaders (1) how to create change even if there is initially no consensus in favor of change; (2) how to create a leadership profile, using the Leadership and Learning matrix, that allows leaders to analyze decisions and focus energies; (3) how to manage time; (4) how to create a new accountability system that goes beyond the traditional dependence on tests scores; and (5) how to identify the next generation of educational leaders and to begin the mentoring process. Secondly, Reeves used lots of figures, graphs and charts to illustrate important points. He also used his own research results to support his ideas and opinions, which can make people easily believe his sayings. However, some charts are difficult to understand. Thirdly, in the Appendix, Reeves provides some leadership checklist, worksheets, matrices and forms, which are very useful to help the school leader's day-to-day management.

In Summary, this is a well-written book with logical arguments, real research data and coherent thought processes. The connections among the sections are logical. Moreover, the real stories and the research results are interesting to read. However, if the author could use some easier charts to illustrate some concepts, it would be easier for the reader to understand.