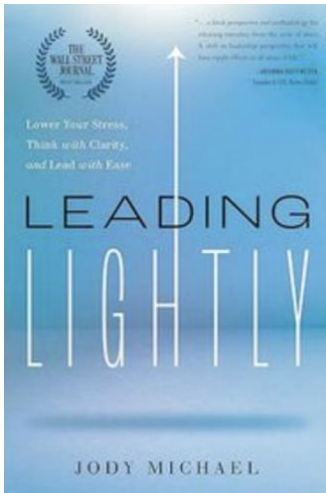


'CliffsNotes' Book Club Recap

DO YOU LOVE BOOKS ON LEADERSHIP, NEUROSCIENCE, AND BUSINESS, BUT NOT HAVE TIME TO READ ALL THE BOOKS?

Join the '**CliffsNotes' club**—where there's no pressure to pre-read the book, no membership required, no cost, and lots of discussion in just 90 minutes. Each month, you will hear a **summary of highlights** from a recently-published business book. This discussion summary is intended to provide a recap of the conversation at Book Club, rather than serve as a thorough book summary. We'll keep you "in the know" on the latest and greatest concepts and models. **Register here** for upcoming events.



July 2024

Leading Lightly

Lower your stress, think with clarity, and lead with ease

By Jody Michael

Discussion Highlights

Presented by Katy O'Neill

Introduction

Jody Michael (2022) defines leading lightly as:

Leading lightly means no matter what happens during your day, you have the capacity to approach everything with enduring ease and clarity. It is a state of being that naturally arises when you have learned to let go of your internal noise and emotional clutter (p. 2).

Michael (2022) asserts that leaders choosing to be responsible for achieving significant results face the following decision points daily:

- What kind of leader are you going to be *right now*?
- How are you going to align yourself internally *right now* with what you are trying to achieve?
- What are you going to choose to create *right now* within yourself and, by extension, within your organization?

She concludes with "**The strongest driver of results – in your leadership, your team, and your organization – is what you choose to think and feel in each moment**" (p.6). The remainder of the book provides a model for achieving leading lightly with stories and concrete examples and actions steps to assist leaders with the tools needed to break through their unconscious reactions to triggers and rewire the brain to achieve alternate outcomes.

Michael's Mental Fitness™ Model

Leadership is about impact and influence. Both grow when you increase your mental fitness – Michael, 2022, p. 7

Michael (2022) defines mental fitness as

Mental fitness™ is your measurable ability to engage constructively in life and work every day, no matter what stressors you encounter. It is your capacity to consistently respond to challenges with optimal performance in the moment and minimal recovery time afterward (p. 7).

Mental fitness helps you and by extension everyone you encounter eliminate pain points providing greater ability for you and the organization to be productive and thrive.

Michael (2022) identifies five “muscles” of mental fitness and describes them as a series of learned skills and choices to help keep yourself out of unproductive, pain point producing catabolic energy states (defined on p. 54 and 70) and shift into an open, curious, and productive anabolic energy states (defined on p. 22-23):

1. Choose personal accountability
2. Choose helpful beliefs over impeding beliefs
3. Accurately self-assess your internal state
4. Hold multiple, disparate perspectives
5. Modulate your own physiology (p. 10).

Mental fitness is best achieved by making a set of choices and developing core skills that transform your fundamental approach to work and life from stress-driven reactivity to powerful, growth driven engagement. – Michael, 2020, p. 22

Michael (2022) describes how our own perceptual lens when in a triggered emotional state leads to outcomes and unnecessary pain for you and the organization. She also illustrates with examples and definitions of perpetual lens and alternate, helpful lenses to achieve change in outcomes even when you are under pressure:

Reaction to Trigger with Current Underlying Operating System, Steps 2-4 below (p. 82).	Reaction to Triger with Metal Fitness (p. 86-87).
1. Things happen (and your perpetual lens is unconsciously applied)	1. Things happen (and your perpetual lens is unconsciously applied)
2. Feel bad, get into catabolic mood	2. Feel bad, get into catabolic mood (you recognize catabolic mood and impeding, perpetual lens, choose a different, helpful lens to view the situation)
3. Reactively try to externally fix, change, control, avoid, prevent	3. Rapidly shift by applying mental fitness (apply ABC, SEE model (p. 214-215)
4. Ruminant, obsess, feed the story	4. Perform

Chapters 5-9 provide depth and detail on each of the five muscles. Michael defines them, articulates what success looks and feels like and presents challenges you might encounter along the way. The chapters address choosing accountability, selecting a helpful perceptual lens, accurately self-assessing, engaging multiple

perspectives, and calming your physiology. Among many tools and techniques identified diaphragmatic breathing, or deep abdominal breathing, is identified as the most effective and immediate method to disrupt a triggered state as it halts your body's fight or flight stress response and returns your body to a relaxed state (Michael, 2022, p.196-197).

Pulling it all together: Michael's ABC, SEE Model

Michael (2022) articulates the application of the following mental fitness skills and behavior choices when triggered:

- **Assess** your mood and notice you are emotionally triggered.
- **Breathe** in and hold it for six seconds to calm your physiology.
- **Choose to take accountability** for shifting your mood.
- **Spot your own perpetual lens** by recognizing your thoughts and identifying the core through driving your reaction.
- **Explore alternative lenses** and thoughts.
- **Elect a more helpful lens** (and thoughts) that empower, rather than impede you (2014).

Finally, Michael (2022) uses the following characteristics to describe mentally fit leaders:

- They drive results with sustained commitment and execution.
- They do not deny or avoid reality.
- They have the power or capacity within themselves to impact change.
- They own their thoughts, moods, and actions.
- They are committed to their own growth.
- They don't give into fear or panic.
- They have a strong sense of self.
- They are empathetic to others and others' perspectives.
- They understand what is and is not within their control (p. 98).

Michael emphasizes that the approach works but it takes time and consistent effort to rewire the brain to respond in alignment with the ABC, SEE model. A MindMastery app is available to help with the process of change.

Reference: Michael, J. (2022) *Leading lightly: Lower your stress, think with clarity, and lead with ease*. Greenleaf Book Group Press.

About the Book Club In this monthly club, a presenter shares highlights from a book related to leadership, business, neuroscience, or coaching. Membership is not required, and there's no obligation to pre-read the book. This discussion summary is intended to provide a recap of the conversation at Book Club, rather than serve as a thorough book summary. [Register here](#) for upcoming events. For the full set of discussion summaries, [click here](#).