

**Book:** *Monday Morning Leadership*

**Author:** David Cottrell

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### **Book Review:**

Recently, I recently attended a leadership seminar at a local Air Force hospital where *Monday Morning Leadership* by David Cottrell served as the cornerstone. The seminar was structured an eight one-hour per week sessions corresponding to the eight chapters (or leadership lessons) of the book. In fact, the subtitle of the book is “8 Mentoring Sessions You Can’t Afford to Miss.”

The central character, Jeff Walters, freely admits that he was on the verge of failure as a middle manager several years ago. What turned converted him from failing leader to an inspired leadership expert? Jeff had a chance meeting with an old friend of the family while playing golf, Tony Pearce. Tony was the epitome of what Jeff strived to be. Tony was confident, successful, and well respected in the business community. Jeff asked for Tony’s help in turning around his career.

This book documents the eight Monday morning mentoring sessions Jeff experienced with Tony. The book is written in the form of an actual account of the dialog between the two as they discuss Jeff’s difficulties at work. This form of writing makes the text easy to read. Furthermore, the author’s style increases the reader’s ability to believe the premise of the sessions. You can quickly breeze through the 100 pages of dialog in one sitting.

Are Jeff’s troubles unique to Jeff or his company? No, on the contrary, Jeff’s troubles are very common with middle managers. He is confronted with subordinates’ low morale, setting priorities, stagnant or falling productivity, and team building. Not surprisingly, the solutions aren’t difficult to understand, but difficult to apply. Without spoiling the joy of reading this book, let me give you an example in the first chapter that sets the tone of the seven sessions to follow.

In the first session, Jeff is 10 minutes late in arriving. Tony had establishes a few simple ground rules to include being on time as a condition of his mentoring. Upon arrival, Jeff begins to apologize and give all the reasons why he was delayed in arriving. Tony quickly identified that Jeff wasn’t taking responsibility for arriving on time. Tony says, “One of the first things I want you to understand is that you have control over how you react to situations.”

The best measure of a leadership book is how quickly you integrate its messages into your daily life. Although outside your normal leadership example, I personally experienced an immediate return on investment from this book. In the same afternoon as reading Chapter 1 about taking responsibility, my 13 year-old son arrived home late from playing with friends. When I asked why, he said that they were cleaning up their mess. Instinctively, I responded, “It wasn’t the mess, but your inability to plan for cleaning up that caused you to be late.”

Although I could continue discussing individual merits for the reader, I started my review by talking about a leadership seminar. Discussing the lessons in *Monday Morning Leadership*, as a group of leaders, has added additional benefits. Each participant was able to share a real life experience similar to those

experienced by Jeff Walters. I strongly encourage you to pick up a personal copy and additional copies for your subordinate leaders. It is a great platform for a improving the leadership in your organization.

A special thanks to Colonel Bradley Herremans and the Medical Service Corps officers of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Medical Group, Elmendorf AFB, Alaska for inviting me to participate. Their contributions, coupled with this outstanding book, have added new tools to my leadership toolkit.

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