

# STUDY GUIDE

## MONDAYS AT 3



### A STORY FOR MANAGERS LEARNING TO LEAD

**Greg Giesen**

*Author of *Creating Authenticity**

**Winner, Best Business Fable**  
- Axiom Business  
Book Awards

## Also by Greg Giesen

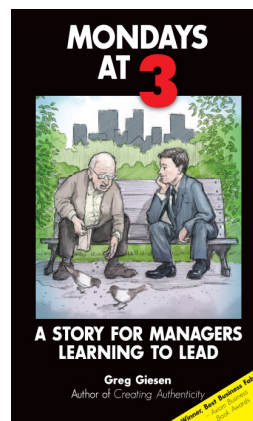
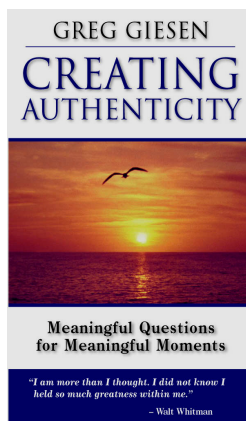
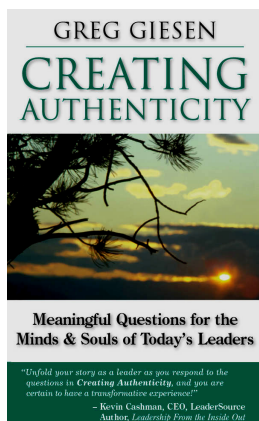
*Creating Authenticity: Meaningful Questions For the Minds & Souls of Today's Leaders*

*Creating Authenticity: Meaningful Questions For Meaningful Moments*

*Mondays At 3: A Story for Managers Learning to Lead*

*The Book of Readings:*

*Inspirational Quotes for the Leader Within*



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## INSTRUCTIONS

What's a business book without a study guide?

It is our pleasure to provide you with the following study guide to assist you in getting the most out of *Mondays At 3: A Story for Managers Learning to Lead*. I am Greg Giesen, the author, and I'd like to give you a few tips on how best to use this study guide.

In the story, Justin uses a journal, per Dr. Mac's suggestion, to record all his management in sights, thoughts, concerns, and lessons learned. I'd like to suggest you go out and purchase your own journal for the same reason. What's more, begin by putting all your responses to the "Application Questions" from this study guide in your journal. This way you are conditioning yourself to use your journal for reflective thinking. If you are not the journaling type, then jot down your thoughts about the questions directly in this study guide. Either way, writing your thoughts down on paper will help you process your thoughts about each question.

I've divided up the Study Guide into five sections, with each section covering approximately twenty chapters from the book. The "Book Questions" in each of the sections are designed to help you think through and evaluate the assortment of management issues that surface throughout the story, particularly in relation to Justin. The "Application Questions" are designed to assist you in thinking through and applying aspects and insights from the story to your work situation. We've also included a complete list of Justin's journal entries near the back of the study guide for your reference.

Lastly, have you ever considered gathering a group of supervisors/managers to read and study *Mondays At 3* together? We have found that there is tremendous value in doing this with your colleagues. Check out the Macology 101 Management Certificate Program (described in the back of this study guide) as a possible format to do this for your organization.

Now get back to work! You've got some reading and writing to do.

Authentically,

*Greg Giesen*

Author

## BOOK QUESTIONS: CHAPTERS 1-20

1. When Justin was promoted, many of his co-workers felt he was not the best choice to be the manager. On his first day as manager, Justin took several actions that reinforced the staff's perceptions of his inadequacies. Understanding that he was thrust into the position and thus expected to be somewhat unprepared, what should he have done to better establish himself as the new manager?
2. Given the constraints put on Christal by J.W., was there a better way she could have announced her decision to promote Justin?
3. While reconciling with Lee Ann, Justin comes to the realization that he made unfair assumptions about her (captured in journal entry #2). Provide an example of one of the assumptions Justin made and explain how it affected his perspective in a negative manner? What should he have done instead?
4. What was the significance of taking Lee Ann to the coffee shop to reconcile? What happened during their conversation that led to a positive outcome?
5. Give an example of Justin avoiding accountability and the implication it had on his ability to manage?

## APPLICATION QUESTIONS: CHAPTERS 1-20

1. How does your work life impact your personal life and visa-versa? Please explain.
2. From you experience, how have co-workers typically addressed problems with other co-workers? Would you say it is effective or ineffective and why?
3. When was the last time you experienced a boss confronting an employee in front of other employees? What happened and how did it play out?
4. What were your first thirty-days like when you got promoted to supervisor/manager for the first time?
5. Have you ever been promoted over your peers? If so, what did you do to gain their respect?
6. Was there someone in particular who helped you learn the fundamentals of supervision? If so, how did he/she help you?

7. Megan was upset with Justin for not initially seeking out her input when he was considering taking the promotion. How has your family/spouse impacted some of your business decisions in the past?
  
8. Have you ever had to apologize to an employee or co-worker as a result of something you did or said? Please explain?
  
9. Have you ever acted out of emotion (as Justin did with his comment to Lee Ann) and then instantly regretted doing so? If so, what happened and what did you learn from that experience?

## **BOOK QUESTIONS: CHAPTERS 21-40**

1. It is not unusual for a crisis to bring people together, especially within a group that already knows each other. Oddly enough, that didn't seem to be the case with Justin's group. Why do you think that was?
2. What was the significance of Justin defending Will during the meeting with Melvin?
3. Given Justin's inexperience, should he have gone out to Boulder? What other options did he have?
4. When Justin got off the plane in Denver, he immediately spotted both Claire and Colleen. Although happy to see them both, he felt a little awkward that Colleen was there. Why do you think he felt that way and was he justified or simply making a big deal out of nothing?
5. The problems in the Boulder office seemed to come down to personality differences and tight quarters. In both cases, there wasn't a whole lot Justin could do to help, at least in his opinion. Given that, was there more he should have done to specifically address the issue(s) between Katie and Colleen while he was there?



## APPLICATION QUESTIONS: CHAPTERS 21-40

1. Have you ever had a tragedy of some kind occur at work? If so, what happened and how was it handled?
2. Have you ever been a part of a team and/or department where some of you co-workers were at a satellite location? If so, what, if anything, was done to create a sense of team amongst the whole group? Did it work?
3. Taking some suggestions from Dr. Mac, Justin turns to journal writing as a way of reflection on things that are happening with him in his new position. If you were keeping a management journal of your own, what sort of entries would you be writing about?
4. Justin's surprise meeting with Dr. Mac at the park bench ends up turning into a pretty powerful mentor relationship for him. Have you ever had a mentor like Dr. Mac at some point in your life and what impact did it have on you?
5. Justin was able to turn his relationship around with Lee Ann and was beginning to make some progress with Will. Give an example of a work relationship that was going down the wrong path before you did something to turn it around? What was it you did and where does the relationship stand today?

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6. What was the significance with the word, “sweet?” Have you ever been a part of a group where there was a word or phrase that contributed to creating cohesion?

## **BOOK QUESTIONS: CHAPTERS 41-60**

1. Justin and Charlie had their big confrontation in chapter 41. Out of frustration, Justin gives Charlie an ultimatum to be a team player or be fired. Considering all that's happened since Justin's promotion, what would have been a better approach for Justin in handling Charlie's attitude problem?
2. What did Justin mean from the following comment in chapter 47: "I'm just hoping there is some support for me in that meeting? If I end up being the one called out on the carpet instead of Charlie, we'll be sending the wrong message."
3. Amy tells Justin of her interest in applying for Colleen's position in Colorado, assuming Colleen is hired on at the Winnetka office. Why is it important for Justin to support Amy on this?
4. Should Justin have been forthright with Claire from the get-go about Amy and what he thought about her? Why or why not?
5. Dr. Mac and Justin disagreed a bit over the resolution of Lamar's sexual affair scenario that occurred in his office. Justin felt that Lamar should also talk with all the employees after the issue has been resolved since everyone in Lamar's office was impacted by the incident. Dr. Mac, on the other hand, felt that Lamar did not have an obligation to address all the employees since the obvious resolution of the problem between the parties would be enough to send a message to everyone involved. What are your thoughts about what should get communicated after such an incident?

6. Colleen confides in Justin that his Boulder visit earlier in the year actually did very little to help the situation between her and Katie. This news was very troubling for Justin, especially when he heard from J.W. that productivity was up in Boulder for the very first time. What do you think were some of the struggles going on in Justin's mind and what lessons did he learn from this?
  
7. The whole interview process for Justin's old job went astray from the beginning. What were all the mistakes Justin made and what should he have done differently?
  
8. Why would Amy support Sara over Colleen during the interview process when she had expressed interest in applying for Colleen's position, if and when it opened up in the Winnetka office? What do you think is going on here?

## APPLICATION QUESTIONS: CHAPTERS 41-60

1. How have you dealt with supervisory mishaps of your own in the past and how are you better today as a result?
2. Justin applied some of his supervisory insights to his relationship with Megan. Have you ever applied some management insight to any of your personal relationships and did it help? If so, how?
3. Once again, Justin's emotions get the best of him as he threatens Charlie with his job. In hindsight, Justin admits that he should have partnered more with Cynthia and Christal before taking such action. Have you been involved with a situation where you successfully partnered with HR over a difficult employee? What about unsuccessfully? Please explain.
4. In chapter 46, Megan brags about the positive changes in Justin since accepting his promotion. Of course, she also acknowledges that he is now taking work home for the first time in his career. How have you been able to balance your work and home life? What do you still need to do?
5. Should inter-office dating be prohibited in corporations? Explain. How can it cause dysfunction within a team/group/department?



## **BOOK QUESTIONS: CHAPTERS 61-80**

1. Amy said some negative things about Justin in her Boulder interview that greatly hindered her chances of getting the job. What do you think was “really” going on with Amy and should she have gone out to Boulder to interview in the first place?
2. In chapter 65, Justin works through a number of concerns by referring to past journal entries as a helpful guide. In looking over the process and logic he used, do you agree with his conclusions? Why or why not?
3. What’s your take on John?
4. Was the timing of the team building session appropriate, given that Colleen was just starting her new job and Amy had just come back from her vacation and unsuccessful interview in Boulder? Why or why not? And what possible implications did it have on the team building session?
5. Overall, would you say the teambuilding session in chapter 72 was effective or ineffective? Should Walt or Justin have done anything different during the session? Why or why not?

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6. Why do you think Amy kept her father's illness quiet for so long? Could she have handled it better and would it have really made a difference?
  
  5. In chapter 76, Justin says to Dr. Mac, "When I think back on it, it was the two employees that I didn't develop much of a rapport with that ended up not communicating with me." What was Justin's point here and what should he have done differently?
  
  6. Claire ends up stepping down from her lead position and moves into Colleen's old position. Did you see this coming and should Justin have done something to keep Claire in her position?

## **APPLICATION QUESTIONS: CHAPTERS 61-80**

1. Justin was clearly frustrated with Amy's negativity. How would you have handled Amy if you were Justin? Have you ever had an "Amy-type" employee or colleague working with you? If so, what impact did they have on others and how did you handle it?
2. Charlie and Will's relationship with Justin evolves to where they freely provide him with feedback. Have you ever had such a relationship with coworkers or subordinates and how did you create it?
3. In one of his columns, Dr. Mac writes about the topic of "managing up." What does managing up mean to you and how do you "manage up" with your supervisor?
4. In chapter 68, Justin was under the assumption that Amy was criticizing him through Dr. Mac's column. If you heard disapproving comments about your management style or personality behind your back, what would you do?
5. The team building session ended up being where many of the unspoken issues emerged within Justin's group. What's been your experience with team building as a vehicle for addressing issues?

6. Charlie finally gets his promotion but struggles with having to move to Boulder. How important is location for you, especially if a promotion is at stake?

## **BOOK QUESTIONS: CHAPTERS 81-End**

1. What's the significance of both the Winnetka and the Boulder orders fulfillment groups spending the day before the annual retreat together? Do you think it really made a difference?
2. What positive message did the news about the Boulder expansion send to the rest of the organization? Can you think of any negatives around this announcement?
3. Do you think it was a good idea for Melvin and J.W. to keep Christal's return a secret until the annual retreat? Why do you think they were trying to achieve by withholding it?
4. In chapter 83, Justin gets recognized for his achievements in front of the entire company. What is the significance of this for: (a) the company, (b) the orders fulfillment department, and (c) Justin personally?
5. How should Justin apply Amy and Dr. Mac's advice of "living each day as if it was your last" in practical terms and how might this apply to being a good leader?
6. In chapter 89, what does Steve Landon tell Justin were the keys to Dr. Mac's success?

7. What is Dr. Mac saying in the following passage from his journal:  
“I’ve worked hard to get to where I am today. By most people’s standards, I’d be considered successful. I have a good marriage, a nice home, and I like my job in data analysis. My life is comfortable, predictable, and secure. Then why am I feeling so unfulfilled? The answer is becoming increasingly clear to me. I’ve become ordinary. And in so doing, I’ve lost my passion.”
  
8. In what ways did Justin benefit from his relationship with Dr. Mac? In what ways did Dr. Mac benefit as well?
  
9. What ended up being the real reason as to why Christal neglected the Boulder group?

## APPLICATION QUESTIONS: CHAPTERS 81-End

1. In chapter 81, Justin and Dr. Mac take time to reflect upon the past year. What do you do at the end of the year to assess how the year went, both personally and professionally?
2. Justin had a very difficult time when he lost Dr. Mac. Have you ever had someone as significant as Dr. Mac in your life that left you for one reason or another? If so, how did you handle it?
3. Would you have taken over Dr. Mac's column if you were Justin? What would be the deciding factor(s) for you?
4. Which of the journal entries hit home the most for you and why?
5. Which character in the story did you end up relating to most and why?
6. What would you want your memorial plaque to read?

## JUSTIN'S JOURNAL ENTRIES

### Journal Entry # 1

- a) If I can't say something nice, or at least say it in a supportive and constructive way, then I'm better off not saying it at all.
- b) I need to take my concerns to the person I'm having the concerns with directly. Anything else would be disrespectful.
- c) It's always a good idea to think through both the process and what outcomes I'm looking for before confronting another employee. And that includes trying to view the concern from their perspective as well.

### Journal Entry # 2

- a) Managing by way of assumptions only gets me into trouble. I need to have my facts straight before drawing any conclusions.
- b) Never, ever confront a staff member in front of his or her peers. It only makes things worse and requires twice as much repair work.
- c) Apologies are difficult but necessary to do when I make mistakes.
- d) It's important to role model the behavior I wish to see in others.

### Journal Entry # 3

- a) I need to manage both the Winnetka and Boulder departments equally and respond to either when needed. And if they continue to see themselves as separate entities from each other, then I have not done my job.
- b) Don't opt to use a consultant to do the work that I should be doing.

### Journal Entry # 4

- a) It takes a lot of work to turn a "strained" relationship into a "supportive" relationship, but it certainly is worth the effort.

### Journal Entry # 5

- a) Always support my employees in front of senior management, even when they are being difficult.
- b) Don't be afraid to use humor to lighten up an uncomfortable situation.

### Journal Entry # 6

- a) Supervision is about action. I cannot manage people by doing nothing.
- b) It's a lot easier to manage tasks than people but my ultimate success depends on being able to do both effectively!

### Journal Entry # 7

- a) Sometimes asking the right question is a better intervention than trying to provide the right answer. Three good questions to periodically ask the staffs I manage:
  - 1) What are your strengths?
  - 2) Where do you need to improve?
  - 3) How can I (your supervisor) help?

## JUSTIN'S JOURNAL ENTRIES

### Journal Entry # 8

- a) The easiest way to learn from a mistake is by owning up to it. Granted it may be difficult in the moment, but it certainly is better in the long run.
- b) Standing up for myself and for what I believe in is invigorating!
- c) The key to an effective relationship, whether at work or at home, is open and honest communication. Of course that's easier said than done, but critical just the same.

### Journal Entry # 9

- a) When planning a significant change (i.e., like a promotion), it's a good idea to talk to the people that will be impacted the most by that change before announcing it.
- b) Don't wait for relationship problems to escalate before addressing them. This is especially true for the people that really matter to me.
- c) Having a supportive boss is essential to my success.
- d) Sometimes a good practical joke is all a staff needs to lighten up.

### Journal Entry # 10

- a) It is important to always keep my word with my employees and empower them to hold me accountable when I don't.
- b) It's unfair to pass off a difficult employee to another department without being totally up front about what I'm doing. And even then, it's probably not a good idea.
- c) Productivity is not always an indication of how well a staff is working together.

### Journal Entry # 11

- a) Staff commitments (i.e., the Boulder group) work best when there is accountability around those commitments. As manager, it is my responsibility to ensure that happens.
- b) Before asking my staff to participate in future projects (i.e., the interview process), it's important that I spell out up front what the process is, what my expectations are, and how a decision will ultimately be made.
- c) Challenging decisions that I've asked my staff to make goes in direct opposition to asking them to make a decision in the first place.
- d) It's important to create a work environment where employees feel comfortable providing me with feedback about my performance.

### Journal Entry # 12

- a) Using Walt as the outside facilitator for the teambuilding session allowed me to fully engage in the process instead of being in charge of it. That was a good thing.
- b) It's important to discuss safety in groups and establish ground rules before engaging a group in a confrontational discussion.
- c) In order for working relationships to thrive, there must be an ongoing avenue available to talk and work through issues.
- d) It only takes one staff member to create a tension-filled work environment. Don't ever let it get to that point again.

## JUSTIN'S JOURNAL ENTRIES

### Journal Entry # 13

- a) Within every problem lies opportunity. Never lose sight of the big picture.
- b) Change is constant no matter how good or bad things seem.
- c) It's important for me to regularly check in with my employees (in both departments) in order to keep communication channels open and available on both ends.

### Journal Entry # 14

- a) Discovering my purpose and passion means nothing if I'm not willing to follow it.
- b) Trusting the process means having an unyielding commitment to a desired outcome, regardless of what's happening around me.
- c) For every ending lies a new beginning...but only if I remain open to possibilities.

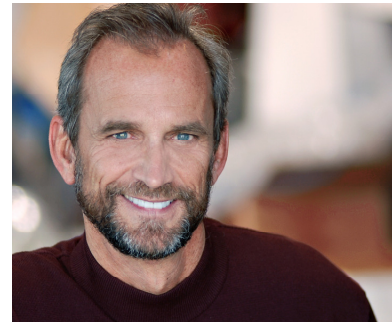
## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Greg Giesen has been involved in management development and training since 1980. With a Master's degree in personnel services and counseling from Miami University, Greg spent nine years counseling, training and implementing programs as the director of student activities on the campuses of Washington University and the University of Redlands. Following his higher education experience, Greg joined the world headquarters' staff of Toastmasters International, where he managed the membership and club development department.

Greg came out to Colorado in 1990 to join the management development department at Mountain States Employers Council. During his tenure at MSEC, Greg designed and presented over twenty different training courses to member companies throughout the United States.

In 1998, Greg created Greg Giesen & Associates, Inc., a leadership and management development organization out of Highlands Ranch, Colorado. His company's specific focus areas include:

- Keynote/Motivational Speaking
- Team Building
- Dispute Resolution
- Executive Team Retreats
- Management Coaching/Consulting



Greg is also the architect and lead-facilitator for the workshop, Leading From Within; a highly successful leadership retreat designed to help participants achieve optimal performance as a leader in both their personal and professional lives. Now in its 15th year, Leading From Within was recently awarded Best Practices in Training Programs by the American Society for Training & Development.

In addition, Greg taught graduate courses at the University of Denver for 14-years in the areas of public speaking, leadership, organizational conflict, and team development and was honored with the distinction of Master Teacher. Greg has also written four books on Creating Authenticity, including his latest book, Mondays At 3: A Story for Managers Learning to Lead. Mondays At 3 recently won a bronze medal for best business fable from the Axiom Business Books Awards.

Greg also produces and hosts the weekly Mondays At 3 talk radio show on Castle Rock Radio ([castlerockradio.com](http://castlerockradio.com)). The show features powerful messages from inspirational authors, speakers, and business leaders.

## SERVICES AVAILABLE

Contact Greg Giesen about any of the services listed below for your company and/or conference:

### **Keynotes Topic:**

- If You Had to Deliver Your Last Lecture, Do You Know What You Would Say?
- Quick Hits: Critical Tips on Solving Work & Relationship Issues
- Using True Colors to Improve Communication and Understanding
- Leading From Within: Three Keys to Living a Life with Purpose and Passion
- Eight Simple Rules to Resolving Conflict and Improving Relationships.

### **Management Certificate Programs:**

Extensive training and team-building programs that build on Giesen's award-winning book, *Mondays At 3* and the 14 journal insights are available through Greg Giesen & Associates. In addition, Giesen is available to conduct workshops and in-depth consulting in the areas of teamwork, leadership, conflict management and communication.

### **Leading From Within:**

Leading From Within is an intensive three-day/three-night workshop designed to help participants achieve optimal performance as leaders in both their personal and professional lives. Through the use of a variety of stimulating and challenging methodologies, participants will walk away from this workshop with a renewed sense of purpose, vision and enhanced leadership capabilities.

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