Book Study
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Chapter 1: Too Good to Be True?

Chapter 1 sets the tone of the book and begins to explain how and why leadership principles are being used in schools around the world.

1. Dr. Covey says, “...just entering the front doors of A.B. Combs can be quite an engaging experience.” What examples did he give?

2. “Engaging” is a powerful word. What word would you use to describe our school?

3. What skills do Dr. Covey and others assert that people will need to thrive in the 21st century?

4. What is “primary greatness” and how does it differ from “secondary greatness”?

5. What are the three overarching themes Dr. Covey challenges us to look for in the school examples found in the book?

6. What one thing are you looking forward to reading more about in the remaining chapters?
Chapter 2: Discovering What Parents, Business Leaders, and Teachers Want from a School

Muriel Summers, principal of A.B. Combs Elementary Magnet School, needed a new focus for her school. She approached the stakeholders—parents, the business community, teachers, and students. Their responses led Muriel to change the direction of her school. 

*Note: You may want to ask the group to visit www.21stcenturyskills.org prior to this meeting.*

1. Why did Muriel need to “reinvent her school”?
2. When asked what they wanted from a school, what was the response from parents?
3. The business community?
4. The teachers?
5. The students?
6. What do we want for our students?
7. What do we already do well? What do we need to do better?
8. “To Develop Leaders One Child at a Time” is the mission statement A.B. Combs created. What is the message they hope each child will hear every day?
10. Would you want your child or grandchild to attend a school like A.B. Combs? Why or why not?
Notes
Chapter 3: Crafting a Blueprint for Leadership

A.B. Combs continued to refine their leadership approach by researching the best ways to teach students the skills needed in the 21st century. This chapter identifies their methods and their blueprint for success.

1. Why is it important for the vision and mission to be visible to everyone?
2. What connections are you making between character and the 7 Habits?
3. Independence is an important accomplishment for a child. Why not stop there?
4. How is the ubiquitous approach different from other initiatives?
5. What do “quality tools” bring to the table?
6. What are the key benefits of using Data Notebooks?
7. What might be different if students set individual goals based on their own previous scores instead of competing with others?
8. What idea found in this chapter have you already used? What new idea will you use?
9. A.B. Combs uses a foundation of 7 Habits and Baldrige Tools. However, they stay abreast of new educational methods and incorporate them if they align with their vision and mission. On page 67 is the schoolhouse model A.B. Combs uses. What would currently be in our schoolhouse windows? (You may want to draw a schoolhouse and write in the group’s answers.)
10. The success of A.B. Combs is built on a culture of caring and respect. How do we currently show our students, and each other, caring and respect? What are other ways we could show our students, and each other, caring and respect?
Notes
Chapter 4: Aligning for Success

More often than not, great initiatives are not sustainable due to systems and processes not being in place to sustain excellence. A.B. Combs took the time to review each of their strategies and determine whether they aligned with their new leadership theme. Some strategies continued, while others were replaced or discontinued.

1. The first task the school undertook was to make sure every teacher was on board. This was a difficult task as there were some who were resistant. Reluctant staff can sometimes make a positive contribution. How is that possible?

2. How would placing the word “leader” after a title impact a person’s image of himself or herself?

3. Dr. Covey mentions that the end in mind at A.B. Combs is to unleash the potential of each child and staff member. “This has brought artistry back to their [the teachers’] careers.” How do you see this manifesting itself in your teaching?

4. How has empowering teachers and students changed the administrators’ day?

5. Why was it important that all staff, not just teachers, be trained in the 7 Habits the first year?

6. How do the 7 Habits help with discipline issues?

7. Many change efforts in schools fail. A.B. Combs paused to review four components and it made all the difference. What are the four components? Why would reviewing each of these make a difference?

8. What barriers might we encounter? How will we handle these barriers?
Chapter 5: Unleashing a Culture of Leadership

This chapter discusses the culture change of A.B. Combs and what was involved leading up to their success.

1. How is “culture” defined in the book?
2. How would you describe our current culture?
3. Each year, A.B. Combs takes the entire first week to establish the culture of the school. What are the pros and cons of this approach? In your opinion, is it time well spent?
4. How is the leadership language seen and heard throughout the building?
5. The artifacts or environment of A.B. Combs screams leadership and student involvement. What daily impact do you think this has on students, staff, and visitors?
6. Traditions play a large part at the school. Which of the traditions listed would be the one you would be most excited to adopt? Why?
7. Closing activity: Hand out a square piece of paper to each participant and ask them to write something in each corner that “squares” with their beliefs.
Chapter 6: Rippling Across the Globe

Moving past A.B. Combs, this chapter highlights other elementary schools that have adopted *The Leader in Me*.

1. Like A.B. Combs, English Estates Elementary School spends the majority of the first two weeks of school teaching students the 7 Habits and establishing goals and expectations for the year. As a teacher, how much time do you predict this would save each day? each year? What could you do with the additional time?

2. What does it say about the culture of the school when, given bonus funds, the parents gave it to the teachers and the teachers shared it with all staff?

3. The principal of English Estates was asked, “With all the pressure to perform academically, how did you dare choose to work first on changing the culture?” She responded, “Because it felt like the right thing to do.” However, their academic scores improved. Why do you think that is?

4. What impact does a “common language” have on a group? Why?

5. Why do you think so many children use the 7 Habits at home, as reported by their parents?

6. Learning anything new takes additional energy, yet the teachers in the book continue to say that they were energized by the new initiative. How is that possible?

7. Many of the schools also included parents in their 7 Habits training. What might be the benefit of offering training to parents?

8. Each of the schools mentioned in the book incorporates *The Leader in Me* in a way that is best suited for their school. Why do you think Dr. Covey makes that point?
Chapter 7: Moving Upward and Beyond

In this chapter, Dr. Covey sites examples of middle schools, high schools, and districts that have taken on a leadership focus using the 7 Habits.

1. At Joliet High School, Tony Cantos was ready to abandon his career in education. From what you have read so far, how do you think the 7 Habits “reignited” his passion for education?

2. Noble Street High School takes on social issues and asks students to apply the 7 Habits. How might this real-life application impact a class discussion?

3. What are some of the creative ways the middle and high schools cited in the book have brought the 7 Habits to their staff and students?

4. How long do you think it will be before the impact of the “Path of Dreams” program in Guatemala will begin to change the culture of the country?

5. In your opinion, how would the 7 Habits affect our test scores as they did in Japan?

6. What are the advantages of a school staff working as a team rather than in isolation?

7. What might be the students’ reaction when they realize that a particular class, focused on the 7 Habits, is about them—and their life?

8. In a middle or high school, where is the best placement for the 7 Habits content?

9. Do you think parenting middle or high school students who know the 7 Habits content would be less stressful? Why?
Chapter 8: Making It Happen, One Step at a Time

Dr. Covey explains four sequential, principle-based steps that can help guide the effort of implementing a leadership theme in a school.

1. What are the four steps Dr. Covey recommends to facilitate change?
2. What are the benefits of a culture that has high trust?
3. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the current trust level in our building?
4. The "Pyramid of Influence" shows teaching at the top, and stresses that modeling and relating need to be strong for teaching to be most effective. Do you agree? Why?
5. How does individual and group behavior change when there is a clear, unified purpose?
6. What step is most often overlooked when initiating change?
7. What is meant by “Teachers are a school's greatest asset, which also makes them the greatest threat”?
8. How is leadership defined in Chapter 8?
9. If you were empowered to teach using your own unique gifts and talents, what would be different? Would you be inspired? Would your passion for your profession be renewed?
10. Consider a past program that we no longer use. Since you just read about sustaining change, what was it about how that program was initiated that made it unsustainable?
11. Using the Jigsaw Method (see Facilitator Notes), divide the larger group into four smaller groups. Using The 4 Imperatives of Leadership found on pages 166–183, ask each group to be ready to share “Assumptions,” “Agree,” “Argue,” and “Aspire to Apply” with the larger group.
Notes
Chapter 9: Ending With the Beginning in Mind

Key content and the spirit of the book are takeaways from this chapter. Four key phrases, as well as the overarching concepts from the previous chapters, are presented and offer a good place to begin the discussion of where you are, where you would like to be, and the best path to get there.

1. The first phrase Dr. Covey wants us to remember is “modern-day miracle worker.” What might change in the way you interact with children if the paradigm you had of yourself was that of a modern-day miracle worker?

2. What examples of being modern-day miracle workers are given of Muriel, the teachers at A.B. Combs, and the other educators in the book?

3. What are we currently doing that shows a “Tradition of Caring” at our school?

4. What could we do to encourage this tradition?

5. “Not one more thing” is a phrase echoed by the teachers in leadership schools. Why do you think they feel that way?

6. In fact, several times teachers comment that the leadership focus actually saves them time. Do you think they felt that way in the beginning? What do you think happened that moved them to that comment?

7. Do you feel that the “universal nature” of the 7 Habits would apply to our school community—students, staff, and parents? Why?

8. Embedded in the four phrases are keys to success of the leadership theme. I would like you to discuss each point for 5 minutes at your table. Discuss whether you agree with the statement and, if so, how you would go about accomplishing it.
   - Individual teachers unleashing the potential of students all over the world, one child at a time
   - A schoolwide effort with all stakeholders engaged and contributing
   - Emphasis on focusing on what is most important to be teaching
   - Emphasis on teaching timeless principles and skills that are relevant to today’s global reality and preparatory for what tomorrow will bring

9. Closing activity: Hand out a paper circle to each participant and ask them to take a “strategic pause” and write the thoughts that keep going round and round in their heads.
Chapter 10: Bringing It Home

The final chapter discusses the powerful influence the home has on a child’s life. Although teachers will gain many ideas to encourage leadership, Dr. Covey is mainly addressing parents in this chapter.

1. What does Dr. Covey mean by “The cultural or social DNA is the great identity thief, not the person who steals and uses your credit card”?

2. You may notice that the four steps for initiating change in the home are identical to the four steps suggested for school. What are some of the ways we could inspire parents to go through the same process at home while we are going through it at school?

3. In Chapter 10 there are several suggestions parents can use for each of the habits. What would be the best way to communicate these ideas to parents? What is our end in mind?

4. The Leader in Me schools have a mission statement, the classrooms have a mission statement, and the students often have a Personal Mission Statement. How could we guide our students to help their families write a Family Mission Statement?

5. Dr. Covey recommends three tips to preparing children for the new reality. What are they?

6. Do you think the parents would be interested in an informational parent night?
FOR THE FACILITATOR

Definition of a Book Study:
A group of people who meet regularly to discuss a book they are reading.

General Tips:

• **READ THE BOOK.** This may seem obvious, but it is the most important step, so it is worth stating. It is a good idea to plan on finishing each chapter a little earlier than you might do otherwise so that you have time to think about it and prepare before meetings.

• **WRITE DOWN IMPORTANT PAGE NUMBERS.** If there are parts of the book that made an impact on you or that you think may come up in discussion, write down the page numbers so that you can access the passages easily while preparing and leading the discussion.

• **LET OTHERS ANSWER FIRST.** When you are asking questions, you want to facilitate discussion. By letting others answer first, you will promote conversation and help everyone feel like their opinions matter. Note: Sometimes people may need to think before they answer. Part of being a good facilitator is being comfortable with silence. Don't feel like you have to jump in if no one answers immediately.

• **GET EVERYONE INVOLVED.** Each member should assume responsibility for the success of the discussion. To keep the conversation moving, ask participants to elaborate or explain more fully a previous comment or to restate their comment in a different way. Encourage participants to relate the contents to their own experiences.

• **ENCOURAGE PARTICIPANTS TO QUESTION AND COMMENT.** Participants should be encouraged to write questions and comments while they are reading and bring them to each meeting.

• **MAKE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN COMMENTS.** If someone gives an answer to Question 2 that connects well with Question 5, don't feel obligated to ask Questions 3 and 4 before moving to 5. You are the facilitator. Even if you go in order, try to find a link between an answer and the next question. By connecting people's comments to the questions, you'll help build momentum in the conversation.

• **OCCASIONALLY, DIRECT QUESTIONS TOWARD QUIET PEOPLE.** You don't want to put anyone on the spot, but you want everyone to know their opinions are valued. If you have a few talkative people who always jump right in, directing a question to a specific person may help draw out the quieter people (and let the talkative people know it is time to give someone else a turn).

• **PLAN STRATEGIES FOR REFOCUSING.** Keep the discussion “on track” and solicit ideas and comments from all participants. If a discussion veers off track, offer to discuss it after the meeting with anyone who is interested.

• **DON'T FEEL OBLIGATED TO GET THROUGH ALL THE QUESTIONS.** The best questions sometimes lead to intense conversations. That's a good thing! The questions are there as a guide. It may be rare that you finish all of the questions. Respect people's time by wrapping up the discussion when the meeting time is over rather than pushing on until you finish everything you planned.

• **CLOSE EACH SESSION.** Plan a summarizing activity, question, or assignment.
Structuring the Discussion

You may choose to use some of the following “discussion starters” as you facilitate the discussion.

- **PARTNER INTERVIEWS.** Participants interview one another to get different viewpoints on a topic.
- **JIGSAW.** (Places great emphasis on cooperation and shared responsibility within groups.)
  1. Divide the group into smaller groups.
  2. Divide the chapter(s) of reading into roughly equal parts.
  3. Assign each smaller group one of the parts.
  4. At the following meeting, have each small group discuss their part and come to a consensus on the main points to share with the larger group.
  5. Make sure everyone participates.
- **TABLE TALK.** Allow for discussion at each table with the intent to share with the larger group after a specific time period.
- **POWERPOINT®.** Pose a question on the screen and collect whole-group feedback on a poster.

Opening the Meetings

- Ask members for a great idea they tried that was successful, or
- A question they may have and need help finding the answer to.
FOR THE FACILITATOR

Concluding the Book Study.

Instruct participants to write what they have learned from the book on sticky notes. Place each sticky note on a large chart paper that has been divided into sections such as “My Ideal School,” “Potential,” “Student Leadership,” “Teaching Strategies,” “Culture,” “Parents,” “Change,” etc.

Decide Next Steps

Decide whether the group would like to know more about *The Leader in Me* process.

- What should be our next steps?
  - Who is responsible for the next steps?
Will Your School or Child Be the Next *The Leader in Me* Success Story?

Drawing from the best practices and thought leadership of successful educators around the world, FranklinCovey’s *The Leader in Me* process will help schools develop students who are ready to succeed in the 21st century, with critical skills and characteristics such as:

- Trust and trustworthiness
- Effective interpersonal skills
- Strong work ethic
- Sense of teamwork
- Motivation and initiative
- Valuing diversity in a global market
- Problem-solving skills
- Goal setting

What’s more, schools will enjoy a culture in which discipline referrals decrease, test scores improve, and engaged staff members contribute the highest and best of their talents and efforts.

**What is the process for getting started with *The Leader in Me*?**

**INSPIRE**

- Vision Day to create a vision for greatness and inspire engagement from teachers and staff.

**ENGAGE**

- The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People adapted for the education environment.

**INTEGRATE**

- Implementation, including training and a rich set of guides and online tools to help integrate the principles of greatness into the school’s existing core curriculum.

**Help put the schools in your community on the path to greatness.**

For more information about how investing in *The Leader in Me* can help put the schools in your community on the path to greatness, please contact FranklinCovey’s Education Solutions by calling 1-800-272-6839 or by email at Educate@FranklinCovey.com. Or visit www.TheLeaderInMe.org. You can also visit www.frankincovey.com/education.