

book nook

By DONNA BOYLE SCHWARTZ

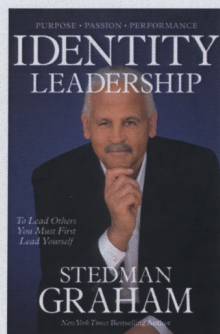


Stedman Graham

'THE ARMY CHANGED MY LIFE'

Stedman Graham's new book spotlights the life skills he learned in military and civilian life

Serving in the U.S. military is a transformative experience for many people, and entrepreneur, motivational speaker and educator Stedman Graham is no exception. The celebrated author, best known as media mogul Oprah Winfrey's longtime partner, has authored a new book titled *Identity Leadership: To Lead Others You Must First Lead Yourself*. The book, Graham's 12th, draws on lessons he learned in his five-year Army tour. *Family* caught up with Graham, who serves as chairman and chief executive of S. Graham & Associates, a management consulting firm, during his book tour to discuss his Army experience and how it influenced his latest educational efforts.



How did your Army experience help shape you as a person?

I did my basic training at Fort Ord in California and was stationed in Landstuhl (Germany) where I worked in administration. I thoroughly enjoyed my time in the military. It was a great opportunity for me to grow, develop and build my life—I really enjoyed the camaraderie. The military taught me skills that stay with me to this day. My advice is everyone should go in the service and get the experience of defending your country, to understand how important it is to be a part of the military that supports your values and what you stand for as a country.

What were the most important lessons you learned in the military?

You start at the bottom and work your way up to create real success. Sometimes you have to break down old systems and bad habits. In the military, you learn to have pride in everything you do, and it helps to build yourself from the bottom up. You learn to respect leadership and chain of command. You have to be able to clean the latrine, and sometimes that means you have to get on your hands and knees with a toothbrush. You have to be able to spit-shine your shoes, clean your brass, make your bed—really fundamental things. You learn to give up your life for what you believe in.

What is the key message that you hope to get across?

I wanted to write a book that would be a culmination of all of my experiences, to teach people how to create self-leadership, so that the more you work on yourself the better person you can be. This message is so important today, because the 21st century is asking us to be self-directed, life-long learners, to be relevant and cognitive thinkers. This book helps to define who we are, specifically around our skills, talents, abilities and what we love. It sets the foundation for growth and development.

How did your military experiences help you with this book?

My military experience helped me in writing this book because life is a journey, and the Army changed my life—it enabled me to be who I am today. 