

ELEVATE ADMINS

A Book Club Guide to Support
Productive Conversations and
Deeper Insights



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a *nourishing* professional life

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Getting Started

The purpose of this guide is to encourage readers to more deeply explore the lessons contained in *ELEVATE Admins: How to Raise the Bar and Achieve Excellence in Your Administrative Career*. This can be done on your own or in a group.

If you're interested in starting a "Book Club" in your workplace, within your professional association, or through a different community, here are some steps to help you get started:

- Share the book description with your prospective group members to gauge their interest. This is available on Amazon here:
<https://www.amazon.com/dp/173690180X>
- I recommend keeping the group to 10 people or fewer. Even 2 people can have very fruitful conversations so don't get discouraged if your group is small. However, if it gets too large, it can be difficult to keep conversations on track. If you have a larger group, you may want to split into two (or more) separate groups.
- Ask that all those who are interested be willing to commit to 10 weekly discussion sessions. Preferably these will take place in person. However, if that's not possible, virtual sessions are perfectly acceptable. Determine what will work best for your group.
- If meeting in person, be sure to reserve private space so that the group can enjoy uninterrupted discussion time.

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Book Club Discussion Guide

- Weekly sessions tend to work best as it's a reasonable expectation and it allows plenty of time to complete the reading between sessions. However, if it's too aggressive for your group, you may wish to make your meetings bi-weekly instead.
- Create a schedule of sessions for the group. I recommend that you choose the same day and time each week for ease of scheduling. If needed, you may want to conduct a Doodle poll to figure out what will work best for the group members. (You can learn more about Doodle here: <https://doodle.com/>). You can also use the table on page 8 of this guide to help you get organized.
- Plan for each session to be one full hour. Do not go over, even if conversation is really flowing. You want to be respectful of everyone's time. If you're working with a smaller group, you may finish early and that's just fine. Please make sure every member has had the opportunity to contribute about each discussion topic before wrapping up.
- Ask each member to purchase his or her book via Amazon as soon as possible.
- Instruct each member that the group discussions are intended to take place *after* the individual reading has been done. Therefore, prior to attending a session, each person is expected to have read the corresponding pages. (Don't worry: Chapters are short and the reading is easy!)
- Ask that each group member arrive to the sessions prepared to enjoy honest, productive discussion.

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- Ask that all members put their phones on silent for the duration of the session and commit to being full present with their fellow group members.

- Ask that all members remain respectful and professional at all times during sessions. This means:
 - Do not interrupt one another.

 - Actively listen by nodding and making eye contact with person speaking.

 - Be willing to express unpopular opinions (politely) and hear them from others as well.

 - Be willing to respectfully disagree at times.

 - Be open to different ideas, experiences, opinions and perspectives—and allow others to change your mind when warranted.

Remember: you do not *have* to work with a group to benefit from this guide.

How to Use This Guide

On the following pages, you will find a series of powerful questions for each chapter of the book. The questions can serve as journaling prompts if you're working alone or as discussion starters if you're working with a group.

Once again, I recommend that you read the chapters *first*, then gather to discuss the concepts with your group. The questions will act as a guide to focus the conversation and keep it productive.

If working through the book on your own, read the chapters and then journal your answers to each question. The act of writing will help organize your thoughts and improve clarity. So, while you may be tempted to simply think about your answers, there is deeper value in putting pen to paper.

A Few Final Words

I am so honored that you've decided to read my book. It is my hope that you will not only enjoy reading it, but that you will also find the information in it useful.

For those of you hosting book clubs, I am truly grateful that you're sharing my work. Thank you.

If your organization or group has purchased 20 or more books, please contact me. I would love to provide a no-cost Q&A session or "Interview with the Author." Send an email to Chrissy@EatYourCareer.com and we'll get something scheduled.

Lastly, once you're done with the book, I would appreciate your honest review on Amazon. This helps new readers find the book. If you leave a review, please let me know so I can say thank you.

Schedule of Book Club Meetings

Use this table to help organize your book club meetings.

#	Date / Time	Location	Topics*
1			Forward + Preface Chapter 1
2			Chapter 2
3			Chapter 3
4			Chapter 4
5			Chapter 5
6			Chapter 6
7			Chapter 7
8			Chapter 8
9			Chapter 9
10			Chapter 10

NOTE: You may also choose to select a “leader” for each session. This designated individual will take the lead in posing the questions to the group and helping to facilitate the conversation. The leader can also help ensure all members get the opportunity to share their thoughts and that the meeting starts and ends on time.

Week 1: Forward, Preface, and Chapter 1 (Introduction)

Pages v-12

If group members do not know one another already, please take some time during this first session for brief introductions.

1. Based on what you know right now, what do you hope to gain from reading this book?

2. In the Forward, Lisa Olsen shared about a time when she was afraid of a big promotion and turned to learning for support. Have you ever experienced a time in your career when you were scared and went searching for information to help cope?

3. The COVID-19 pandemic is the main focus of the Preface. What were your experiences like during this time, both personally and professionally? Looking at it now, what do you consider the biggest lessons you learned from it?

4. Did you have a “dream” career when you were a kid? What did you imagine it to be like? Can you identify any ways in which your current job is similar to that?

5. Are you an active part of the “global administrative community”? Are you engaged with admin groups on social media? Do you participate in learning and networking events? Do you follow specific admin “experts”? If so, share your experiences and favorite resources.

6. Have you encountered admins who treat the role as beneath them or as a stepping stone? How do you think that impacts their behaviors, performance and success? Have you experienced this mindset in the past?

Week 2: Chapter 2 (The Evolving Admin)

Pages 13-30

1. How long have you been in an admin role? How has your personal career evolved over the years?
2. What changes have you personally experienced or witnessed within the admin role during your time in it?
3. This chapter mentions the word "secretary." Do you have any feelings about this title (good, bad or in-between)?
4. Have you experienced any antiquated notions about your role? What have you heard and how have you handled it?
5. When you think about the shrinking/advancing admin field, what comes up for you? Do you believe it means more opportunity (in certain aspects)?
6. What impact do you think the pandemic will have on the admin role in the long-term future? What impacts have you already seen?
7. Looking into the future, what predictions do you have? Do you agree that the 3Cs (connection, collaboration and creativity) will be paramount for administrative success? Would you add anything to that list? What fears or concerns do you have about the future of the role?
8. When you consider perceptions of the admin role within your current organization, where is there room for growth? What can you do to help reshape those perceptions?

Week 3: Chapter 3 (Job vs. Career)

Pages 31-52

1. Look at the job vs. career mindset table on page 34. Which do you most identify with and why?
2. Do you have a career of choice or a default career? Do you agree that language is powerful and it's important to take ownership of the choice, even in retrospect?
3. Do you consider your work a job, a career, or a calling? What are your reasons?
4. Have you ever attempted to shape your job or craft your career? If so, how did you do it? If you were to do it in the future, what elements would you want to minimize and which would you want more of?
5. Do you agree that ongoing learning is an essential part of administrative success? Why?
6. What learning and development activities have you engaged in? What activities are you interested in pursuing in the future? What are your thoughts about higher education within the administrative field?
7. If you thought of your career as a business (as suggested at the end of this chapter), how might you approach it differently?

Week 4: Chapter 4 (Raising Performance Standards)

Pages 53-88

1. Broadly speaking, what are your thoughts about the ELEVATE Admins Competency Model? Do you feel it encompasses the primary aspects of your role? Does anything surprise you? Is there anything missing?

2. The three categories described under “Qualities” are character, ethics and professionalism. How well do you feel you embody the traits described? Where do you have room for improvement?

3. The core competencies are the foundational skills required for success in the admin role. Which area is your strongest? How did you grow this skill and what best practices can you offer others?

4. Which core competency is your weakest? Is there a particular aspect you struggle with most? What can you do to improve in this area?

5. The advanced competencies are required to provide higher-level support. Which area is your strongest? How did you grow this skill and what best practices can you offer others?

6. Which advanced competency is your weakest? Is there a particular aspect you struggle with most? What can you do to improve in this area?

7. The three Key Integrated Behaviors are teamwork, self-management, and leadership. Do you believe these elements are woven throughout your role? In what ways do you already demonstrate these skills on a day-to-day basis and how can you do so even more?

Week 5: Chapter 5 (Designing a Partnership)

Pages 89-102

1. Do you agree that the concept of Intentional Relationship Design is important for *all* successful partnerships? Have you ever implemented this kind of strategy (perhaps without knowing what it was called) in the past? If so, what were your results? If not, will you consider doing so in the future?

2. Considering your current circumstances, do you and the person/people you support see to eye-to-eye regarding the type of partnership you want? How do you know?

3. Have you ever tried to build a partnership with someone who didn't want one (or didn't want the same kind as you)? What were the results?

4. Have you ever found yourself falling victim to mind reader syndrome? How about the person or people you support? What consequences have you experienced as a result of this?

5. How do you feel about the idea of daily "stand up" meetings? Have you used this strategy in the past? If so, what were the results? If not, will you consider doing so in the future? What concerns do you have about it? What obstacles do you foresee and what can you do now to prevent or overcome them?

6. What behaviors do you believe contribute to building trust? What behaviors damage or break trust?

7. Have you experienced a time in the past when trust was broken with your partner? What happened? What did you do to repair and rebuild it?

Week 6: Chapter 6 (Career Paths for Admins)

Pages 103-111

1. Does your current organization have a defined “career path” for the admin role? If so, what does it look like? Have you ever worked for an organization that had this?
2. Do you feel your current manager or direct supervisor supports your career goals? How do you know?
3. How has your career progressed up to this point? Where did you start and how did you get here? Who supported you and what did you do to make each step happen?
4. When you consider your options for the future, are you most interested in growing your career within the admin field or outside of it? What kind of growth appeals to you most at this time and why?
5. Do you agree that there is ample opportunity for administrative professionals to grow (both in the field and outside of it)? Does this idea challenge your current thinking in any way?

Week 7: Chapter 7 (Administrative Leadership)

Pages 113-153

1. How do you feel about the idea that “position power” is the lowest and weakest form of leadership? Do you agree that admins might not have formal leadership authority, but still have plenty of opportunities to lead in different ways (through influence)?

2. Which of the five stories in this chapter did you find the most interesting and relevant? If you had to choose one “most important” lesson from each, what would it be?

- Barbara Cameron: Building an Enterprise-Wide Administrative Training Team
- Carol Walsh: Building a Community of Practice
- Deborah Green: Advocating for Change
- Michelle A: Transitioning to Management & Career Crafting
- Ayanna Castro: Building a Personal Brand Internally and Externally

3. Every administrative professional has his or her own story of leadership. Share yours! What problem were you (your team or your organization) facing? What solution(s) did you provide? What did you do to make it happen? What advice would you offer others looking to achieve something similar?

Week 8: Chapter 8 (The Compensation Conundrum)

Pages 155-176

1. Looking at the list of factors reflected in pay, does anything surprise you? Did you previously understand the complexity of pay decisions? Which elements do you think are most important at your current organization?

2. Discussing pay in specific terms can cause a lot of tension and judgement. Instead of sharing numbers, discuss how you generally *feel* about your compensation package. Do you feel it fairly reflects the value you deliver? Do you believe it's competitive? Do believe you have room for growth?

3. Have you negotiated for pay in the past or advocated for a raise? What strategies did you use and how did it go?

4. This chapter cites a number of things you should *not* do when discussing pay (like making ultimatums, focusing on your personal need, or mentioning the pay of someone else). Have you ever done one of these things? If so, how did it go over?

5. Have you ever left a job because of the pay? Were there other factors involved? Did you try to get a raise before leaving? Alternatively, have you stayed in a job where you were underpaid? How did that impact your feelings and performance?

6. Pay conversations can be very uncomfortable. What feelings come up for you and where do they come from?

Week 9: Chapter 9 (Addressing Common Concerns and Complaints)

Pages 177-201

1. Considering the five common complaints and concerns cited in this chapter, which ones do you relate to most?

- There is an overall lack of respect for admins at my organization.
- My boss is a micromanager and isn't releasing control of things!
- I'm giving too much to others, and I'm headed for burnout.
- My boss is a "bully."
- I'm bored and unchallenged.

2. How are admins viewed and treated in your organization? Has it always been that way or did things change at some point in the past? If so, what caused that change?

3. Have you ever supported someone who struggled to release control? What did you do to help ease him or her along?

4. Have you ever experienced burnout or the early signs of it? How did you know this was happening? What did you do to prevent it or recover from it, and what did you learn for the future?

5. Have you ever worked for or with a bully? Describe the behavior and how it made you feel. What did you do about it? What did the experience teach you about workplace dynamics?

6. We all experience times of boredom (or lack of challenge) in the workplace. What strategies do you use to overcome these issues? What aspects of your work do you find the most and least engaging?

Week 10: Chapter 10 (The Gift of Work)

Pages 203-209

1. This chapter discusses many reasons why work is an important part of life, and it suggest that those reasons may change as our lives change. Considering where you are in your life right now, why is work important to you? What does it add to your life?
2. Do you agree with the perspective that work is a gift? If so, how is that reflected in your behaviors?
3. Who are your career role models? What did they teach you about work and how do you demonstrate that today?
4. As you wrap up this book, what are your overall feelings about your role as an admin and the future of your career? What are the most important lessons you will take with you? How will you implement those lessons moving forward?

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING

If you enjoyed the book, I would appreciate an honest review on Amazon.

This will help more people find it.

About the Author



Chrissy Scivicque (pronounced “Civic”) is the founder and CEO of CCS Ventures, LLC, a company dedicated to professional development and career advancement training. Chrissy is a certified Project Management Professional (PMP) and certified Professional Career Manager (PCM). She also holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Sonoma State University, CA.

A former C-Level executive assistant, Chrissy has developed and delivered training for administrative professionals inside some of the world's most recognized companies including Accenture, Capital One, Go Daddy, Microsoft, Northrop Grumman, Turner Broadcasting, and more.

Chrissy's work is regularly featured on popular websites including Forbes, US News & World Report, Monster and CareerBuilder. She has published over 500 articles on career-related topics and is the author of *The Proactive Professional*, *The Invisibility Cure*, and *ELEVATE Admins*, all available on Amazon.com.



EAT YOUR CAREER

Chrissy believes that work can be an enriching, *nourishing* experience. She loves helping professionals figure out what that means for them and how to achieve it.

CCS Ventures, LLC (the company behind Eat Your Career) provides professional development training and resources to help you conquer career complacency and find fulfillment at work.

Join Our FREE Webinars

We offer FREE monthly training webinars and Q&A sessions, where Chrissy provides straightforward advice to help address *your* workplace frustrations and career challenges. Sign up to get notified about upcoming sessions here: www.EatYourCareer.com/signup

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