

Professional Reading Program

Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program



Elephant Company by Vicki Constantine Croke

Best Wildland Fire Leadership Level to read this book:

- All Leadership Levels.

Why Read *Elephant Company*?

If you enjoy stories of heroism, animal-human bonds, and historical adventures, *Elephant Company* is definitely worth a read! It tells the story of James Howard "Elephant Bill" Williams, who worked with elephants in Burma during World War II. His bond with these magnificent creatures and his heroic efforts during the war are both moving and inspiring. *Elephant Company* offers several valuable leadership lessons.

Building Trust: Williams' experiences with elephants teach valuable lessons in courage, trust, and gratitude. He built strong trusting relationships with the elephants and his colleagues. Trust is a cornerstone of effective leadership, enabling open communication and collaboration.

Courage and Resilience: This book is filled with thrilling adventures, including daring escapes, and operations behind enemy lines during the Japanese invasion of Burma. Williams exemplifies the courage and resilience needed in leadership. Leaders often face tough decisions and must remain steadfast and resilient.

Adaptability: The challenging conditions in Burma required Williams to be highly adaptable. Leaders must be flexible and able to navigate changing circumstances while maintaining their vision and goals.

Innovation: Williams' innovative use of elephants for wartime logistics and his courageous efforts to save lives demonstrate how leaders can think outside the box and take bold actions to achieve their goals.

Compassionate Leadership: Williams' advocacy for humane treatment of elephants and his efforts to improve their working conditions reflect a leadership style that values the well-being of all team members, human, or animal.

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.nwcg.gov/wfldp/toolbox/professional-reading-program>

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

Elephant Company Discussion Questions

Chapter One: The Early Years

How does Williams' leadership style evolve from his early career to his wartime efforts? What is the difference between a leader and a bully?

Chapter Five: Building Trust

How did Williams build trust with the elephants, and what can this teach us about building trust in human teams? Discuss the importance of empathy in Williams' leadership style. How did it impact his relationship with both elephants and his human colleagues?

Chapter Ten: Challenges

What were some of the key challenges Williams faced during World War II, and how did he overcome them? How did Williams' adaptability and resilience contribute to his success as a leader during the war?

Chapter Fifteen: Innovation and Courage

Consider how Williams' ability to adapt and innovate in challenging situations showcases his leadership skills? Discuss a situation where Williams had to take a bold action. What can other leaders learn from his courage and decision-making process?

Chapter Twenty: Compassionate Leadership

How did Williams advocate for the humane treatment of elephants, and why is this significant from a leadership perspective? Have you ever had a leader that advocated for your well-being? In what ways do the elephant's actions and behaviors mirror human characteristics?

Chapter Twenty-five: Legacy

What qualities make Williams an effective leader, and how are these qualities demonstrated in his interactions with the elephants and other characters?