

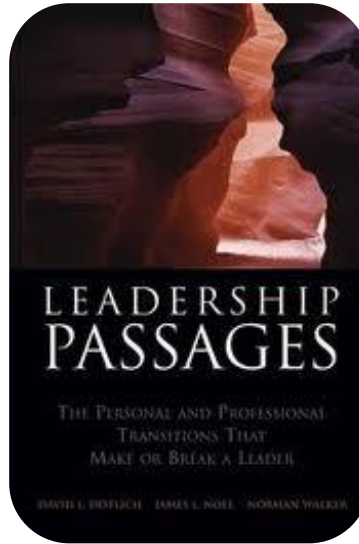
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# LEADERSHIP PASSAGES

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## The Personal and Professional Transitions that Make or Break a Leader

Written for corporate executives by three Executive Coaches as a warning, or walkthrough, about the different challenges, or passages, that each leader experiences in their career. The passages are predictable, and are experienced by many people, regardless of their position of authority. There are 13 passages described that the authors feel are common problems in the business world.



While *Leadership Passages* is acknowledged by the authors to be written for business executives who feel the need to develop their leadership skills, the ideas of the authors transcend the business world and are readily applicable to any

leadership position. Seeing as teaching is considered to be a very leadership oriented career, it only makes sense that the thirteen passages defined and described by the authors are also transferable from the business world to

What areas of your life do the Passages affect?

- Personal
- Social
- Business / Professional
- Psychological

I found *Leadership Passages* to be a very interesting read, and was able to identify different ideas that correlated to what I can expect to experience as a teacher. Overall, I would advise anyone who is going to be in leadership positions to read this book.

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## Do these Business Ideas correlate to the World of Education?

Each one of the passages gives the leader in question an opportunity to grow, or not, and the potential to move their leadership ability and skill forward. Moreover, each of these passages is not solely a situation experienced by leaders in the business world. Every one of the thirteen passages can also be adapted to leaders in the education world, with many

teachers and principals experiencing the difficulties, and reaping the rewards that come from the experience of each passage. A teacher or administrator can experience every passage in the book, and we shall discuss them in detail later.

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## What about Leaders who have failed?

Dotlich, Noel, and Walker begin by tackling a subject that many people don't feel is a key component to making a good leader. They begin by talking about failure, and how many current CEO's of large companies feel that having executives who have failed (either on projects, or to the point of being fired) on their team is a benefit, due to the personal and professional growth that someone must go through in order to bounce back from failure. The authors discuss how we live in a world where people who have never

failed are glorified as superstars, but in truth, people who have never failed at something don't know how they will react as leaders in tough, never before experienced, situations. "The individual who enjoys one success after another may become very proficient at what [they do] but will never grow much as a leader." (p16) This of course also implies that people who do not attempt to grow, as a person, in their home life and their career, will also not be the best leader that they could be.



"Adversity has the effect of eliciting talents which in prosperous circumstances would have lain dormant."

Horace

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## Memorable quotes from Leadership Passages.

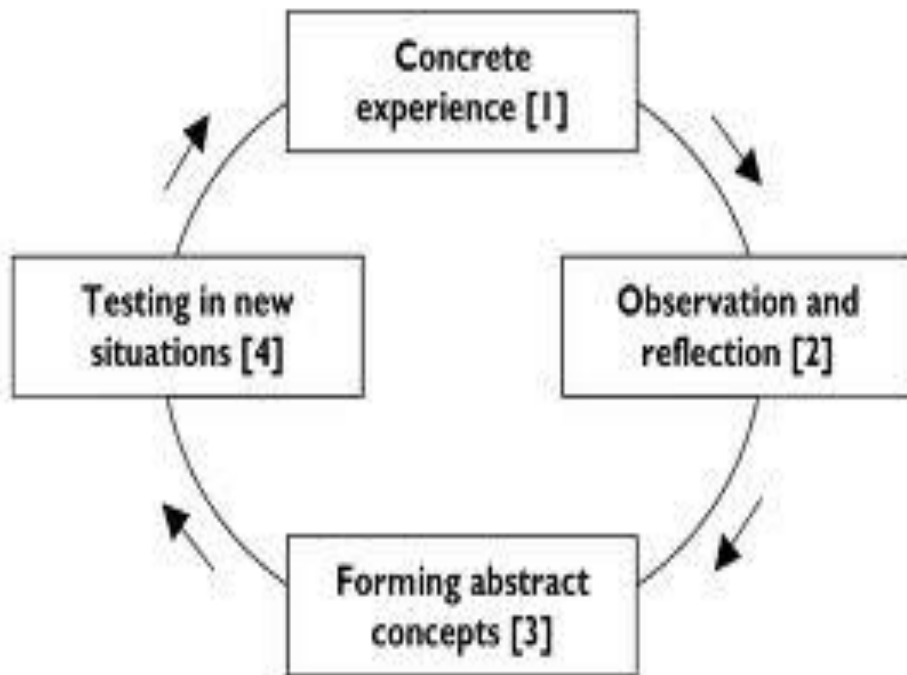


Letting go of ambition is a kind of epiphany, because for the first time in your life, your work requirements and the job you hold are a perfect match." (p. 157)

The individual who enjoys one success after another may become very proficient at what [they do] but will never grow much as a leader. (p. 16)

When leaders aren't in touch with who they are and what they feel, they are ineffective as leaders." (p14)

Admitting that your personal life has affected your work is "like a sign of weakness in a corporate world that defines professionalism as the absence of any emotion" (p. 167), but this type of thinking actually distances the leaders from their subordinates, and "unnatural stoicism [undermines] trust". (p. 168)



## How we learn from our mistakes (or not, depending on which side of the fence you're on)

Because *Leadership Passages* attempts to explain how these thirteen passages help us learn the habits of effective leaders by showing how some effective, and some non-effective, leaders each passage is given its own chapter, including a chapter about the psychology of learning from an experience. David Kolb (a renowned psychologist from the 1970's) felt that once you have an experience, you reflect on it, and derive meaning. You then form concepts as to how the experience affects what you know. Using these concepts, you make theories, and test them the next time you come across a similar experience.

The authors do point out that if you have a closed mind and are not open to expanding your ideas and experiences then you won't form new ideas or theories, and you certainly

won't bother testing them out.

This is of course, what most people do when they encounter a new situation where they have no previous experience. You engage in the experience, observe and reflect on what you experienced, you form new ideas based on your reflections and thoughts and then you test the new ideas.

## What are the 13 passages?

### How to traverse these passages

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#### Don't lose your cool

Almost every passage requires you to keep your cool if you are to learn anything from it.

Staying calm allows you to deal with any anger or other emotions before your reaction can damage your reputation, or risk your job.

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#### Listen to others

There is no reason to traverse these passages alone. Talk to others, friends and loved ones, and listen to their experience. Learning from the experience of others is always a good idea.

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## What can these Passages teach us?

Time really can help a lot of things: One of the recommended courses of action for the passages above is to take time before acting. Taking time allows for reflection, and cooling of emotions.

When in a new job or new environment, discern the difference between the old and the new. Then you can identify the differences, and adapt.

Meet new people, and understand that while you may be an expert in your field, they may be an expert in theirs (and maybe yours too).

Surround yourself with these experts, engage them in your life (or team).

When faced with the unknown, set a timeline that will give you enough time to learn, but not so much time that you're wasting your experiences.

In all leadership passages, when experiencing new things, trust your instincts. Your instincts got you to this point in being a leader, don't ignore them when new challenges arise.

Make time to focus on people. The people who work with you or under you will appreciate your interest in their lives.

Value the unfamiliar, new experiences can teach you new things that you won't learn from doing the same things again and again.

Accept the paradoxical nature of work. There will be many times when there are two equally good (or bad) options that you have to choose from, this is normal, and is faced by every business leader.

When dealing with failure; don't let that failure define you. Don't seek scapegoats, and don't limit your thinking to the failure. Discern what you did wrong and work to fix it.

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## Questions to think about. . .

What is leadership?

There are two “camps” when it comes to the question:

Leadership is all about behavior and if you want to excel, you should learn and replicate the key behaviors of good leaders.

Leadership is all about character, values, and authenticity.

According to the *Leadership Passages*, both are valid, yet

incomplete

Would you agree or disagree with the following quote?

“Adversity has the effect of eliciting talents which in prosperous circumstances would have lain dormant.”

- Horace



*“If you’ve never failed as a leader, you’ll never be very successful.” (p. 81)*

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Dotlich, Noel, and Walker. (2004) *Leadership Passages: The personal and professional transitions that make or break a leader*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

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## THE DILIGENT LEADER

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### EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY

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