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LEADING — FROM THE — FRONT



NO-EXCUSE LEADERSHIP
TACTICS FOR WOMEN

CAPTAINS OF MARINES

ANGIE MORGAN AND COURTNEY LYNCH

Lead Star's Strive for Five Book Club
Five women. Five Weeks. A lifetime of leadership.

Lead Star's Strive for Five Book Club

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Congratulations! You've chosen to participate in an exciting, enriching journey designed to foster networking, ideas exchange and personal and professional leadership development. You'll also be helping to spark a national dialogue on the topic of women and leadership. This kit contains everything you need to get your Strive for Five Leading from the Front Book Club group up and running.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

Strive for Five is a five-week study focused on *Leading from the Front's 10 Leadership Principles*. You will choose four additional women to commit one hour a week to the program for a total of five weeks. All club meetings will be conducted using conference call services, allowing you and your group members flexibility with time and meeting locations. An optional in-person group meeting on the program's fifth week makes a great celebration of your Strive for Five's successful completion.

The Strive for Five program wouldn't be complete without a final challenge. At the end of your book club's journey, your team members will make a commitment to continue the leadership dialogue as they identify four additional women who will join their new book club.

ACTION STEPS FOR LEADING A STRIVE FOR FIVE BOOK CLUB

1

Identify key women you'd like to invite to join you on this leadership development program.

You can choose to invite women you know or, if you are seeking to expand your personal network, invite four women you do not know to partner with you on this project. One way to do this is to ask your colleagues and friends to refer you to women who would enjoy the program. Or, you can approach women whom you find interesting and ask them to join. ([Sample email invitations](#) for your book club follow this section.)

2

Outline the logistics for your group.

You decide the week the program will start and when it will end. Set the specific times for your weekly conference calls together, via email once the club has been formed. (See "[Setting Up the First Call](#).")

3

Make sure all group members have a copy of ***Leading from the Front***.

They may purchase books at all major retailers. Online pricing is often best. Amazon.com and Walmart.com consistently have the best price on the book. The book may also be ordered from our publisher, McGraw-Hill, at www.mhprofessional.com.

4

Communicate regularly with your group.

Each week, send your group the Strive for Five [Weekly Guide](#) prior to your conference call. Group members should complete their reading assignment before the weekly call. Each week's reading will take approximately 30 minutes.

5

Be respectful of your group's time.

Start and end all conference calls on time. Each call should last 30 minutes. Additional discussion can be conducted via email for those interested in commenting on thoughts presented on the weekly call. Make sure your calls are organized and focused. Refer to the Strive for Five [Weekly Call Agenda](#) for your weekly discussion points and questions.

6

At the conclusion of the program, CELEBRATE!

Also, provide your materials and any best practices for running the group to your group members after your final call. Group members may download their own Strive for Five Book Club Guides at www.leadstar.us. Serve as a resource as your group members accept the leadership challenge of starting their own club.

Sample Email Invitations

Inviting others to join your Strive for Five Club is easy. You need to decide if you'd like to have your club members be people you know or people you'll enjoy getting to know. If you will be asking those you know to join, here's a simple email you can cut, paste, and personalize to your prospective members:

Hi _____,

I'd like to invite you to join a unique, short-term, book club focused on personal and professional development. The program's called Strive for Five and I will be leading a group of five that will be reading the best-selling leadership book for women, *Leading from the Front*. Our group will only take about 5 hours of your time (1 hour a week) for 5 weeks. That time will be split between reading and a 30 minute phone call each week to discuss leadership topics presented in the book. I'd be honored to have you as part of this experience and dialogue. Thank you for letting me know if you are interested in participating! If you'd like more information on *Leading from the Front*, please visit the authors' website at www.leadstar.us.

A great benefit of the Strive for Five program is the opportunity to share the experience with women you haven't met before. If you would like to expand your network with the program, ask your current friends and contacts to refer you to women who would be interesting in a focused, efficient way to develop and grow. Here's a sample email you can cut, paste, personalize, and send to your friends.

Hi _____,

I am in the process of starting a unique, short-term, book club for women who are interested in developing their leadership skills for use in all aspects of their lives. My club will also be a networking experience — I am seeking to invite women who don't know each other to connect for five weeks as we read the best-selling leadership book for women, *Leading from the Front*, together. Could you please forward to me the names and email addresses of a couple of women you know who might be interested in participating in this program?

The book club is called "Strive for Five" and participation will only take about 5 hours of the woman's time over a 5 week period. That time will be split between reading the book and participating in a 30 minute conference call each week. This will be a great opportunity for your professional colleagues or personal friends who are interested in connecting with others who are interested in the topic of leadership for women. If you'd like more information on *Leading from the Front*, please visit the authors' website at www.leadstar.us. Thanks so much for your insight.

Sample Email Invitations

Once you receive replies from your contacts, send the following email to prospective participants:

Hi _____,

I was referred to you by _____, who mentioned that you'd be interested in this unique leadership development opportunity. I am creating a short-term book club focused on reading the best-selling leadership book for women, *Leading from the Front*. I'd love to have you as part of my club! We'll meet on a conference call each week for five weeks to discuss the book and leadership. Between the 30 minute call and the reading assignments, participation will take about an hour of your time each week.

While I am organizing the club, I have not personally met the women who will be reading the book. In addition to learning about leadership, we'll also get a chance to connect with other talented women and expand our networks. If you'd like more information on *Leading from the Front*, please visit the authors' website at www.leadstar.us. The club will begin the week of _____. Thank you for letting me know if you'd like to be involved!

*After you have received confirmation from four women who are interested in participating, your next step is to send all participants an email **setting up the first call**.*

Setting Up the First Call

You can use this email text to welcome club members and find the best call times for your club. An ideal way to do this is to provide three suggested call times at various times and days throughout the week asking group members which ones they can make themselves available for. Ultimately choose the time slot that all members indicate they can make. In a perfect world, your group will connect at the same time on the same day each week, yet call times can be decided on a weekly basis for flexibility. With this email you also ask for a short bio on each group member which you will distribute to the group once the ideal call time has been selected.

Hello all:

Welcome to our “Strive for Five” Book club. Thank you for taking time to participate in what I know will be a great personal and professional development experience! We need to set a time for our first call. In order to determine what availability works best for all of us, let me know if you are available for a call at any or all of the following times:

A: First Option

B: Second Option

C: Third Option

Just reply to this email with the letter of the timeslot that works best for you. If all times are fine, just let me know that A,B, and C work well for you. We’ll ultimately go with the time that works best for all. It would be great if we could all meet at the same time each week. Please indicate if the time(s) you selected will also work for the rest of the five week challenge. If needed, we can adjust the time each week so that we are all able to make the call. Also, can you please send a short bio that will serve to introduce yourself to our group? You might want to include where you work, the type of work you do, info on your family, and your hobbies and interests.

I look forward to talking with you all soon!

Week One Guide

Hi all!

I am looking forward to our first call this week. As a reminder, our call will take place at _____ on _____. Thank you for honoring your commitment to participate in our club. Please complete your first reading assignment (up through page 52, including the Forward, Preface, Introduction, and Chapters 1 and 2) before the call. From the reading you'll:

- Learn how surprisingly relevant Marine Corps leadership lessons are to all of the roles you fill.
- Get to know the book's authors' and their definition of leadership.
- Recognize how having double standards can hamper your leadership abilities.
- Understand why leaders must be decisive and how to make timely decisions.

Talk to you soon!

Week One Call Agenda

Open the call by asking everyone to introduce themselves and provide one insight from the first reading assignment that they found interesting or profound and why they found that point significant.

Then, guide your club participants in a discussion of some the following suggested questions or brainstorm your own line of questioning.

INTRODUCTION

- Courtney and Angie write that, “Being a leader has nothing to do with your job title, salary, pay grade, the number of people who report to you, or your department’s budget.” Did you believe this statement when you started reading *Leading from the Front*? Is reading this book changing your opinion of what leadership is all about?

CHAPTER 1

- The book states that true leaders take responsibility for serving as role models to those around them — even those who do not necessarily work for you. Share an example of how you’ve served as a role model to a colleague or family member.
- A leader’s performance level is the foundation for their success. What types of performance standards must be met in order for a leader to be successful?
- Why is it difficult to hold others accountable to standards when they fail to perform? How can you overcome these difficulties?
- Courtney and Angie encourage everyone to “take the initiative and prepare before you are required to perform.” Discuss new ways that you can take initiative and prepare at your job or in your home life.

CHAPTER 2

- Leaders are decision makers. What are some of the barriers that keep you from making timely decisions? Can you recall a time when you delayed making a decision and the implications of procrastination?
- Share with the group an example of a time you found the 80 percent solution to make a timely decision.
- When someone is decisive, how does this affect your impression of them? Do you have more confidence in this person?
- Many women have a hard time saying “no.” Do you struggle with saying no? Can you share a time when the inability to say no affected you or someone you know?

Week Two Guide

Hi all,

I really enjoyed last week's call and I am looking forward to continuing our *Leading from the Front* discussion. This week we'll connect for a call at _____ on _____. The reading assignment to be completed before the call is: Chapters 3 and 4 (pages 53–88). These chapters focus on:

- Why it is so important to accept responsibility for your role in problems.
- Areas of life where it seems easier to place blame instead of accepting responsibility.
- The best way to build strong teams.
- Ways to develop your servant leadership abilities.

I look forward to speaking soon!

Week Two Call Agenda

Begin this second call with everyone providing a quick recap of how they have begun implementing the first (Meet and exceed the standards you ask of others — lead from the front) and second principles (Make timely decisions — find the 80% solution).

Then direct a guided discussion on several of the suggested questions below.

CHAPTER 3

- “The key to achieving your goals and living a life that is in balance begins with taking responsibility for your actions and your decisions, rather than making excuses for your shortcomings.” Can you recall a time when you noticed that a lack of accountability delayed progress?
- Whether at work or at home, most of us have been in situations or faced problems that seemed overwhelming. Courtney and Angie write, “When you feel overwhelmed or things seem out of control, recognize that you probably had something to do with creating the chaos, and this means that you also have the power to change it.” Discuss techniques you use to solve problems in these types of situations.

CHAPTER 4

- Leadership is about taking care of those around you. In what ways are you a caretaker? Discuss additional ways that you can be of service to team members or others around you.
- Angie shares the story of her brother’s suicide and the subsequent reaction by her boss. How did you feel about his reaction to the situation? How would you have handled the situation differently if you were her boss?
- Leaders also need balance in their lives. What ways have you found to put yourself first and keep balance in your life?

Week Three Guide

Hi all,

We have made it to the half-way point of the “Strive for Five” challenge! Congratulations on your commitment to leadership development. For this week’s call, be sure to complete Chapters 5 and 6 (pages 89–124.) Our call time will be at _____ on _____. This week we’ll be reading about and discussing the following topics:

- The importance of emotional resolve.
- Strategies for bringing calm to chaos.
- Best practices for crisis management.
- The importance of taking action to influence outcomes and inspire others.

Looking forward to the call!

Week Three Call Agenda

This week's material introduces the topic of emotional resolve, the importance of harnessing your emotions and putting them to use in productive ways, instead of allowing your emotions to hinder your ability to be a confident leader. Begin the call discussing each participant's thoughts on emotional resolve. Leave the conversation open-ended as the topic of emotions will come up again during Week Four of the challenge.

Here are suggested questions for your third call. Select and discuss the ones you find most engaging.

CHAPTER 5

- Angie and Courtney write that, "Women are perceived as being more likely to display their emotions in public than men, and that perception can interfere with their ability to lead." Do you agree or disagree?
- Emotional resolve is a skill most believe they have; only to find it elusive when they need it the most. What circumstances, or actions by others, most often cause you to overreact?
- Courtney shares the story of a fellow Marine, Lisa Randall, who earned a reputation for tirades and breakdowns at work. Have you or someone you know ever had problems controlling emotions in a professional setting? Discuss how this affected their performance at work?
- Share with the group techniques you use to regain composure when you feel your emotions rising.

CHAPTER 6

- How do you normally handle a crisis? Do you usually "panic and freeze," or perhaps you get caught up in the communication phase and neglect to aviate and navigate?
- We have all faced crisis situations where we were required to come up with a solution. Share with the group a creative solution that you are particularly proud of.
- Which part of "aviate, navigate, communicate" is most important?
- The best leaders are constantly anticipating change and preparing for the future. What do you do on a regular basis to prevent crisis situations?

Week Four Guide

Hello everyone,

Thank you again for your time spent on last week's call. I enjoyed the discussion! Our call this week will be at _____ on _____. The reading assignment is: Chapters 7 and 8 (pages 125–158). Topics covered in the chapters include:

- Understanding what steps you must take to be successful.
- The importance of setting goals.
- Emotions in the work place.
- The negative impact your tears have on your career.

I am really looking forward to discussing these topics. See you on the call!

Week Four Call Agenda

The focus of this call is likely to be on the crying principle. Open your call allowing participants to discuss whatever is on their mind about the topics discussed in Chapter 8 (Don't cry over something that won't cry over you.) After a lively debate of the principle, be sure to leave your group with the thought that emotions are not bad — everyone cries, though there is a time and a place for tears.

Be sure to eventually shift the call to a discussion of the importance of goal setting. Here are suggested questions for this call.

CHAPTER 7

- The book outlines four steps to success in anything you do — courage, initiative, perseverance, and integrity. How can you apply this formula in your own life?
- Courtney and Angie encourage everyone to set large goals. Discuss with the group one new goal that you can set for yourself. What are the first steps you can take toward accomplishing this goal?
- What would you consider your most significant personal accomplishment? How about your most significant professional accomplishment?
- Which step in the “recipe for success” do you find most challenging? Is it courage, initiative, perseverance or integrity?

CHAPTER 8

- Courtney shared her story of how her rifle instructor taught her not to cry over something that wouldn't cry over her. Have you ever let emotions get in the way at work? How do you think it affected the way others perceived you?
- The philosophy of this principle can go beyond actual tears — whining, complaining, guilt, and anger apply as well. Which negative, unproductive emotions are most often displayed in your workplace? How do they impact the working environment?
- How would you coach a peer, colleague, or friend who had difficulty with “crying over something that won't cry over them?”

Week Five Guide

Hi all,

We did it! We met the Strive for Five Challenge and have made it to our final call. The call will take place at _____ on _____. Your reading assignment before the call is to finish the book by reading Chapters 9 and 10. These chapters discuss:

- The value of your apologies.
- The pitfalls of passive communications.
- The importance of being an authentic, credible leader.
- Why being the best version of yourself is a goal you should focus on meeting.

On the call this week I'll also be speaking with you about a future leadership challenge I hope you will all be up for accepting. Talk soon!

Week Five Call Agenda

Congratulations! Your group has completed the Strive for Five Challenge! Spend time on this call celebrating your accomplishments and discussing the next leadership challenge the group will face — starting their own Strive for Five Book Club. Explain to the group where they can find copies of this guide (at Lead Star's website: www.leadstar.us). You can also compile your own notes to forward to the group as they continue to spark a dialogue on the topic of women and leadership. A starter question for this week can be a quick focus on what each participant enjoyed most about this leadership journey and her initial plans for how she'll start a Strive for Five Club.

Here are guided questions for this call; as always feel free to add your own, creative questioning to the mix.

CHAPTER 9

- Angie and Courtney write that, "Leaders say they're sorry only when they are at fault." Do you overuse the phrase "I'm sorry?"
- Why do you feel women have a tendency to over-apologize for circumstances that are beyond their control?
- As a leader, how can you create a climate where direct, honest communications (instead of passive ones) are embraced, not feared?

CHAPTER 10

- Angie and Courtney encourage women to use their unique personalities to be a better leader. Discuss three of your strengths. How can these qualities help you be a better leader?
- How would you describe your unique leadership style?

WRAP-UP QUESTIONS

- The book presents ten leadership principles. Of the principles discussed in the book — which one resonated with you the most? Why?
- The goal of this book is to teach women how to make behavioral changes that can vastly improve their careers and their lives. Did you come away with any specific advice to apply to your own life after reading *Leading from the Front*? If so, share with the group three things you would most like to accomplish.
- Has this book increased your interest in the topic of leadership?

Enhancing Your Strive for Five Experience

As a leader of a Strive for Five Book Club you have many opportunities to guarantee a positive experience for your group members. Here are some “extras” that you might want to consider doing to make your book club experience even more dynamic and memorable:

- Purchase copies of the book for each of your participants, mailing the copies to the women with a personal note before the club begins.
- Give a creative prize after each weekly call, such as Best Participation, Most Intriguing Insight, Aha! Moment Award, etc. Your prize can be an e-card with an internet gift certificate attached.
- Send a handwritten note to each participant congratulating her at the end of the club.
- Have a Strive for Five reunion call or live meeting several months after you complete the club.
- Subscribe to Lead Star's *Leadership Moments* newsletter for weekly insights and inspiration.

About Lead Star



Lead Star is a leadership development consulting firm with expertise in designing and delivering training programs for the world's best organizations. At Lead Star, we believe that leadership can help you create a better workplace, a better life, and a better you. We look forward to supporting you every step of the way on your leadership journey. Please visit us online at www.leadstar.us for additional leadership development resources.