



FLATIRON
BOOKS
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A Higher Loyalty: *Truth, Lies, and Leadership* Reading Group Guide

1. Did you like the title of this book? Why do you think the author chose it?
2. Each chapter begins with a quote. Which was your favorite and why?
3. Did you have a favorite story? Did any of the stories surprise you?
4. To begin his introduction, Comey quotes Reinhold Niebuhr: *Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible, but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary.* What does this quote mean to you and for our country?
5. At the end of one chapter, Comey describes challenging young people to close their eyes and imagine they are at the end of life and asks them to think about who they want to have been. Do you think that is the right question to ask?
6. What experiences have you had with bullies? Have you been the victim of a bully? Have you ever bullied someone else or stood by while someone was bullied? Do you think bullying will always be a problem in our culture? Why or why not?
7. Do you agree with Comey that the grocer Harry Howell was a great leader? Why or why not? Who is the best leader you have personally worked for, and what was their leadership style? Were you surprised that someone who worked for three presidents chose a grocery store manager as an exemplar of good leadership?
8. Do you agree with Comey that having enough “confidence to be humble” is an important quality for an ethical leader to have? Why or why not? How did Helen Fahey’s leadership style and office culture differ from Rudy Giuliani’s style as United States Attorney?
9. Comey describes finding meaning and purpose in life by not surrendering to loss, but instead ensuring that something good comes from suffering so that pain and evil do not hold the field for long. Do you see examples of this philosophy in the world today or in your own life?

10. Many fans were very angry when Martha Stewart was indicted for lying. Do you think Comey made the right decision? Did your opinion change after reading his book? Do you think it's inevitable that people lie? Why do you lie?
11. Comey describes shaky legal opinions about surveillance made by lawyers at the Department of Justice (DOJ) following the attacks on 9/11 to try to keep our country safe. Do you think Comey did the right thing by withdrawing those legal opinions? Do you think Comey should have done anything differently about the Stellar Wind program?
12. How important is it for people to speak truth to power?
13. When Comey was the FBI Director, he had five things he expected employees to do:
 - 1) *find joy in their work, because their work is about helping people;*
 - 2) *treat all people with respect and dignity;*
 - 3) *protect their institution's reservoir of trust;*
 - 4) *work hard; and*
 - 5) *fight for balance in their lives* (that is, care for loved ones, have a full life outside of work, be healthy, and get enough sleep).

Do you agree with his list? What would you add to or subtract from it?

14. Once hundreds of thousands of Hillary Clinton's emails were found on Anthony Weiner's laptop, Comey says he felt there were only two doors for him to walk through, and they both required action: *Speak* or *Conceal*. Do you agree?
15. Comey held a press conference to announce the end of the Hillary Clinton email investigation but then sent a notice to Congress when he reopened it. Meanwhile, the FBI's investigation of members of the Trump campaign proceeded without public comment from the Bureau. Comey maintains this handling is consistent with the FBI's policy, but that another reasonable person might have chosen to act differently. If you had been Comey on October 28, 2016, what would you have done? Having read the book, do you now understand his actions?
16. Comey says he's not sure if his actions influenced the results of the 2016 election. What do you think? Now knowing all he was facing, do you think he acted correctly?
17. Comey says great ethical leaders do not ask for personal loyalty. Do you agree? Why or why not?
18. What do you think of the way the White House and the Department of Justice handled Comey's firing? Should Comey have been fired? Why or why not?
19. Comey compares the Trump administration to a forest fire and says he is hopeful that it will provide an opportunity for new growth in our country. Do you see any new growth? Do you think this book will be useful to people living among the flames?