

Professional Reading Program

Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program



Chop Wood Carry Water by Joshua Medcalf

Best Wildland Fire Leadership Level to read this book:

- All leadership levels

Why Read Chop Wood Carry Water?

Chop Wood Carry Water is an intriguing book centered around the *process* of becoming something great rather than focusing solely on the *outcome*. This motivational self-leadership book is presented as a parable following a young archer-in-training. As this young man casts away traditional expectations and follows his dream of becoming a samurai archer in Japan, he learns more than expected. His mentor creates simple yet profound teachings that emphasize the importance of embracing the process, building discipline, and cultivating character over focusing solely on results.

The video below is an introduction to the ideas discussed in the book.

- "*Chop Wood, Carry Water*" (9 minutes):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Za10ld8lusU>

For more leadership ideas and to dig deeper, check out the Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program (WFLDP) blog, Facebook page, Professional Reading Program, and more at the links below:

Blog: <http://wildlandfireleadership.blogspot.com/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WFLDP>

Professional Reading Program: <https://www.nwccg.gov/wfldp/toolbox/professional-reading-program>

Main WFLDP page: <https://www.nwccg.gov/training/wildland-fire-leadership-development-program>

Chop Wood, Carry Water Key Points and Discussion Prompts

Key Points:

- Success is not an easy thing to achieve; you need to be prepared to fight for it.
 - Process over outcome; success is not just about achieving goals but about committing to daily habits and actions that allow the journey room to grow.
- Use the tedious and mundane as meditation and learning material.
 - True greatness comes from consistent effort even in the monotonous of activities. Focusing on being consistently good rather than occasionally great.
- Great People have a strong value system.
 - Core values are our anchor points. Decisions are constantly vetted against these core values to guide the hard right over the easy wrong.
- Achievers are people with persistence and focus; Mastery of their craft is their main attribute.
 - *“I fear not the one who practices 10,000 kicks once, but the one who practices one kick 10,000 times.”* – Bruce Lee
 - Progress is incremental and requires resilience and trust in the journey.
- Discouragement keeps many people from achieving great goals.
 - Positive internal dialog will build resilience, which builds a backstop for challenges.
- Failure is intrinsic of the journey to success; the key is persistence despite setbacks.
 - You cannot beat the person who never gives up.
 - Failures are stepping stones for growth, teaching humility, and resilience.

Discussion Prompt 1: What are your “chop wood, carry water” tasks?

- List the foundational habits you need to focus on daily.
- Reflect on an area where you tend to prioritize outcomes over process. How can you shift your mindset?

Discussion Prompt 2: Look back – What are some challenges you faced and grew significantly from?

- How would your stress and life/work balance change if you focused on embracing the journey rather than just the outcome?
- What does “falling in love with the process” mean to you.

Discussion Prompt 3: Apply the teachings from the book.

- Choose a skill or goal you are pursuing and break it into small, actionable steps.
- Identify one area where you can cultivate patience and persistence.

Discussion Prompt 4: Build character.

- Reflect on an area where you tend to prioritize outcomes over process. How can you shift your mindset?