

Leading from the Second Chair

Questions for Reflection and Discussion
Introductory Section (Chapters 1 and 2)

Chapter 1 – Living in the Paradoxes

- Which of the paradoxes do you find most challenging? Why?
- Which of the paradoxes do you handle the best? What enables you to do so?
- Is there someone from whom you can learn to become a better second chair leader? What keeps you from starting that process?
- What do you most hope to learn and improve upon as you read this book?

Chapter 2 – Am I a Second Chair Leader?

- Do you think of yourself as a second chair leader (based on our definition)? Who else on your team and in your organization is a second chair leader?
- Do others in your organization see you as a second chair leader? Why or why not?
- Reflect on the definition of a second chair leader? Which aspect of the definition is most difficult for you to master?
- Do you rely on a title to indicate that you are a second chair leader? How would you assess your influence?
- What are you currently doing to “put on leadership lenses” and improve your skills as a leader?
- In your current role, is your attitude one of surviving or thriving? Based on your answer, can you identify why?

Questions for Reflection and Discussion
Subordinate-Leader Paradox (Chapters 3 and 4)

Chapter 3 – Taking It from the Top

- What is your subordination quotient (see pp. 32-33)? What factors tend to make it higher or lower?
- Think about your relationship with your first chair. What causes it to be good or bad? No matter where it is right now, good or bad, how can you work to improve it?
- What can you do to improve communication with your first chair? To improve trust? To improve the way your first chair perceives you?
- How are you praying for your first chair? Are you aware of his or her needs and concerns?
- Is your work characterized by sincere and joyful attitude of service? How can you put Colossians 3:23-24 and Philippians 4:4-9 into practice in your work?

Chapter 4 – Crossing the Line

- When have you “crossed the line” with your first chair? What was the result?
- How can you reassure your first chair of your loyalty and your intention to not be insubordinate?
- Are the boundary lines for your role well-defined? What can you do to gain clearer definition of the lines? How would the lines need to change to make your role more fulfilling?
- When is the last time you had an explicit discussion with your first chair about the scope of your role? How can you initiate such a discussion?
- Within your scope of responsibility, are you leading as effectively as possible? Are you initiating or reacting? What can you do to lead more effectively?

Questions for Reflection and Discussion Deep-Wide Paradox (Chapters 5 - 7)

Chapter 5 – A Matter of Perspective

- Do you normally “focus on the details” or “see the big picture”? What can you do to develop the other perspective?
- Who in your organization can help you develop a deep and wide perspective? How can you take advantage of his/her expertise?
- Is your organization characterized by silos? What can you do to overcome this tendency?
- Reflect on a time when you had a strong opinion on a matter and then reversed your position as you learned more about the issue. What can you learn about “perspective” from this experience?
- Think about a current challenge you are facing. What “why” and “what if” questions should you be asking (see pp. 78-79)?
- How often do you ask God to help you see things from His perspective?

Chapter 6 – Building the Team ... One Relationship at a Time

- How is your relational time allocated? What percent is in the “north” direction with your supervisor? “South” with subordinates? “East” and “west” with peers and other lateral relationships? How does the ideal compare with the actual?
- When you make suggestions or try to help your peers, how are your efforts received? Whether good or bad, reflect on why this is the case.
- Are you seen as someone who is genuinely willing to serve others?
- Review the definition and description of team (pp. 86-91). Are the groups where you serve *true* teams? What can you do to foster real teams?
- Are there things you do that undermine teamwork? What are they? What first steps will you take to change your behavior?
- How much time do you spend praying for key peers in your organization? Relating to them for fun?

Chapter 7 – Putting It into Practice

- Which of the four practices (p. 99ff) do you most need to focus on?
- Do you have a good “finger on the pulse” of your congregation? How can you develop a broader and more accurate view?

- Do you have a clear understanding of the vision? What are the specific implications for the ministry areas you lead?
- What leaders are you mentoring? Is this too many? Too few? The right ones? Have you identified other potential leaders?
- What gaps in your organization are in critical need of being filled? Are you the right person to do it? If not, how can you facilitate a solution?

Questions for Reflection and Discussion
Contentment-Dreaming Paradox (Chapters 8 - 10)

Chapter 8 – Contentment in the Second Chair

- How content are you in your current season of ministry? What are your main sources of contentment? Of discontent? How can you address the negative factors?
- Reflect back on challenging or stressful times in your career. Can you now see how God has used those times to equip and strengthen you?
- Do you feel a sense of impatience or anxiousness to move to a new role? Examine this feeling – is it self-driven or God-driven?
- Who can you turn to for counsel in the midst of struggles with the contentment-dreaming paradox?
- Have you made a conscious choice to grow and excel in your current role? If not, what would it look like for you to make such a commitment?

Chapter 9 – Dreaming in the Second Chair

- When is the last time you spent time with God, praying about His plans for your future? When will you schedule a time to get away and do this?
- How would you describe the dream(s) that God has given you?
- Who have (or will) you share your dreams with, so that they can pray for and encourage you?
- Do you and your first chair have a good understanding of each other's dreams? If not, how can you initiate that dialogue?

Chapter 10 – Leaving the Second Chair

- Reflect on what you have learned about “leaving” in your prior experiences and in your observations of others. What are the most important lessons to remember?
- If you are considering leaving your current chair, will you commit to a season of prayer and to seeking the counsel of a trusted friend?
- If you are leaving for another position, what are you doing to carefully evaluate the new role and to make sure that it is a good fit for you?
- What can you do to leave well? How can you prepare the organization so that it will not suffer as you leave? How can you bless those you are leaving behind?

Questions for Reflection and Discussion
Conclusion

- What have you learned about yourself as you've read *Leading from the Second Chair*?
- What have you learned about your ideal work environment? About the personality and style of your ideal first chair?
- What have you learned about God in this process? How is He working in your life at this time?
- What personal improvement steps are you taking in the coming weeks?
- Reread the story of Joseph in the coming days. Read slowly and keep a journal at hand. What is God showing you in this story?
- Think about other second chair leaders in the Bible. What can you learn and imitate in their lives?
- Loneliness and isolation are often problems for second chair leaders. What steps will you take to connect with others who can relate to your situation?

Questions for Reflection and Discussion For First Chair Leaders

General

- Based on our definition, who are the existing second chair leaders in your organization? Who has great potential to become a second chair leader?
- Do you truly want these individuals to function as leaders? What about your personality or your leadership style may work against them being able to do so?
- When is the last time that you expressed your appreciation for the job being done by your second chair leader(s)?

Subordinate-Leader Paradox

- What are you doing to build strong relationships with your second chairs?
- Have you clarified the “boundary lines” that define their responsibilities and your expectations of them?
- When one of your second chair leaders takes initiative on a major issue, do you feel thankful or threatened?
- What would it look like if you adopted the “one millimeter” principle (see p. 62)? How would this benefit your organization?

Deep-Wide Paradox

- What are you doing to help your second chairs see the organization’s “big picture”?
- In defining the role of your second chairs or assigning specific projects, how are you factoring in their specific gifts and interests?
- Do you and your staff function as a true team (see pp. 86-91, 113)? How can you promote more effective teamwork?
- Is your vision for the organization clear and compelling? What do you need to do to clarify it for your second chair leaders?

Contentment-Dreaming Paradox

- How often do you ask your second chairs, “What in your role is bringing contentment or causing discontent?”
- What do you know about the dreams of your second chairs? How can you better understand their aspirations? What are you doing to facilitate their success?

- Has the time come for a second chair to leave? How can you guide this process to bless the person and benefit the organization?