



[The Making of a Leader](#)

J. Robert Clinton

★★★★★ (5 stars)

Buy this book if you want:

- *Some great perspective to offer your clients on how God develops a leader's character over a lifetime*
- *A process for creating a timeline of a client's leadership development*

This classic work (in print for nearly 20 years) examines the processes God uses to build a leader's character over a lifetime. Based on copious research into the life histories of thousands of biblical, historical and contemporary leaders, Clinton presents a model for understanding the different stages God takes us through in life as we move toward convergence (functioning in a role that fits our call and design). The idea is that certain predictable character building tasks occur at certain points in a leaders development; and that therefore that development can be mapped to show where in your development you are and how to engage God's work in your life.

Each of the five phases is described in detail, with special focus on two areas:

- Common processing items that happen during each stage
- Critical transitions between those stages

The transition material is especially helpful. Transitions are almost always confusing, and it is a great challenge not to resist the changes God is attempting to bring to move you to the next level in your own leaders. Just having an understanding of what you are going through and that God is in it is tremendously helpful. The book also describes a number of common, crucial tests a leader goes through (functioning under unhealthy authority, conflicts, growing in discerning God's guidance), with examples that help you understand what God is doing through those difficult circumstances.

One of the author's quirks is that he plasters a technical name on every possible test or permutation of them. There is a lot of meat here, and sometimes you can get lost in the details. The stories and examples are very helpful in sorting out which are the most important concepts.

What's in this for coaches? First, every coach needs some type of life stage paradigm to work from. If you understand the developmental processes going on in your client's lives, you'll coach more effectively. Many times in my own coaching, helping the client reframe a difficult situation as a developmental task from God has led to



breakthrough insights. Second, the book includes a well-thought-out process for developing a personal timeline of your own leadership development that you can walk through with a client.

Summary

There aren't many books that I'd say are a "must read" for a leader, but this is one of them. There is nothing else out there that describes leadership character development processes so incisively. For coaches, the perspective this model can bring to a client in transition or in difficult circumstances can be life-changing.

Reviewed by:

Tony Stoltzfus, Professional Coach & Coach Trainer

www.CoachingPastors.com/stoltzfus.htm