

"This book stopped me in my tracks. In a word, it is brilliant."

Britt Berrett

CEO, Medical City Dallas Hospital

THE LEADERSHIP TEST

Will You Pass?



From the Author of *Epic Change*
Timothy R. Clark, Ph.D.

MORE PRAISE FOR *THE LEADERSHIP TEST*

"A high-impact experience. Simple, elegant, and profound. A short enough read to keep a busy exec's (or busy mom and dad's) attention, and meaningful enough to invoke personal inventory, reflection and action. I was reflecting on all my relationships at work and at home as I read the story."

Christopher Germann

Vice President, Executive Programs, Gartner, Inc.

"Clark does a brilliant job of bringing us back to basics and defining what drives authentic leadership. This book will be required reading for both aspiring and practicing leaders in my company."

Wesley Bull

President, Sentinel Training & Logistics, LLC

"*The Leadership Test* was refreshing and inspiring. Most books about leadership are sterile and hard to choke down, but this one was surprisingly different. After you read this book, you'll look at yourself differently and ask the hard questions about your influence and intent as a leader. I'm going to share this book with all of my friends."

Tiffany Watkins

Senior Administrator, Operation Kids

"This book took me on a powerful journey into the essence of leadership. It will be a wake-up call for many leaders and a handbook for those of us who are preparing to move into positions of leadership. I highly recommend it."

Benjamin Bloomfield

Graduate Student, University of Virginia

"As a secondary school administrator for 34 years, responsible for the education of thousands of students and the supervision of the associated educational staff, I found this book most interesting and helpful. Dr. Clark's enlightening narrative will be extremely helpful to all students of leadership."

Steve Holtom

Former Principal, Idaho Falls High School

"*The Leadership Test* masterfully defines the fundamentals of leadership in a way that is both enlightening and motivational for any leader or future leader."

James Larson

Recent graduate, MIT Sloan School of Management
United Airlines Emerging Leaders Program

"*The Leadership Test* is a dialogue between a teacher and student that reveals the essence and impact of leadership. Among the abundance of leadership books available, this book stands out with a refreshing message of principled and authentic leadership. Whether you are a formal leader or not, it provides practical and actionable insights that will help you to become a better leader and person."

Damon Larsen

Senior Consultant, Leading Strategy Consulting Firm

"Whether you're a leader or intend to become one, or never want to be one—read the book. It provides a great analysis about the topic of leadership in very few words and in an easy-to-read story format. It can help you regardless of your current ideas about leadership. It's a topic that affects us all in one way or another."

Rex Brown

Vice President, Advantage Performance Group

THE LEADERSHIP TEST

Will You Pass?

From the Author of *Epic Change*

Timothy R. Clark, Ph.D.

Copyright © 2009 by Timothy R. Clark.
All rights reserved. No part of this publication
may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system,
or transmitted in any form or by any means,
electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or
otherwise, without the prior written permission of
the publisher, except as permitted under the United
States Copyright Act of 1976.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2009911780

ISBN: 978-0-578-04210-7

BUSINESS & ECONOMICS/Leadership
BISAC: BUS071000

Published by Oxonian Press
PO Box 1662
55 Merchant Street
American Fork, Utah, 84003

Printed in the United States of America

Book design and layout by Kelli Nilson

First Edition

www.theleadershiptest.com

*To my children
and the next generation of leaders*

Copyright 2009

CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Chapter One	The Teacher 7
Chapter Two	The Student 11
Chapter Three	The Question 21
Chapter Four	The Answer 35
Chapter Five	The Test 63
Chapter Six	The Grade 91
Self-Assessment	95
Acknowledgements	99
About the Author	101
Solutions	103

Copyright 2009

THE LEADERSHIP TEST

Copyright 2009

Copyright 2009

INTRODUCTION

What is the scarcest resource in the world? Ask any kindergarten teacher and the answer is attention. But there are other answers—oxygen to the scuba diver, mindshare to the blogger, cell phone minutes to the teenager, variety to the assembly-line worker. All good answers. But there's a better one. Leadership.

Its absence is the pandemic of our time. We don't need more smart people. We have plenty of those. It's a poverty of principle we face, a crisis of character.

Leadership is about stewardship, not self-interest. It's about moral responsibility for your life, other people, and the resources we share. Too often, this is not the pattern. What we see instead are leaders intoxicated with power, thirsting for adulation, vaunting themselves as if we were lucky to have them. And what do they leave? The littered remains of indulgence, greed, and corruption. How sad it is to leave a landfill when you could leave a legacy.

THE LEADERSHIP TEST

The universal temptation of leadership is to use position for personal gain. The culminating test of leadership is to resist that temptation. But as we all observe, many succumb. In far too many instances, leaders become lords of entitlement.

We see venal cartoon characters auctioned to the highest bidder. We see public figures clamor for praise and tribute from the less exalted. We see role models who don't model. We see image makers who would rather impress than bless. And yet we go on believing that leadership is about IQ points and the charismatic arts, as if they will save us. They never will.

The essence of leadership seems lost in the archives. Skills and experience matter. Of course they do. But the enduring truth remains that a leader's integrity is the true measure of greatness.

The story you are about to read is the story of a young man and his teacher. The teacher

THE LEADERSHIP TEST

tutors the young man in the first lessons of leadership. Ultimately, the young man must take the test of leadership—a test that, sooner or later, thrusts itself on all of us.

Now the story.

Copyright 2009

CHAPTER

1

The Teacher

Isadore Kroll was a bookish little man. Every day, he dutifully appeared in his trademark ensemble—a bow tie and tennis shoes. But the culminating feature of his appearance was the hair. Either it wouldn't yield to the brush or the two had never met. Bushy, unkempt, undomesticated hair was his treasured affectation.

You see, even the most unpretentious human beings delight in at least one signature statement. It comes in handy if you need a little boost in your confidence. As a new teacher, Izzy, as they called him, needed such a boost when he first arrived.

THE LEADERSHIP TEST

Now, he was an institution, an urban oracle—at least to a few high school students in a tough section of Chicago.

He taught underprivileged, underachieving youth in an underfunded school in an underappreciated neighborhood, deep in the old city's industrial bowels—a combination that overwhelmed, overworked, and overcame the most well-intentioned.

Then a most unusual thing happened. Izzy ascended to the height of his powers. He rocked the literary world and won the Pulitzer Prize for a gracefully written account of Chicago's ethnic history. For the first time, writing's most coveted award went to a high school teacher, a distinction that has remained ever since.

As you can imagine, that singular event gave the hitherto unknown school a measure of self-respect and bestowed adoration on an unlikely hero. He could now draw a paying crowd. But he would not.

THE LEADERSHIP TEST

Izzy stayed. In spite of his instant celebrity and a flood of offers to move up in the world, he refused. He had received the highest of praise, and yet he carried on as if nothing had changed. Here he was—still eating school lunch, still grading essays about the meat-packing industry at the turn of the century, still doing the heavy lifting that wasn't always uplifting.

For a decade they called, and for a decade he turned them down. They would bring him into the fold. They would pay him a small fortune, furnish him with a cozy nest, set him up splendidly to live the life of the mind in the gilded salons of the literati. He could forget about the bleak and mundane things of the world.

The answer was always the same. "I like it here," he would say. They would nod in deference. Privately, they were offended and stupefied. It's one thing to be loyal, but this was a gritty inner city school. He'd done his time. It's noble to be committed to your

THE LEADERSHIP TEST

calling, but what is there to be cherished about at-risk youth and overwhelming odds? Why would this celebrated man of letters stay when the success stories were so few and far between? What possessed him to grind away in this blighted spot?

This was the teacher.