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JCLD
JOURNAL OF
CHARACTER & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

CENTER FOR CHARACTER & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

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Why We Need Conversations

David Lindsay Douglas R. Lindsay, United States Air Force Academy

People aren't perfect. Which means, we aren't perfect, and therefore, our leaders won't be perfect. That isn't intended to be negative or pejorative. It is human nature to be fallible. Even with the best of intentions, our actions will occasionally fall short. It is a predictable part of the human condition. What this means is that there will be times, in all of our lives, where we are sitting on the other side of our intentions. What occurs at that moment of recognition is consequential for our development and future trajectory. Ideally, we would like the recognition to occur prior to crossing that metaphorical line. However, as previously established, perfection is the aim, not always the reality. For those in the business of character and leader development, this is understood. It is recognized that leadership is a journey. It takes time, intentionality, and diligence. There will be missteps. There will be relationships that need to be rebuilt. Sometimes, trust will need to be reestablished. There may even be consequences that can endure. While we do not cherish these times, they should also not surprise us when they occasionally occur. If we ourselves are fallible, then we should understand that others are also imperfect and afford them the necessary grace, when appropriate. This is a key tenet of development and development can occur through advancements as well as setbacks. That should be an encouraging thought for all.

To some, this may seem like a peculiar topic to write about for a journal, especially for a journal based at a military service academy. However, over the last couple of years, it has become common, if not altogether normal, for individual's shortcomings (even minor ones) to be vilified broadly and socialized openly. This occurs regardless of domain and almost independent of

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the individual's intentions. For leaders, this scrutiny is common to the mantle of leadership. Leaders are held to a higher standard due to the responsibilities that are entrusted to them. The visibility of their actions and decisions are typically clearly discernable to all around them. When mistakes are made, they have significant, enduring, and often immediate consequences not just on the leader, but on many around them. So, accountability in leadership, and with our leaders, is crucial.

However, one of the things that is often overlooked is that leaders, being human, are in a developmental process (like the rest of us). Each leader is on a developmental trajectory that started long before they assumed their current role as a leader and will continue long after they vacate their current position. Leaders are selected for their positions based on many factors. Importantly, two of them are past performance and the potential to serve in that position. Performance is pretty straightforward. We examine what they have done and determine if it is at a level sufficient enough to take on larger responsibilities. Were they effective in what they were given to do? We use that to think about the second factor, potential. Potential is an inference. Since the individual has not held the position before, we are looking at previous factors to make an educated guess on whether they are suitable for the leadership role. In essence, we ideally use all available information to make a supposition that since they were successful in the past, they have a high likelihood to be successful in future. It is why we have the old saying that, "past behavior

is the best predictor of future behavior." We also attribute that to their chance at success. Important in that colloquial phrase is the word predictor. It is really a forecast of what we hope to expect from the individual. Since no forecast is perfect, and to go along with the earlier notion that people are fallible, it should not be surprising that often, there are failures. While no organization would state that they are okay with those failures, they should also not be surprised when they happen.

For the organization, it means that when leaders fail, there may be culpability. Has the organization done their due diligence to not only make sure that the person is ready for the position, but it has also provided them the resources and processes to be successful once selected? It is easy, and common to put the full burden on the individual when failure occurs. However, this is often not simply the case. You may hear a narrative around the idea that the person wasn't ready or didn't prepare as if it was solely their responsibility to prepare for a position that they hadn't held before. While there is certainly preparation that should be taken by the individual leader to develop themselves, they are preparing without the full context of the position. Organizations, however, understand what success looks like for the position. They know what they are hiring or promoting to. They know what is needed. If there is not an alignment between what is needed and who is promoted, then failure is one predictable outcome. In fact, failure rates can be as high as 40% for senior leaders in different domains. The point is, the over vilification of

the individual, while ignoring the involvement of the organization is not only inappropriate, it has developmental consequences as well.

It is important to introduce an important caveat at this point. When referring to mistakes or failure, I am not referring to those leaders who commit crimes or partake in other nefarious behavior. That is another category of intentionality that has appropriate and significant legal consequences. What we are talking about is when a leader finds themselves on the other side of their intentionality. As mentioned previously, we are seeing these mistakes, often minor ones, being ruminated on in painstaking detail. In essence, we are seeing a one mistake

"...accountability in leadership, and with our leaders, is crucial."

system. Taken to the extreme, we are seeing this play out in the media via a new term in our lexicon: cancel culture. While we want to hold people (and ourselves) accountable for our words and deeds, we also have an opportunity to discuss, reflect, and give grace. Mistakes will be made. Leaders behavior will not always align with their rhetoric. But, from a developmental perspective, we must also give room to grow. A developmental path is not always linear. It will not always go up and it is not always in the predicted direction and it does not always have clearly identifiable consequences. That is what

makes leadership challenging. It is why you hear leadership referred to as a journey, not a destination. Those leaders who think they have arrived when they reach a certain position and think there is no more room to grow are those that we often read about.

The point about it being a journey is a significant one.¹ It is why we dedicate an entire issue of the JCLD every year to that point. There is wisdom in the journey. There is a lot



to be learned from other's journeys, sidesteps, and regressions. The mistakes that were made. The challenges faced. The obstacles overcome. The organization's involvement. You see, no leader has ever been successful without at least one mistake. It just doesn't happen. We are human. It is going to happen. When those happen, our first reactions shouldn't

¹ The Fall Issue of the JCLD is focused on conversations with thought leaders from different domains. They can be found at: <https://www.usafa.edu/character/jclid/>

be to cancel one another. We need to hold accountable, encourage, support, AND allow that person to continue to develop. Through leadership conversations, like the ones in this issue, we get a glimpse inside of the thought processes of leaders. What was happening, what they were thinking, and what they did. It is a powerful learning experience. And, equally as interesting, no journey is alike, or exactly like the individual thought it would be. The leader that we are today is the foundation of our leadership tomorrow. The beauty in the process is that we influence the process. And, when we experience mistakes, we learn from them. Otto von Bismarck understood the process when he uttered, "Only a fool learns

us. As organizations, that insight should help us to do things like scrutinize our developmental processes, look and individual needs, and examine position requirements. As you read through this issue of the JCLD, pay attention to the individual's journeys and how they dealt with challenges, took in that experience, and used to refine themselves and their leadership.

In This Issue

The JCLD is published three times a year and is a much larger publication. This smaller issue is focused internally to cadets and highlights three conversations with leaders that are especially applicable regarding leader and character development. Notice that the



"Through leadership conversations, like the ones in this issue, we get a glimpse inside of the thought processes of leaders."

from his own mistakes. The wise man learns from the mistakes of others." We see mistakes all around us. While the first reaction of many is to condemn, from a developmental standpoint, we should be thankful for the example.

At the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA), the purpose is to develop leaders of character. Notice the wording. Not make leaders of character, but develop leaders of character. The process is inherent in the wording. We are all working, developing, and leading in some capacity. We need to understand that others are as well. As such, that should give us a developmental perspective for those around

word conversations is used. We use that term intentionally because it is not just an interview where questions are posed to the individual and they respond. Instead, there is value in the conversation, the back and forth, the asking of questions both ways, the dialogue, and the playing off one another regarding leadership and character. Specifically, we examine leaders across different domains so that some of that contextual flavor of leadership is gained. While there are certainly some leadership characteristics that are effective regardless of domain, the context is a critical leadership factor that is important to capture.

The issue begins with an article resulting from a conversation between the Superintendent of the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA), Lieutenant General Richard Clark and Colonel Kurt Wendt the Director of the Center for Character and Leadership Development at USAFA. In the conversation, Lt Gen Clark reflects over the past year, including its challenges and successes. He also discusses the developmental framework USAFA uses to develop leaders, the Leader of Character Framework. In the article, you will see how Lt Gen Clark approaches his position and how he feels USAFA has dealt with COVID over the past year.

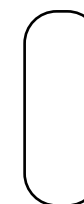
The issue continues with Lieutenant General (Ret, USAF) David Deptula who is the Dean of the Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies. In the conversation, Gen Deptula discusses his background (34 years) in the Air Force and several lessons he learned along the way. He also keys in on the importance of the Core Values and its impact on the force. Gen Deptula also describes how the Air Force is uniquely designed to carry out its mission in relation to the other services, in addition to the importance of fiscal considerations and how that has an influence on how the Air Force accomplishes the mission.

Finally, from the domain of sports, we are fortunate to include a brief conversation with Mike Singletary, NFL Hall of Fame linebacker with the Chicago Bears and football coach. In this enlightening interview, he shares about his faith, the importance of your identity, and knowing who you are and what you stand for. He finishes the conversation with advice on the

value of spending time with and learning from great leaders.

These three conversations are a selection from the larger Fall Issue of the JCLD that can be found at: <https://www.usafa.edu/character/jcld/>. In the larger issue, we more conversations with leaders from the military, business, and academics. We hope you find the conversations with these leaders enlightening and applicable to your own development. If you have any suggestions for leaders (from any domain) who you would like to see us have a conversation with, please contact the Editor in Chief, Dr. Douglas [Lindsay at douglas.lindsay@afacademy.af.edu](mailto:Lindsay_at_douglas.lindsay@afacademy.af.edu).

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Developing Leaders of Character: A Conversation with USAFA Superintendent, Lt Gen Richard Clark

David Lindsay Douglas R. Lindsay, United States Air Force Academy

Mark Kuykendall, United States Air Force Academy

In the little more than one year since Lieutenant General Richard M. Clark returned to the United States Air Force Academy to lead his alma mater, he has overseen one of the most challenging periods in the institution's history. In a recent conversation with Colonel Kurt Wendt, Director of the Center for Character & Leadership Development, USAFA's 21st Superintendent sat down to reflect on the past year, the unique challenges it presented, and the critical importance of character to the development of leaders for our Air Force and Space Force. "Developing leaders of character is our number one priority, and I love that mission," said Lt Gen Clark. "It makes this place very special because it goes beyond academics, athletics, or military training. Being a leader of character is something so big that regardless of what your aspirations are in life, developing at this Academy will help you get there."

Dr. Douglas Lindsay is the Editor in Chief of the *Journal of Character and Leadership Development (JCLD)*. Prior to assuming his current role, he was a Professor and the founding Director of the Masters of Professional Studies Program in the Psychology of Leadership at Pennsylvania State University. He also served in the United States Air Force where he retired after a 22 year career, serving in a multitude of roles, including research psychologist, occupational analyst, inspector general, deputy squadron commander, senior military professor, Full Professor, deputy department head and research center director. He has over well over 100 publications and presentations on the topic of leadership and leadership development. He received a Bachelor's Degree from the United States Air Force Academy (class of 1992), a Master's Degree from the University of Texas at San Antonio, and a Ph.D. in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from Pennsylvania State University.

The mission of developing leaders of character is the foundation that USAFA is built upon. All aspects of cadet development, from the academic curriculum, to athletics and military training are organized around that prime directive. Lt Gen Clark is the first USAFA Superintendent to have also served as Commandant of Cadets, and his influence on the Academy's character development efforts date back to that time. In 2011, he authored the foreword to a foundational document: "Developing Leaders of Character at the United States Air Force Academy: A Conceptual Framework."¹ It explained that the purpose of USAFA is "to develop leaders of character who our nation can count on: leaders equipped to respond to the complexity, uncertainty, and asymmetry of today's world because they possess a firm and stable character that reflects the virtues embodied in our Core Values." This purpose remains true today, as USAFA seeks to grow leaders of character, the future combat leaders who will lead our Nation's Air and Space Forces in a highly complex and uncertain environment.

The Leader of Character Framework is an evidence based framework that describes the approach to developing a leader of character. "The Framework enables us to put our Core Values into action," said Clark. "When we put integrity first, we are embodying what it means to live honorably. When we are committed to service before self, that enables us to lift others to be their best possible selves. And

when we demonstrate excellence in all we do, we elevate performance both as individuals and across our entire Academy community." The framework provides a deliberate, unifying structure to all efforts across the USAFA mission elements, helping all cadets, faculty, and staff to understand the approach and where they fit in. "We are all leaders at USAFA – Every coach, faculty member, airbase wing airman, we must all be leaders of character. Embracing the Framework is something that we should all be aspiring to, making it a part of our leadership every day," said Clark. "Living honorably, lifting others, and elevating performance are the components of the framework, and these are the things I want my kids to do. So, even as a parent, I want to demonstrate those qualities and those ideals to my kids. But also to the airmen that I come into contact every day, to the cadets that I see, and I think it's something that we should all be proud of and that we should all take as a, I think aspirational framework for us to embrace."

As Lt Gen Clark described, the Framework defines a leader of character as someone who:

- Lives honorably by consistently practicing the virtues embodied in the Core Values
- Lifts others to their best possible selves
- Elevates performance toward a common and noble purpose

"The Framework needs to permeate throughout the entirety of USAFA. The athletic

department, the Cadet Wing, the Dean of Faculty – it's very clear how they can embrace it and weave it through everything that they do," said Clark. "But it can't stop there, we have to ask ourselves – how do we do our daily work? When we talk about dignity and respect, how does that relate to the Leader of Character Framework? If you're an honorable leader and you truly want to lift others, then you're going to live a life of dignity and respect, and you're going to embrace those qualities in every interaction that you have with people."

"Developing leaders of character is our number one priority, and I love that mission..."

With that in mind, the Center for Character & Leadership Development is uniquely positioned to enable and enact that mission. As USAFA's Center for all things related to character and leadership, it provides services and support to all faculty, staff, and cadets to assist with individual, team and organizational development. CCLD accomplishes this through research support, integration efforts, experiential learning activities, Senior Scholar inputs, developmental workshops, and the Journal of Character & Leadership Development (JCLD).

Part of carrying out that mandate, is examining what is working and constantly adjusting to make sure that we are the leaders of character that are

being developed are prepared to be successful today and into the future. Along those lines, just as it has impacted campuses and communities across the United States and around the world, the COVID-19 pandemic has presented USAFA with unprecedented challenges, and has forced the institution to think about how to adapt while still meeting mission requirements. While current cadets may be going through a different USAFA



experience than past classes, ultimately this will become a unique aspect of their character and leadership development. "COVID-19 has been as much of a character and leadership development opportunity as anything that we could present to them artificially," said Lt Gen Clark. "I am incredibly impressed and proud of how this institution has taken the incredible challenges of the pandemic. The cadets have been amazingly resilient. They have endured significant hardships but have stepped up and pushed through. They have taken ownership of this challenge as leaders, and have lifted one

¹ <https://www.usafa.edu/app/uploads/21st-Century-LoC-Final-March-2021.pdf>
<https://caccapl.blob.core.usgovcloudapi.net/web/character-development-project/repository/developing-leaders-of-character-conceptual-framework.pdf>

another up. But they didn't do it alone. Our staff, faculty, and coaches have been and continue to be absolutely amazing." It has been a whole of institution effort to adjust to current conditions while still providing critical developmental experiences.

One aspect where this has been most evident is with respect to resilience. In considering how developing character can reinforce leaders against the challenges they will face in their lives and careers, Lt Gen Clark likes to channel the old



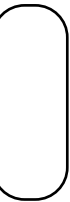
"When we put integrity first, we are embodying what it means to live honorably."

adage from the 6th century Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu: *"Your thoughts become words, your words become actions, your actions become habits, your habits become character, your character is your destiny."* "We have to work the Framework into our daily language, and our daily actions, and then it will become habits. That's how we develop character," said Clark. "But it's also important that we communicate it the right way, and that all of our leaders understand and embrace it – from our cadet leaders to our staff and permanent party. We all have to own it."

While the first year may not have turned out exactly as Gen Clark had predicted, when he reflected back on the year, he modeled the

perfect developmental approach by saying "I'm proud to be a part of it and I'll continue to do whatever I can to help our school and execute our mission better. I'll keep getting out of bed every day, looking for a better way to do it." In uncertain times, such a perspective is exactly what is exactly what is needed.

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Core Values and the Air Force

David Deptula, Lt Gen (Ret), USAF, Dean, Mitchell Institute of Aerospace Studies

Interviewed by: Douglas Lindsay

Lindsay:

Would you mind starting by talking a little bit about your career?

Deptula:

I will try to do this in as condensed a manner as possible, but you know, I was in the Air Force for 34 and a half years. It all started with my enrollment as a ROTC cadet at the University of Virginia. I graduated and was commissioned in 1974. There were 10 pilot candidates in my class, but two months before graduation, we got notification that our induction to active duty would be slipped for a year. That was due to all the pilots coming out of Vietnam. I decided to get a master's degree while I was waiting. Interestingly, out of those 10 pilot candidates in my ROTC class, I was the only one that went on to undergraduate pilot training (UPT) in the Air Force. They were offering incentives to get people not to come on active duty, because they just had too many pilots at that time. So, I came on active duty in 1976. I was fortunate to be one of the first UPT graduates to be assigned an F-15. I was in the second or third class of UPT graduates assigned F-15s right out of

Lieutenant General (Ret) **David Deptula** serves as the Dean of the Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies. Gen Deptula is a world-recognized leader and pioneer in conceptualizing, planning, and executing national security operations from humanitarian relief to major combat. He was the principal attack planner for the Operation Desert Storm air campaign, commander of no-fly-zone operations over Iraq in the late 1990s, director of the air campaign over Afghanistan in 2001, twice a joint task force commander, served on two congressional commissions and was the Air Force's first chief of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR). He is a fighter pilot with more than 3,000 flying hours (400 in combat) including multiple command assignments in the F-15. Gen Deptula is a recognized expert and sought-after commentator around the world as a thought leader on aerospace operations, defense, strategy, and ISR. Gen Deptula has BA and ME degrees from the University of Virginia and a MS degree from National War College. He is also a graduate of the Air Force's Fighter Weapons School. He is also the Perot/Risner Senior Military Scholar at the Center for Character and Leadership Development at the U.S. Air Force Academy, a board member at a variety of organizations, and an independent consultant.



flight school. For the next 10 years, I did what young officers do—learn, grow, and mature in their career field—in my case as an F-15 pilot. I got 1,000 hours flying the F-15 in four years, which is pretty incredible. I was selected as the Pacific Air Forces F-15 aerial demonstration pilot, and graduated from the Fighter Weapons School in the F-15.



“I did what young officers do—learn, grow, and mature in their career field—in my case as an F-15 pilot.”

Forces Staff College for Intermediate Service School and my follow-on assignment was to the Pentagon working in the Air Force doctrine division on the Air Staff. While in that position, I reported to Colonel John Warden. In 1989, I was selected to work for the new Secretary of the Air Force, Dr. Don Rice. I was author, ghost author if you will, of the document *Global Reach-Global Power*, which basically laid out the vision of the Air Force, and what its relevance was in the post-Cold War era. Six months later, Saddam

Hussain invaded Kuwait. I got involved with the planning effort in the Pentagon, and Dr. Rice gave me full authorization to go do that and to work with Colonel Warden. We put together a plan that was known as “Instant Thunder.” Some folks may recognize that. There’s a great book on the subject titled, *The Heart of the Storm*, written by retired Colonel Rich Reynolds.

We thought our planning effort would be over when we took our “Instant Thunder” plan down and briefed General Norman Schwarzkopf on Aug 17, 1990. But General Schwarzkopf asked us to go over to Saudi

Arabia, and brief Lt General Horner, who was acting as the Central Commander forward. Five years prior, Gen Horner was the senior commander of Tyndall Air Force Base and I was his instructor pilot in the F-15. In 1990 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, he asked me to stay as part of his staff, and I became the chief planner for the Desert Storm air campaign where I wrote the attack plans for each and every day of the Desert Storm air campaign.

After that, I came back to Secretary Rice’s office and was involved with building and delivering many briefings as you might imagine. After four years at Headquarters, Air Force, I went back to an operational F-15 assignment at Eglin Air Force Base. I led the 1992 William Tell team, became Deputy Logistics Group Commander, and then after getting promoted to Colonel, I attended National War College. After War College, I was selected by the Chief of Staff to be the Air Force representative to the Commission on Roles in Missions for the Armed Services. It was the first major service roles and missions review that had been accomplished since 1948.

Following that assignment, I had the privilege of going back to the 33rd Fighter Wing at Eglin Air Force Base, this time as the 33rd Operations Group Commander. While I was there, our group went through an operational readiness inspection, and our F-15s executed six operational deployments to Southwest Asia. It was during one of these deployments on June

25, 1996, that a terrorist bomb was detonated outside the Khober Towers housing complex in Saudi Arabia that killed 19 Airmen—10 from the 33rd Operations Group. It was a terrible day and reinforced the risks and ultimate sacrifice that members of the military take.

At the end of 1996, I was called back to Washington and being told I was needed again, this time to be the Air Force representative on the National Defense Panel which was to evaluate the first Quadrennial Defense Review. At the end of 1997, I was selected to go to Turkey to become the Combined Joint Task Force Commander for Operation Northern Watch. In that assignment I oversaw the no-fly zone operations in Northern Iraq, which was a magnificent experience having soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, and coalition partners under my command. We really applied the notion of effects-based operations to the military mission at the time and as a result, eliminated all the surface-to-air missile sites in Northern Iraq.

I was then called back to Washington in September 1999, this time to be the Director of the Air Force’s Quadrennial Defense Review for 2001. Interestingly, I just finished doing a podcast with General John Jumper about what happened on 9/11. I was in the Pentagon on 9/11, two corridors away from where the airplane was flown into the building. A couple of days later, I got a call to go down to Chief Jumper’s office. He told me that he had received a call from the Commander at 9th Air Force requesting me to

become the Commander of the Combined Air and Space Operations Center (CAOC) and do the planning for America's response to 9/11. So, I was the first director of the CAOC for Operation Enduring Freedom.

After nearly three months in Saudi Arabia, I came under pressure from the Air Combat Command commander to take up the assignment that I had been given before 9/11, the Air Combat Command Chief Plans and Programs officer. In that job, I was responsible for putting together a balanced \$27 billion dollar resource plan in the face of significant competing challenges and fiscal limitations. I also built the first force structure flight plan in Air Force history that integrated fighters, bombers, weapons, ISR, and C2 aircraft into a game plan for planning and programming. I followed that assignment by going out to the Pacific to become the Pacific Air Forces Director of Operations, the Vice-Commander of Pacific Air Forces, and then, the Kenney Warfighting Headquarters Commander, which at that time had replaced the numbered Air Force command structure. In that role, I was the standing Joint Force Air Component Commander for all air operations in the Pacific outside of Korea. In late 2004, early 2005, after the tsunami hit South Asia, I was appointed as the air component commander for Operation Unified Assistance, which was the tsunami relief operation. It was the largest humanitarian/disaster relief airlift—in terms of cargo—in Air Force history.

In the spring of 2006, I got a call from the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, then General Buzz Moseley, who said, "Hey, Dave. I've got something I'd like you to do. I would like you to come on board as the Air Force's first three-star Chief of Intelligence." For a minute there, I scratched my head. I thought, hey look, I'm an operator. But it only took a handful of seconds to realize it was a perfect pick, because I had been a consummate user of intelligence my entire career, understanding where its weaknesses and strengths were, so I came back to the Pentagon and stood up the first Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence. After I arrived back in the Pentagon, I convinced General Michael Moseley that he shouldn't make the job just about intelligence—it should have the responsibility for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR). He agreed. About a year later, I made the point to him that it would be smart to move responsibility for unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) underneath my ISR position, and out from operations because UAVs need to be treated as an enterprise—the aircraft, the sensors, the analysts, and the associated intelligence distribution system. It's not just about those little pieces of fiberglass up in the air. It's about the sensors. It's about the distribution system. It's about all of that. And so, he agreed. For the next four years, I oversaw the greatest increase in integration of unmanned aerial vehicles in the Air Force.

I transitioned from active duty into a different uniform in August 2010. I continue my role in trying to help the Air Force, and the Nation to

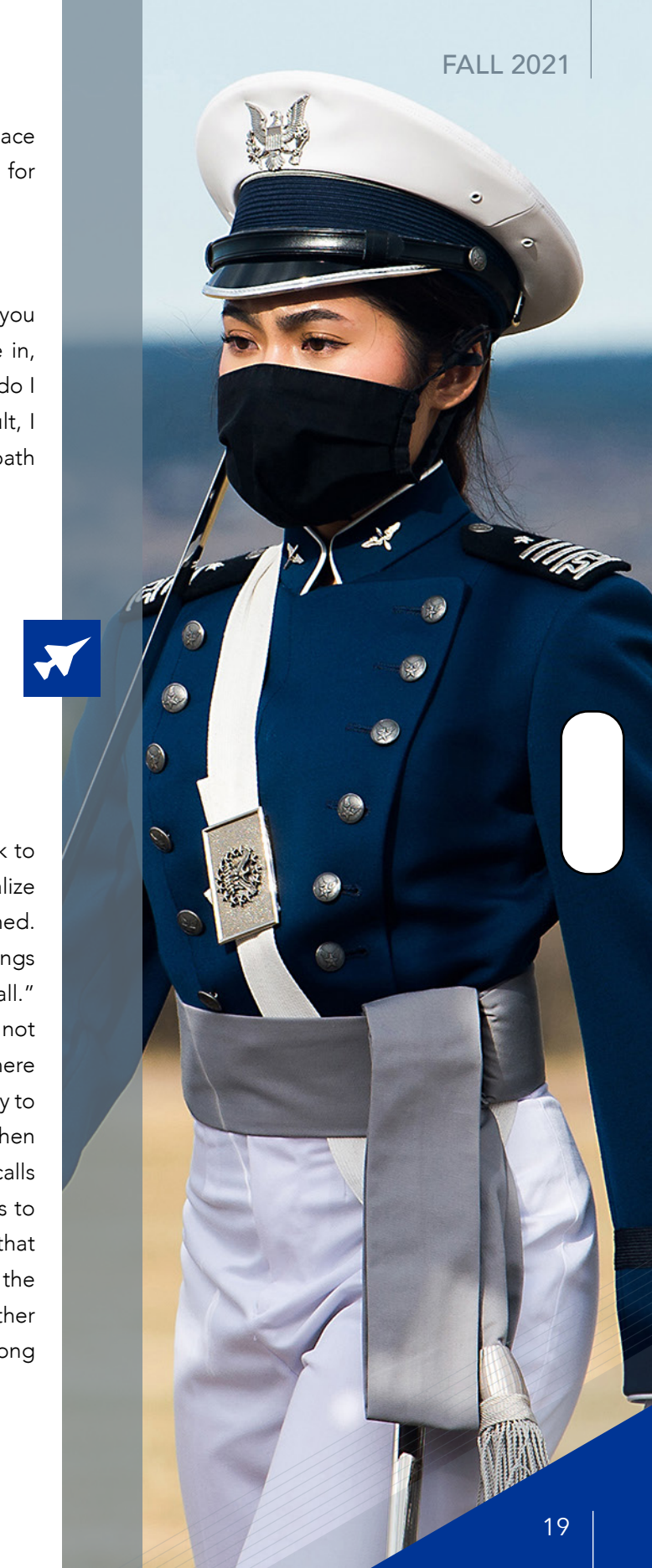
understand the virtues and values of aerospace power as the Dean of the Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies. So, there you go.

Lindsay:

I think that's fascinating, because when you start out in whatever enterprise that you're in, you initially think, "Okay, what kind of path do I need to follow to be successful?" As a result, I think early on people think there is this one path

"...I had been a consummate user of intelligence my entire career, understanding where its weaknesses and strengths were..."

that you can follow. But as I continue to talk to hundreds of senior leaders like yourself, I realize it's not what you would have initially planned. That is important, because one of the things that you kept bringing up was, "I got a call." The truth is, we don't get calls when we're not good at what we do. We don't get calls where we don't have good performance. Your ability to answer the call, be willing to do that, and then perform when needed, resulted in those calls to keep coming. Your ability and willingness to serve in that capacity, whether you thought that was good timing, or at the right time, or the right place, because you may have had other things that you probably wanted to do along the way.




Deptula:

That is a very good summary. When I first got a call saying, "Hey, you're going to go over to be the Combined/Joint Task Force Commander in Turkey," I thought to myself, "What?" But, it happened to be my most enjoyable assignment of all of them. And I enjoyed every one of them. If you look at my career, I wish everyone in the Air Force had the same set of opportunities. Let me explain what I mean. Starting in 1992, after my second tour in the Pentagon, I alternated between headquarters assignments and

staff perspective that people in the operational world generally didn't understand.

One of the things I failed to mention is that I'm the only officer in Air Force history to have been fully combat mission qualified in the F-15 at every rank from Lieutenant to Lieutenant General. That's significant because as a senior commander out in the Pacific, I was fully combat mission qualified in a fighter. So, when I'd go down to the 199th Fighter Squadron of the Hawaii Air National Guard that was flying F-15s,



"I also built the first force structure flight plan in Air Force history that integrated fighters, bombers, weapons, ISR, and C2 aircraft into a game plan for planning and programming."

operational assignments. Then, over time, the level of responsibility went up. It's unique because I was able to bring back to the Headquarters Air Force staff, operational perspectives particularly from the joint operational experience I had that most people in the Air staff simply didn't have. And vice versa, when I went back to operational assignments. I could provide insights from a

they treated me just like a Captain. I wasn't one of those visiting Generals that had a special pilot sitting in the back seat to make sure that they didn't kill themselves. I could beat anybody in the squadron on a straight up high-aspect basic fighter maneuvers (BFM) mission—all but one guy. There's this one guy who was really, really good, but anyway, I digress. So, what was

unique about my career was the movement back and forth between senior operations position and senior staff leadership positions. I knew and worked for every Chief and Secretary of the Air Force going back to Larry Welch and Don Rice.

Lindsay:

That balance seemed to pay dividends for both operations and headquarters. Thanks for sharing that background. I was wondering if I could get your thoughts on the role of character in leadership?

Deptula:

I think that we are very fortunate in the Department of the Air Force as we have three overarching tenets that stand as a great guide to leadership and character. Those are the core values of, integrity first; service before self; and excellence in all we do. Those have stuck in my mind since they were initially instituted by General Ronald Fogleman. They are one of two sequences of words that have remained constant in the Air Force since their original inception. The other one being the vision of the Air Force of *Global Vigilance, Global Reach, and Global Power*.

With respect to *integrity first*, an airman or a guardian, must be a person of integrity, courage, and conviction. They've got to be willing to control their impulses and exercise courage, honesty, and accountability, in order to do what's right. And, as many people have said, even when no one's observing them.

Now, *service before self* means that the military professional's duties take precedence over personal desires. Every airman or guardian, is expected to have the discipline to follow rules, exhibit self-control, and possess respect for the beliefs, authority, and work, of others.

Finally, regarding *excellence*, what it means is that airman and guardians strive for continued improvement in self and service, in order to advance the capabilities of the Air Force and the Space Force as well as achieve greater accomplishment and performance for themselves, and their community. What I'd tell you is that I think it's important to continually reinforce these fundamentals, because they do stand as guideposts. Cadets, faculty, and staff at the Air Force Academy must demonstrate a sophisticated combination of these tenets, by employing responsibilities, skills, and knowledge, as members of the profession of arms, as they relate to service in the Air Force and the Space Force.

With respect to current events unfolding in Afghanistan, these tenets, and how they are applied, are coming to the forefront of discussion. You see it all over the news, and it just reiterates their importance. Let me give you a couple of examples. With a complete U.S. military exit as the goal, U.S. citizens in Afghanistan, personnel at risk, should have been evacuated well prior to removing our primary forces, particularly the asymmetric advantage of

our airpower in country. Second, the evacuation was driven by the calendar versus conditions. This guaranteed that American citizens would be left behind. I would tell you; military actions should be conditions based, and should not be driven by arbitrary timelines, and certainly not by timelines driven by political opportunity, like getting our forces out prior to the 20th Anniversary of 9/11. So, the question is, how are these decisions made and why? Now, I don't have the answers. It would be presumptuous at this early stage to guess at what they are, and it will take an in-depth investigation to determine. But, they must be answered, and appropriate action taken, because as a result of the debacle of a hasty withdrawal from Afghanistan, extremists have been emboldened, not just in Afghanistan, but around the world because they view the U.S. now weaker than ever before. Furthermore, the loss of confidence in the United States for our allies in Europe and the Indo-Pacific region is going to reduce U.S. ability to influence events around the world. It undermines U.S. National Security. Unfortunately, what's not apparent is a path to recovery, but that highlights one of the major current issues that directly relate to leadership and character.

Let me offer you one more. Another topic that's directly related to character and leadership at a strategic level, and I think this is something that, too often, folks at the Academy don't get exposure to, but it's the fundamental issue of U.S. Defense Strategy and the resources allocated to achieve it. Simply put, there exists a growing

strategy resource mismatch. The strategy calls for more defense resources, but Congress ignores that. And frankly, the Pentagon does, to a degree, also. Let me give you an example. The current Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) planning guidance calls for more of the attributes provided by the Department of the Air Force in order to meet the challenges of the current National Defense Strategy. But at the same time, the Office of Defense fiscal guidance, or budgetary guidance, does not reflect that focus in terms of resource allocation, because it gives each of the services roughly an equal share of the budget. If you go back to 2018, Congress directed the Department of the Air Force to identify, in a resource unconstrained study, just what force structure they actually need to meet the demands of the National Defense Strategy. You may recall, the answer was 386 operational squadrons. That's a 24 percent increase over what we have today. When was the last time, Doug, that you heard a discussion about how the Air Force is planning to get to the 386 operational squadrons?

Lindsay:
I haven't.

Deptula:
Right. As an institution, are we standing up for the resources we need or are we going along to get along, by not making waves with the other services, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and Congress, by silently accepting the arbitrary budgets they issue, that we know are not

sufficient to accomplish our assigned missions? The Department of the Air Force remains the world's preeminent force in Air, Space, and Cyberspace. We maintain that distinction by maintaining our objective of Global Vigilance, Global Reach, and Global Power. But, our position is rapidly slipping, in part because of the social and fiscal pressures to go along to get along. So, I'd tell you it's time to examine the current strategic issues that I've highlighted here, in the context of the Department of the Air Force core values of integrity, service, and excellence.

there", but in getting there, and understanding that you look at it as a scale from zero to 10, and you sit there and you start to feel good and go," Okay. I'm getting up to about a nine". And then by the time you reach a nine, you realize it's not a scale of one to 10. It's really a scale of one to a 100. So then, I need to keep going, by time I maybe I get to 95 or 96, I realize it is bigger. That aspect of it being aspirations is very important.

You also made a point about how the DoD needs those attributes of the Air Force, but they don't necessarily line up. I was wondering, can you talk a little bit more about those attributes?



"...I'd tell you it's time to examine the current strategic issues that I've highlighted here, in the context of the Department of the Air Force core values of integrity, service, and excellence."

Lindsay:

I appreciate that, because you hit on a lot of different points, starting with the idea of the core values. I think you're right. They're really waypoints. What I appreciate about the core values is that, they're not destinations. They're aspirational. There has to be a continued, increased focus as we move up as leaders, on what does excellence mean for me at this level? It's not necessarily tactical. It's operational, and strategic, and in your case, often enterprise, country wide, or even coalition wide. So, it is the aspect of it being grounded, not in, "I got

When you talk about that, are you saying those focused on the core values, or are there some specific attributes that you see?

Deptula:

I'm talking about the actual mission capabilities, military capabilities that the Air Force supplies, like range and payload, the ability to penetrate, the ability to provide 24/7/365 intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance, and then, the ability to accomplish events in quantity, at range, and rapidly. When you look at the Pacific—I told you I was the Kenney Warfighting Headquarters

Commander out there—I used to get sick and tired of listening to my Navy friends talk about, “Oh, this is a marathon theater, you know. We’ve got the tyranny of distance out here. We’ve got 16 times zones.” And I’d remind them, I’d go, “Yeah, you have 16 times zones, so you know the way you conquer the tyranny of distance is by going 600 miles an hour in an airplane, not going 20 miles an hour in a ship.”



“...you can’t have integrity without character, and you can’t have character without integrity.”

That’s a long answer to your question. The defense guidance says, hey, we need more of this aerospace stuff, but then, the planning, the budgetary guidance says, by the way, we’re not going to give you any additional money. We want additional capacity and capability out of you, but we’re not going to give you any more money to do it. But, we’re going to maintain the same size of the Army. We’re not going to use it in the Pacific to the degree that we might in other locations. It doesn’t mean the Army’s not important. I want to have the strongest Army, Navy, Air Force, Space Force,

also be an open hand. We saw that in Operation Unified Assistance. We just saw it with the evacuation of Kabul. So, what I’m talking about are those capabilities that aerospace power is bringing to our defense equation. That’s what is necessary to meet the needs of the peer threats that we are facing today. It’s important to recognize that the Air Force is the indispensable force when it comes to joint force operations. We cannot conduct any joint force operation, none, without some element of the Department of the Air Force involved. You can’t say that about any other service.

When Operation Unified Assistance started on December 28, 2004, they started to get the USS Mercy hospital ship in San Diego, ready. It departed San Diego on January 5, 2005 and by the time it got off the coast in Indonesia, it was 34 days later and the operation was essentially already concluded. Operation Unified Assistance was a mobility operation. The way you solved that was with airpower. Many people think about airpower as a clenched fist—it can

and Marine Corps, in the world. But, we have to adjust for the strategy, if in fact, we have limited resources. If Congress isn’t going to plus up the Department of Defense where it needs to be, then inside the Department of Defense, we need to start making decisions on the basis of cost per desired effect. If your desired effect is rapid, long-range reach, with high payload, the Air Force is your solution, not the Army.

Lindsay:

When you take what you just said on the idea of fixed resources, and you hear the Chief say we want to have airpower anytime, anywhere, that is not a resource constrained statement, or a vision. It is actually quite the opposite. I appreciate you talking about those attributes, because what you’re talking about are these things that are uniquely the Air Force. You’ve also talked about some of the things that are uniquely about leadership—the things that we need from our people. As you start talking about trying to make decisions, what can I do with what I’m given—again to me—leadership, character, integrity, those things become magnified... because you’re making choices between, not just “do I want this airframe?”, “do I want this capacity?” — but also about the ability to wage war, life, and death, potentially lose-lose scenarios, not necessarily win-win scenarios.

Deptula:

Right. You got it.

Lindsay:

So, with that in mind, what are your thoughts about getting back to some more of those core values of integrity, service, excellence, and character? When you’re talking about this type of leadership, and certainly at the levels that you’ve been at, a lot of people get into trouble in areas of discretion. It’s not necessarily about not knowing your job. It’s about making those bad choices, or it’s about prioritizing things wrong, or not necessarily doing the right thing. Any thoughts about how character and leadership are intertwined? We talk about them oftentimes separately, but in reality, they are more integral than I think a lot of people give it credit for.

Deptula:

Yes, you can’t have integrity without character, and you can’t have character without integrity. It’s an interesting proposition, and I think back to one of my taglines when I was Chief of Air Force Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance, that you can’t have intelligence without surveillance and reconnaissance. And, the only reason we do surveillance and reconnaissance is to acquire intelligence. So, I agree with you, that character, leadership, and integrity, are integral. They are three parts of a triangle, or three legs. They are three legs of a stool, and the stool won’t work if one of those legs isn’t around.

Lindsay:

It also doesn’t work effectively if one of them is underdeveloped. For example, it’s not like we can just be excellent at our job and not care

about service. If character is underdeveloped, you've got a wobbly stool either way. And, you've got a problem.

Deptula:

You've got me thinking here as I go back and I look at my career. First, I was blessed by a wonderful mentor, my dad. My dad was in the Air Force. He retired as a Lieutenant Colonel. He was not a pilot. He was in Research and Development. But, I've known no one in my life that was more dedicated to the virtues and values of air and space, than he was. I went to the University of Virginia, Mr. Jefferson's university. He said, "Son, you need to have a goal in life." One day when we were walking around the school, he goes, "I've got one for you. It's a Thomas Jefferson quote. It's on the south gate. "Seek the path of honor, the light of truth, and the will to work for mankind." I thought, "Yeah, that's a good one. That's going to be my tagline for my movement forward." That was ingrained into me by my dad, and he would reiterate that periodically, as time went on, starting in college. Then, probably after I'd gone to Intermediate Service School, or once you start thinking about goals...what is it that you want to do, I tried to set one up for myself. I thought about the goal of being a general officer. No, that won't work. First, it's too covetous. Second, from my perspective goals should not be about rank. They should be about having an impact. So, what I came up with is this; "to have a positive policymaking influence on the Air Force." That became my goal for my Air Force career.

As I look back on that, and I think about that moment, that worked pretty good. And here's why. It's not connected with rank. It turns out that I achieved that goal when I was Lieutenant Colonel; as the author Global Reach-Global Power that still is fundamental in Air Force doctrine; and then as a planner in the Gulf War, coming back and translating some of what we did into organizational changes inside the Air Force. But, it didn't stop. The beauty of that goal that I laid out is, even though I achieved it as a Lieutenant Colonel, it remained in effect as I elevated in rank. So, it continued to be a motivator, but it didn't stop once I achieved it. There was another level to work toward.

Lindsay:

Exactly. I like that because it goes back to that idea of the core values. It's bigger than ourselves. So, and I think that focus, not on a rank, but on the ability to have influence, allowed you to focus, whether intentionally, or maybe it was just a script running in the background, a mental model of that's what you wanted to do, to have influence. If you had been solely focused on a rank, you might have not taken a couple of those phone calls. You might not have done some of those opportunities, and said, "No. I'm not really sure how that fits. I need to go hit this gate. I need to do this because that's where I need to be in order to just set my next promotion up." Because the goal was larger than yourself, or something that wasn't tied to a position, you were able to keep that open. I think you hit on something there that, I think a lot of times, people miss. If I focus on what

simply I can do just transactionally, we can miss the opportunity to really have that influence at a much larger level. That gets into that whole idea of a calling. And, I know you are still making a difference enterprise wide, in your position, through your influence. I think that's a very critical point. I don't think young leaders get that all the time. Some leaders never get that. They never grow, because their vision is only about where they can be.

endeavor you're involved with, you're not interested in self (core value of Service Before Self). You're interested in the betterment of the institution, or the organization, that you're trying to change. That's the one segment of advice that I would give to folks in college. Now, they might be too young to really appreciate and understand that, but I would tell them that, just stick it in the back of their cranium.



"...the way that you succeed as you grow more senior is by properly dealing with people—success is all about human relations."

I know we only have a few minutes left and I have a question I like to ask, if current day David Deptula could go back to ROTC Cadet Deptula and give some advice on leadership, knowing what you know now, what would you say?

Deptula:

Well, first, I would like to go back, but I'd like to go back with the knowledge that I have now. Obviously, you learn a lot along the way, but I like to keep things relatively simple, so I've got two. The first one is, if you want your ideas accepted, then, you need to convince your boss that your ideas are really his, or her, ideas. Number two, to reinforce that, you shouldn't worry about who gets the credit, because fundamentally, if you're trying to achieve a positive policy making influence in the Air Force, or in whatever

Now, here's a more practical one, and this is not what you're going to expect, but my dad was in Research and Development. He was in Air Force Systems Command. He worked on nuclear weapons effects testing. It was very science and technology focused, and so, when I went to the University of Virginia, I majored in Astronomy. I was looking forward to perhaps becoming an astronaut. I thought that the Social Sciences, things like Psychology and History, were actually soft subjects that really weren't that relevant. Science and technology was where it was at. But, if I was to go back, and I actually advise this today, when I have college folks, or interns, or fellows, come and ask me for advice... As I grew more and more senior, I realized the value of the two courses that I eschewed when I was in college, but was forced



to take, and those were Psychology and History. I tell them the importance of making sure that they have plenty of Psychology and History, because the way that you succeed as you grow more senior is by properly dealing with people—success is all about human relations. I saw that with the way General Horner worked with General Schwarzkopf, in how he brought him over to his perspective, by working with him as a human being.



“...success is all about human relations.”

Then, history is the other thing that is fundamental to success, not just U.S. history, but also your service’s history. Only in that manner can one understand what has gone before; what has worked, and what has not. There is simply not enough time in one’s career to personally accumulate the wisdom of those who have faced the same or similar challenges to the ones that you will have to deal with. This is why for the last 10 years, I’ve been trying to get the Air Force Academy to make Air Force History a core curriculum requirement. I’d like to start by at least having them teach it. The Air Force Academy doesn’t even teach a course in Air Force History. It’s fundamentally important, regardless of what discipline you’re going to go into, to understand your service’s history.

Lindsay:

To understand the profession. Understand what it is that the Air Force is about. I appreciate

you bringing that up, because I know there’s always a bit of this pull to be technical. We have to do STEM.¹ And it is important to have that basic knowledge, that basic cognitive ability, that level that you have to be tactically good at what you do. But at some point, that’s just the cost of entry into the room. If you don’t get the other stuff, at some point you are going to look around the room and go, “Everybody here is at least as smart of me, if not smarter than me.” So, it isn’t just about that. I appreciate you sharing your story about how, not only were you around senior leaders, it sounds like you paid attention to those senior leaders, how they lead, what they did, and that opportunity to grow and develop yourself.

♦ ♦ ♦

¹ Science, Technology, Engineering, & Math (STEM)



Know Who You Are

Mike Singletary, NFL Hall of Fame, Chicago Bears

Interviewed by: Douglas Lindsay

Lindsay:

Would you mind sharing a little bit about your journey, and maybe some thoughts about what you've learned about leadership along the way. Certainly faith is a big aspect of who you are. We talk about that with respect to character, who you are. So anything you'd be willing to share along the ideas of leadership and character would be great.

Singletary:

I think first of all, we're living at a time in our society where leadership is not a trait that is regarded as very valuable. I think what's happening right now in our world is more and more leaders are quiet. I think leaders today are paralyzed by the fear of someone calling them prideful, not team players, and arrogant. I think that it's really, in our country right now, a time more so than any other for leaders to rise, not be afraid, and not be paralyzed. To make sure that if you feel that you're a leader, and we're all leaders in some respect, but if we feel that we are a leader, then one of the first things that we must acquire is courage. As a leader, there will be times that you will be afraid. There will be a time to stand alone. There'll be times that you are in a room, and everybody's saying the same thing on one side of the room, and you're the only one that's standing for what you believe is right. I've been in that situation where they say, "All you have to do is come over here, then we don't have to argue." But when you believe something and you know what to be right, I don't care if the whole world is against you. For leaders, it is so important that they know who they are. Because if I know who I am in God, then I know that I always

Mike Singletary is a retired professional football player. He spent 12 years as a linebacker with the Chicago Bears, is a 10-time Pro Bowl selectee, a three-time NFL Defensive Player of the year, Super Bowl Champion, a team captain for 10 years, and culminated his career with selection into the Professional Football Hall of Fame (1998). Following football, he spent 10 years as a consultant supporting businesses elevate their strategies. In 2003, he started a coaching career with the Baltimore Ravens as a linebackers coach, moved to the San Francisco 49ers to be a linebackers coach and became the head coach for two years, and followed that up with three years with the Minnesota Vikings, and a year with the Los Angeles Rams.

have someone with me. For me, that is my faith. I believe that if God is with you, you're the majority. If I have that perspective in life, I'm going to be someone very, very difficult, or safe to handle. So I think that's one of the main things. The first thing is identity, knowing who they are, and they can't be swayed, they can't be bought, they will not compromise. They will not give in. They will not quit. They will do the right thing, they will be above reproach at all cost. I think that's number one.

Lindsay:

I think that idea of identity is really important because I think oftentimes we tend to see our identity as things we do, not necessarily who we are, right? We might be successful in one domain, for example, my identity as a football player and I tend to see myself and my success in that light. But it's much greater than that. Who we are, as much more than just what we do. It's so much more than that.

Singletery:

If who we are becomes what we do, we are vulnerable. We're vulnerable because what we do can always be taken. Because it's something that someone gave me, allowed me to do, whatever. That's why my identity must be from the inside out, and not from the outside in, external or something that is attached to me. It must be something that is in me and not detachable, not tangible, but something that is interwoven into the thread of my soul.

Lindsay:

When was it for you that reality hit? You came from a tough home life where you were called to be the man early on in your life. You had success in football, which allowed you some opportunities. When was it in your life that reality of, my identity of who I choose to be, was going to be the way that you are going to live your life for the rest of your life?

Singletery:

It's really interesting, because all leaders grow, and we grow in stages. We grow in levels. There was a time as a young man, my leadership was by force, and you were either with me or you against me. You were either on my side, or you were not. If you didn't say what I'm saying, you're wrong. If you were not going to walk with me then oh, you're wrong. If you like this person that I don't like, you're wrong. And so, as a young man that was my form of leadership, if I could look back on it and just be honest.

My dad, I did not like him. And because I didn't like him, I wanted to be better than him. I wanted to redo the things that I felt that he had messed up with the Singletery name. I wanted to restore pride, that I felt that he had tarnished it, so that was my driving force to begin with. Then the Lord took me through a point of forgiving my dad, and it allowed me to have to get my strength and my drive from somewhere else. It could no longer be from hate. It had to go from hate to freedom. I was

the released from the hate. Now, I'm beginning to find that source in me of strength. As I began to understand the freedom that I had, I could play the game of football, live my life, be who I was, and be free from the pain of my past and realized that I could be forgiven, now I can move to love. And joy. But love is the hardest one. No, I should say love is difficult. Joy is the hardest one. And it's joy is the road to peace because at some point in time, none of that other stuff matters. When you have a leader who is free, he loves who he is, even though he doesn't have what Joe has, he doesn't have

"For leaders, it is so important that they know who they are."

with Jim has, he's free. You go from that to loving unconditionally because of the work that has already been done, and I just have to receive it. It's already been done, we make life too hard, and to be a leader, I just need to be who I am. I just need to be, and move away from doing, and being brings about the joy.

Lindsay:

And it really just unburdens us from all that past, all that guilt, all that other stuff, right? It also brings in that idea of just being to really kind of an aspect of service, and wanting to serve others as a leader. Being able to not be about me, but being about the business of being in the service of others. As we are called to be. Is that part of why you wanted to move

into coaching, and be in that aspect so that you can serve others, to be in that role, to be that example, and pass that on?

Singletery:

You know, the biggest reason that I believe that I was in coaching for the time that I was, was to be a head coach. You know, people go,



"Well, why do you want to be a head coach?" Because I didn't trust those that were leading it. I always knew that whoever I'm leading, it's going to be about them. I am going to make decision based on their behalf. I'm not going to be a selfish leader, I'm not going to make them stay there until two in the morning knowing that they have a newborn baby, and knowing that they have responsibilities as a father. If I'm not helping my coaches be better men so that they can be better husbands, so that they can be better fathers, if I'm not helping them,

and if they're not seeing what I want to see in them, what I'm trying to teach them, if they're not seeing it in me, and I'm just talking about it— I'm sending the wrong message. So, I knew that I could be trusted, to be the example. And that's the thing about a leader when a leader is trying to be who he should be, he's a leader.



"...I knew that I could be trusted, to be the example.."

Lindsay:

That's powerful because now you're changing lives. Now you're making a difference. Now, you're leading from your position of strength because of who you are, right?

Singletery:

Yes, and I don't have to second guess myself. I don't have to worry about it. What is Jim going to think about me if I make this decision? What if I get fired? What if I get criticized? I don't have to worry about it because I'm free, right? Freedom is power.

Lindsay:

So, with that in mind advice would you have for young leaders in terms of what they need to focus on early on in their careers? Is it that idea of finding yourself, finding your identity, understanding what you stand for?

Singletery:

I think the best advice that I can give young leaders, is to seek out other leaders who you know are great leaders, and ask to spend time with them, ask them how much time can they spend with you, and seek to be in their presence.

Lindsay:

I think that's important because we're all influenced by different people. We're influenced by those who we put in our lives, right? We're influenced by the books we read, the people we hang around. That's important because oftentimes we allow ourselves to be influenced by whoever's loudest, whoever's in front of us, and/or whoever has what we want. I think it's easy to get sidetracked.

Singletery:

Absolutely.

♦♦♦



Resources



LEADER OF CHARACTER FRAMEWORK

The United States Air Force Academy is firmly grounded in the Leader of Character Framework, creating an environment where cadets and faculty alike own, engage, and practice the habits of honorable thoughts and actions in line with an identity of a leader of character. The framework defines a "leader of character" as someone who:

- Lives honorably by consistently practicing the virtues embodied in the Core Values;
- Lifts others to their best possible selves; and,
- Elevates performance toward a common and noble purpose.

<https://www.usafa.edu/character/>



NATIONAL CHARACTER AND LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM

Several people highlighted in the Fall 2021 Journal for Character and Leadership Development have also been featured as speakers at the Academy's National Character and Leadership Symposium. View Dr. Koldtiz and Rodney Bullard's videos from NCLS below.

[Dr. Koldtiz Video](#)

[Rodney Bullard's Video](#)



*Integrity First,
Service Before Self,
Excellence in All We Do*





JOURNAL OF CHARACTER & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The Journal of Character and Leadership Development (JCLD) is dedicated to bringing together the expert views of scholars and leaders who care about both character and leadership, and to the integration of these vitally-important concepts.

JCLD is produced at the U.S. Air Force Academy. It is motivated by, but not exclusively concerned with, preparation of cadets to lead as officers of character in service to our Nation.

Combining quality, peer-reviewed scholarship and the experiential perspectives of leaders at all levels, JCLD aims to enhance intellectual understanding and empower real-world development of the effective, character-based leadership that both individuals and organizations need to succeed in a complex and demanding world.

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