

Leadership Book Report

Lincoln On Leadership, Donald Phillips



“It is easier to do a job right than to explain why you didn’t.”

— Martin Van Buren

“No person was ever honored for what he received. Honor has been the reward for what he gave.”

— Calvin Coolidge

“The harder the conflict, the greater the triumph.”

— George Washington



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Lincoln On Leadership Summary

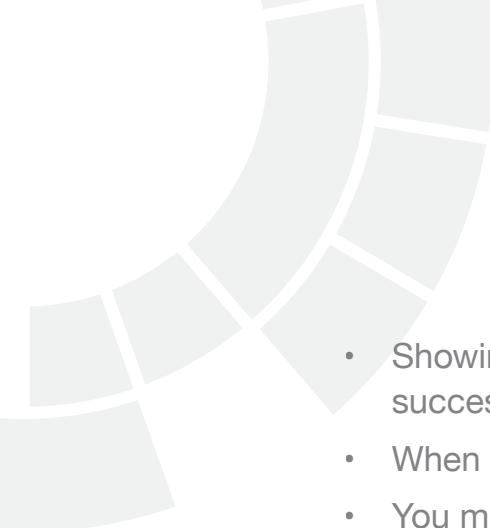
Add *Lincoln On Leadership* by Donald T. Phillips to your book club study list. It is filled with wonderful leadership insights applicable to today's challenging work environment. The following outline summarizes key highlights from the book.

Get Out of the Office and Circulate Among the Troops

- Explain yourself in writing and offer advice on how to solve problems.
- It is important that the people know you come among them without fear.
- Seek casual contact with your subordinates. It is as meaningful as a formal gathering, if not more so.
- Don't often decline to see people who call on you.
- Take public opinion baths.
- Be the very embodiment of good temper and affability.
- Remember, everyone likes a compliment.
- If your subordinates can stand it, so can you. Set a good example.
- You must seek and require access to reliable and up-to-date information.

Build Strong Alliances

- Wage only one war at a time.
- Spend time letting your followers learn that you are firm, resolute, and committed in the daily performance of your duty. Doing so will gain their respect and trust.
- Etiquette and personal dignity are sometimes wisely set aside.
- Invest time and money in better understanding the ins and outs of human nature.
- Remember, human action can be modified to some extent, but human nature cannot be changed.

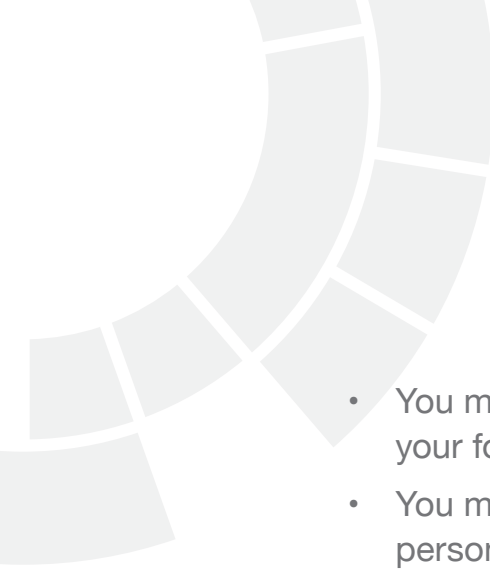
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- Showing your compassionate and caring nature will aid you in forging successful relationships.
 - When you extinguish hope, you create desperation.
 - You must remember that people who have not even been suspected of disloyalty are very adverse to taking an oath of any sort as a condition of exercising an ordinary right of citizenship.

Persuade Rather Than Coerce

- Discourage formal grievances. Persuade your subordinates to compromise whenever you can.
- Use force only as a last resort.
- Remember that your followers generally want to believe that what they do is their own idea and, more importantly, that it genuinely makes a difference.
- If you would win a subordinate to your cause, first convince him that you are his sincere friend.
- Seek the consent of your followers for you to lead them.
- If you practice dictatorial leadership, you prepare yourself to be dictated to.
- Delegate responsibility and authority by empowering people to act on their own.
- On issues that affect your entire organization, conduct full and frequent consultations with the heads of your various departments.
- A good leader avoids issuing orders, preferring to request, imply, or make suggestions.

Honesty and Integrity Are the Best Policies

- Give your subordinates a fair chance with equal freedom and opportunity for success.
- When you make it to the top, turn and reach down for the person behind you.

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- You must set, and respond to, fundamental goals and values that move your followers.
 - You must be consistently fair and decent, in both the business and the personal side of life.
 - Stand with anybody who stands right. Stand with him while he is right and part with him when he goes wrong.
 - Never add the weight of your character to a charge against a person without knowing it to be true.
 - It is your duty to advance the aims of the organization and also to help those who serve it.
 - If you once forfeit the confidence of your fellow citizens, you can never regain their respect and esteem.

Never Act Out of Vengeance or Spite

- Never crush a man out, thereby making him and his friends permanent enemies of your organization.
- No purpose is served by punishing merely for punishment's sake.
- Always keep in mind that once a subordinate is destroyed he ceases to contribute to the organization.
- People will be more willing to seek an audience with you if you have a good reputation.
- It would not hurt you much if, once in a while, you could manage to let things slip, unbeknownst-like.
- Remember: your organization will take on the personality of its top leader.
- You should be very unwilling for young people to be ruined for right causes.
- Have malice toward none and charity for all.
- Touch people with the better angels of your nature.

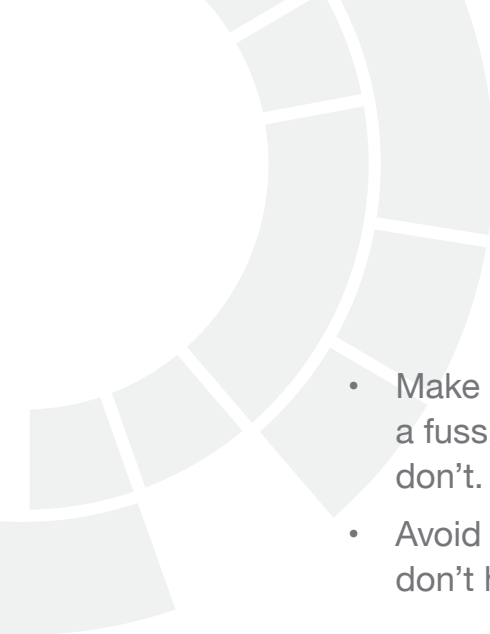


Have the Courage to Handle Unjust Criticism

- Refrain from reading attacks upon yourself so you won't be provoked.
- Don't be terrified by an excited populace and hindered from speaking your honest sentiments.
- It's not entirely safe to allow a misrepresentation to go uncontradicted.
- Remember that truth is generally the best vindication against slander.
- Do the very best you know how-the very best you can-and keep doing so until the end.
- If you yield to even one false charge, you may open yourself up to other unjust attacks.
- If both factions or neither shall harass you, you will probably be about right. Beware of being assailed by one and praised by the other.
- The probability that you may fall in the struggle ought not to deter you from the support of a cause you believe to be just.

Be a Master of Paradox

- Make consistency one of the main cogs in the machinery of your corporation.
- Remember that it is not best to swap horses when crossing streams.
- Don't surrender the game leaving any available card unplayed.
- Do less whenever you believe what you are doing hurts the cause, and do more whenever you believe doing more will help the cause. Try to correct errors when they are shown to be errors; and adopt new views so fast as they appear to be true views.
- You must come to grips with the paradox of providing employee security while also encouraging an environment for risk-taking.
- When you are in deep distress and cannot restrain some expression of it, sit down and write out a harsh letter venting your anger. But don't send it.

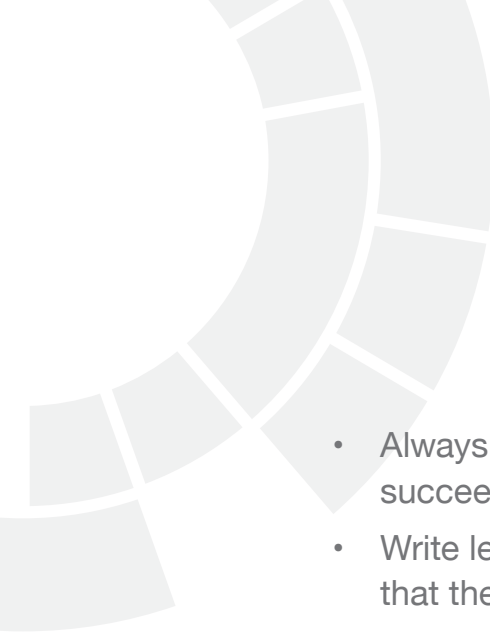
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- Make no explanation to your enemies. What they want is a squabble and a fuss; and that they can have if you explain, and they can not have if you don't.
 - Avoid major conflict in the form of quarrels and arguments. You simply don't have time for it.

Exercise a Strong Hand – Be Decisive

- An entire organization is never wisely sacrificed to avoid losing one or two small parts.
- Take advantage of confusion, desperation, and urgency to exercise strong leadership.
- Seize the initiative and never relinquish it.
- Don't give up all your key points of strength or the competition may "beat out your brains."
- Never let your immediate subordinate take action upon your responsibility without consulting you first.
- If you have a subordinate who has a presidential chin-fly biting him, don't knock it off.
- When making a decision, understand the facts, consider various solutions and their consequences, make sure that the decision is consistent with your objectives, and effectively communicate your judgment.
- Remember that compromise does not mean cowardice.
- Try ballots first; when ballots don't work, use bullets.

Lead by Being Led

- If you are a good leader, when your work is done, your aim fulfilled, your people will say, "We did this ourselves."
- Try not to feel insecure or threatened by your followers.
- Let disputing parties work out their differences by bringing them together and guiding their dialogue.

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- Always let your subordinates know that the honor will be all theirs if they succeed and the blame will be yours if they fail.
 - Write letters to your subordinates making the personal acknowledgment that they were right and you were wrong.
 - When your subordinates come up with good ideas, let them go ahead and try. But monitor their progress.
 - If your commanders in the field can't be successful, neither can you or your executive staff.
 - Never forget that your organization does not depend on the life of any one individual.
 - The greatest credit should be given to those in your organization who render the hardest work.

Set Goals and Be Results-Oriented

- Unite your followers with a “corporate mission.”
- Set specific short-term goals that can be focused on with intent and immediacy by subordinates.
- Those leaders who achieve something at the head of one group will eclipse those who do nothing at the head of a hundred.
- Sometimes it is better to plough around obstacles rather than to waste time going through them.
- Leave nothing for tomorrow which can be done today.
- Your war will not be won by strategy alone, but more by hard, desperate fighting.
- Your task will neither be done nor attempted unless you watch it every day and hour, and force it.
- Remember that half-finished work generally proves to be labor lost.

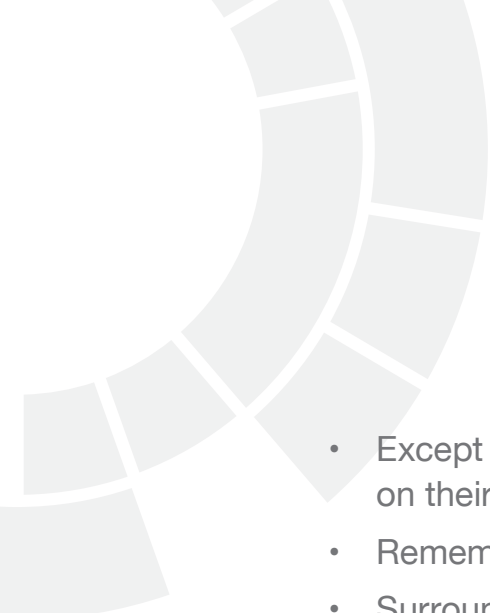


Keep Searching Until You Find Your “Grant”

- Choose as your chief subordinates those people who crave responsibility and take risks.
- Go out into the field with your leaders, and stand or fall with the battle.
- If employees gripe about one of your chief supervisors, and the complaints are true, do not be afraid to remove him.
- Give your followers all the support you can, and act on the presumption that they will do the best they can with what you give them.
- Provide your managers a three-to-five-month grace period to see if they will take action and perform adequately.
- If they don't perform adequately, ease them out of power gradually, always giving them ample time to turn it around.
- Beware of subordinates who keep piling up information without ever really accomplishing anything.
- Coach and counsel a new executive so that he or she may get off on the right foot. Remember, you want him to succeed.
- Do not forget that aggressive leaders tend to choose employees in their own image.
- Let the thing be pressed.

Encourage Innovation

- When the occasion is piled high with difficulty, rise with it. Think anew and act anew.
- Don't lose confidence in your people when they fail.
- Let your subordinates know that you are always glad to have their suggestions.
- If you never try, you'll never succeed.

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- Except in matters of broad policy, encourage subordinates to take action on their own initiative, without waiting for orders.
 - Remember that the best leaders never stop learning.
 - Surround yourself with people who really know their business, and avoid “yes” men.
 - Be quick and decisive at employing new advances and make every attempt at getting new weapons into your soldiers’ hands immediately.

Master the Art of Public Speaking

- Be your organization’s best stump-speaker, with droll ways and dry jokes.
- Extemporaneous speaking is your avenue to the public.
- Use a variety of body language when you speak.
- Prepare yourself thoroughly for your public speaking engagements.
- Never consider anything you write to be finished until published or, if a speech, until you deliver it.
- Remember that there will be times when you should simply not speak. Say to your listeners: “Kindly let me be silent.”
- Try not to make mistakes when you speak publicly. Everything you say is intently heard. If you make a mistake it doesn’t merely affect you but the organization as well.
- You should often couple written documents with verbal discussions, thereby catching the idea with two senses rather than just one. Both you and your subordinates will remember it better, even if you do not understand it better.

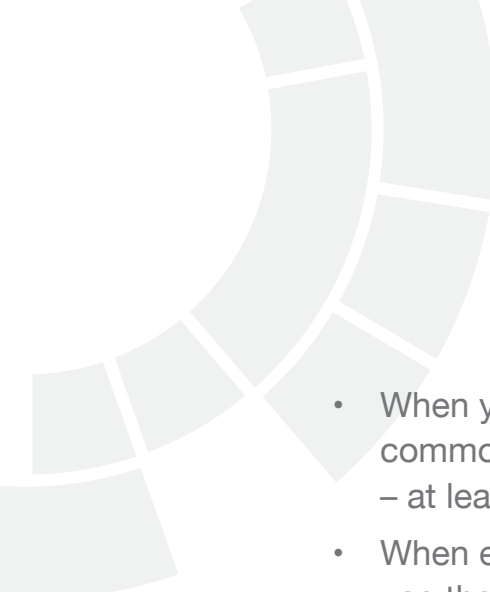


Influence People Through Conversation and Storytelling

- When you meet with an individual, try not to part with any unpleasant impression on either side.
- Speak in simple and familiar strains with people, without any pretension of superiority. Leave people with the feeling that they've known you all their lives.
- Don't forget that humor is a major component of your ability to persuade people.
- A good laugh is good for both the mental and physical digestion.
- Remember that people are more easily influenced through the medium of a broad and humorous illustration than in any other way.
- You will often avoid a long and useless discussion by others or a laborious explanation on your own part by a short story that illustrates your point of view.
- The sharpness of a refusal or the edge of a rebuke may be blunted by an appropriate story, so as to save wounded feelings and yet serve the purpose.
- Loyalty is more often won through private conversation than in any other way.

Preach a Vision and Continually Reaffirm It

- Provide a clear, concise statement of the direction of your organization, and justify the actions you take.
- Everywhere you go, at every conceivable opportunity, reaffirm, reassert, and remind everyone of the basic principles upon which your organization was founded.
- Effective visions can't be forced on the masses. Rather, you must set them in motion by means of persuasion.
- Harness your vision through implementation of your own personal roving leadership style.

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- When you preach your vision, don't shoot too high. Aim lower and the common people will understand you. They are the ones you want to reach – at least they are the ones you ought to reach.
 - When effecting renewal, call on the past, relate it to the present, and then use them both to provide a link to the future.
 - You must realize that the process of renewal releases the critical human talent and energy necessary to insure success.

Notes