



Greenleaf Book Club

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Do you remember writing book reports in school? I often felt the structure of the specific questions, required formatting, and deadlines associated with the report took away from the enjoyment of actually reading the book. The joy in reading for me has always been the creative thoughts inspired by the content of the book, not necessarily analyzing the symbolism of a specific motif used throughout the story. Sharing and discussing those creative thoughts with others that have also read the same book inspires critical thinking.

This is exactly why I started our Greenleaf Book Club shortly after becoming president of Greenleaf Trust. The goal was to engage our leadership team's collective critical thinking skills to better each other and our company. We will typically read two to three books a year. No reports, just candid discussion on what everyone thought about what we read, and how we could apply the concepts to Greenleaf Trust and ourselves. We have focused our readings on such topics as leadership, strategy, innovation, teamwork, diversity, emotional intelligence, etc. The resulting discussions are approached with a growth mindset and have been honest, thought provoking, and challenging. Some of the books from our recommended list include:

1. *Scaling Up Excellence* by Robert I. Sutton and Hugy Rao;
2. *Switch* by Chip and Dan Heath;
3. *Multipliers* by Liz Wiseman;
4. *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* by Patrick Lencioni.

Most recently, our Director of Research, Nick Juhle, led us through a discussion on the last few chapters of the book *Small Acts of Leadership* by G. Shawn Hunter. The

premise of the book is that by adopting small intentional behaviors and practicing them every day, leaders can make a broader impact. Specifically, the author describes twelve critical competencies that are consistently present in the daily routines of the most successful leaders. We spent a fair amount of time discussing the chapter on inspiring others. From the book, we challenged ourselves with the question "When people leave an interaction with me, do they leave feeling more or less energized?" We had to be honest with each other. You are not being honest with a blanket answer to the question of simply "more." Therefore, the discussion evolved into ways we could all consistently be energizers by doing more of the

simple things like being present, following through, and asking supportive questions.

Having our leadership team spending purposeful time collaborating on how to inspire those they lead is important. Highly talented, inspired people doing important work together leads to impactful outcomes for our clients, which is the collective goal. Our book club meetings provide the time and forum to learn and grow like this. And that's my book report. ☑

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