FEATURE ARTICLES

Lifting Others

Michele Johnson, United States Air Force Academy

Steven Jones, United States Air Force Academy

Robert Reimer, United States Air Force Academy

Hans Larsen, United States Air Force Academy

Introduction

During one of their many conversations, Colonel Murphy mentioned to Captain Johnson that she would be a squadron commander someday. Although she was a little surprised, she appreciated his confidence. As her supervisor, Col Murphy believed in Capt Johnson's abilities when she was not yet able to see for herself. He projected an image of what the future might look like, and he projected an image of a "possible self" she could not yet imagine. Knowing someone else was mindful of her development motivated Capt Johnson to work toward achieving that possibility. Prior to Col Murphy saying she would be a squadron commander someday, she could not think that far into the future. She was busy completing day-to-day, short-term tasks. However, Murphy knew it was part of his responsibility to develop her in the longer term. Even as a busy group commander, he was mindful of others and their roles in the organization. He helped Capt Johnson see a version of herself she could not yet visualize; he motivated her to work toward that possibility; and he took the time to guide her along the way. In short, Col Murphy's actions represented what the Air Force Academy describes as lifting others.

In another vignette, a few years prior, Senior Master Sergeant Prudich closed the office door and said, "LT, let's talk." Nervously, First Lieutenant Johnson listened to his feedback. He proceeded to mentor her, a young officer who had exhibited a bit of an attitude when things did not go exactly as planned with one of their senior-ranking

Dr. Michele E. Johnson is an Assistant Professor for Officer Development Integration in the US Air Force Academy's (USAFA) Center for Character and Leadership Development. In this role, Dr. Johnson partners with faculty and staff to integrate character and leadership education and training across the 47-month cadet course of instruction. Dr. Johnson also teaches leadership core classes to junior and senior cadets. In addition, during her 25-year active duty career, Colonel (Retired) Johnson commanded squadrons at USAFA and Basic Military Training (BMT), and earned her master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Colorado. Prior to her current position, Dr. Johnson served on the faculty at Air University in the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies and was Dean of Students at the Air Command and Staff College. Her extensive experience encompasses pre-commission education at USAFA, enlisted accession education at BMT, and officer professional military education at Air University.

co-workers. The Senior Non-Commissioned Officer knew it was part of his role to develop the young officers he worked with, even though they outranked him. Looking back, Lt Johnson appreciated the time SMSgt Prudich took to motivate her and to guide her back to a better path. His efforts to lift others reminded her that she could do better, and he held her accountable to that for the rest of the time they worked together.

What can we learn from these stories? They illustrate what lifting others looks like in action. Effective leaders accomplish the mission and lift others to their best possible selves. *Lifting others* involves "exerting a positive influence upon themselves and others" (Quinn & Quinn, need year, p. 2). We can all think back to someone who helped guide us in our personal or professional development. Someone who lifts others can be a parent, a friend, a supervisor, a coach, an instructor, or even a subordinate. In addition, the act of lifting others does not have to be a big, formal act. Lifting others also happens in small moments.

Lifting others is a process that describes accomplishing tasks and the mission with a specific focus on developing others. The process involves interdependent relationships within an organizational context. Developing the untapped potential in those around us is an important way to achieve the mission. The purpose of this paper is to examine the practice of lifting others as a strategy to being a leader of character. The Air Force Academy defines a leader of character as someone who respects the dignity of others and

practices habits consistent with the Air Force Core Values by: *Living Honorably, Lifting Others to their best possible selves, and Elevating Performance* toward a common and noble purpose (USAFA Manual 36-3526, 2022). While lifting others has been broadly defined by the Air Force Academy (CCLD, 2011), our contribution is to take a deeper look and move from broad concepts to practical application.

Lifting others is something practiced and habituated by leaders. We present five leader responsibilities to suggest key actions individuals can practice in their daily roles as leaders and leader-developers. Five leader responsibilities essential to lifting others include:

- being mindful of others,
- helping others envision their best possible selves,
- motivating others to work toward their best possible selves,
- guiding others in their progress,
- creating and nurturing a culture of accountability

Before exploring each of these responsibilities, we want to clarify our use of the term leader. We use the term to refer to any person who influences others to contribute to organizational effectiveness. Lifting others does not require members to supervise anyone or to hold a formal leadership role, but does require them to practice influence. Anyone who is influencing others is acting as a leader and can practice lifting others to enhance organizational performance. Lifting others may involve, but does not require a particular status

Steven K. Jones holds both a M.S. and a PhD in Psychology from the University of Oregon. He has served on the faculty at the United States Air Force Academy since 1996, and he is currently a Professor in the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership. There, he oversees the department's core introductory psychology course and conducts research related to teaching and learning. Prior to his current role, he served as USAFA's Director of Academic Assessment, Associate Dean for Educational Innovation, and Senior Associate Dean.

within an organizational hierarchy. In our opening vignettes, Col Murphy outranked Capt Johnson, and he was in a good position to lift Capt Johnson. However, SMSgt Prudich lifted Lt Johnson when he mentored her, even though she outranked him. Most organizational contexts are rooted in hierarchical relationships – the military and the Air Force Academy are no exception. However, there are many circumstances where junior organizational members can practice lifting higher-ranking members. In short, any individual can lift another person, and another person can be lifted by any individual.

Leader Responsibilities

In recognizing the importance of lifting others in the process of developing leaders of character, the following questions remain—What responsibilities do we have as leaders when it comes to lifting others, and how can we best develop the skills to lift others? The following five responsibilities are not exhaustive but help to operationalize the practice of lifting others and provide ways in which we can develop lifting others as a skill set.

Responsibility #1: Lift others by being mindful of others.

To be able to engage in the process of lifting others, leaders first need to be mindful of others- prioritizing relationships with those around them and what those relationships need in the context of the organization. Being a leader is more than just giving motivational speeches and setting a great vision. Leaders also need to be aware of, and have regard for, the people they work with, whether in a supervisory role, as peers, or as subordinates. Being mindful of others allows leaders to get to know the people they work with and to see them more clearly as individuals who want to feel valued. Being mindful of others also helps us realize we are not alone in our endeavors. The people who are alongside us in our professional and personal developmental journeys can help us as we learn and grow.

Empathy. A key skill for becoming mindful of others is having empathy toward others (Quinn & Quinn, 2015). Dr. Brené Brown, a researcher on leading with courage and vulnerability, defines empathy as "connecting with people so we know we're not alone when we're in struggle" (Brown, 2019, p. 1). She goes on to explain that, "Empathy is a way to connect to the emotion another person is experiencing; it doesn't require that we have experienced the same situation they are going through" (Brown, 2019, p. 1).

The good news is that our empathy skills are not static—we can develop our empathy skills over time, but it takes practice. Practicing empathy can be as simple as being kind, being curious, refraining from judgment, actively listening, and communicating that the other person is not alone in their feelings (Brown, 2018, 2019). The positive influence of having empathy for another person includes being able to take

---

Robert D. Reimer, PhD, Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Air Force, is an Associate Professor, Senior Military Faculty Member, and the Deputy Chief of the Research and Scholarship Division in the Center for Character and Leadership Development at the United States Air Force Academy. Bob is leading efforts to establish the Center for Character and Leadership Development as a focal point for disseminating, producing, and encouraging research in the areas of character and leadership development and the profession of arms. He advises the Academy's assessment community to develop a holistic picture of institutional character and leadership efforts. Bob is an awarded leader and educator with experiences enhancing performance of individuals, teams, and organizations in educational, professional, and austere environments. He has applied experiences advancing the performance of global companies, government organizations, professional associations, and educational institutions.

another person's perspective, which helps break down biased stereotypes, and accepting and appreciating the differences we see in others (Goleman, 1995). As an added bonus, focusing on helping others by empathizing with them often results in improvements in our own performance (Quinn & Quinn, 2015). Overall, being mindful of others, to include prioritizing relationships with those around us and practicing our empathy skills, is an excellent way to build a foundation for our lifting others toolkit.

Responsibility #2: Lift others by helping them envision their "best possible selves."

The Leader of Character Framework (CCLD, 2011) intentionally focuses on lifting others to their best possible selves, and it is the last portion of that statement that is the focus of our second responsibility. Lifting others involves more than just helping someone complete tasks or achieve success—it involves helping them become the best possible version of themselves. As a first step in enabling that to happen, we contend that it is necessary to help people envision what their best possible self might be.

Sense of Self. Each person has a distinct sense of self, an internal understanding of who they are, the characteristics they possess, and the roles that are important to them as individuals. To get a glimpse of one's sense of self, the Leader of Character model invites you to think about the ways in which you might complete the sentence "I am _____." Perhaps more importantly, consider what your answers reveal about who you are, what is important to you, and who you aspire to be.

For many of us, the first thing that comes to mind in completing the "I am _____" sentence may be the various roles each of us play in our personal and professional lives. For instance, cadets at the Air Force Academy may think of themselves as students, athletes, or friends. Permanent party members may think of themselves as faculty members, instructors, colleagues, or coaches. As each of us thinks more deeply about completing that sentence, we may start thinking of adjectives that describe us, such as patient, thoughtful, hardworking, and reflective. Each of us is likely to complete that sentence somewhat differently, but the bottom line is that the exercise forces us to reflect upon who we are. Furthermore, the descriptors we come up with provide a lens through which we see ourselves and interpret our own experience.

Possible Self. As a complement to the idea that we each have our own sense of self, Markus & Nurius (1986) proposed the idea of "possible selves," as what an individual could become at some point in the future. For instance, a cadet at the Air Force Academy may currently focus on being a student, an athlete, or a good friend. However, these same cadets could also see

Hans J. Larsen, PhD, Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Air Force, is the Dean of Academics at the United States Air Force Academy Preparatory School in Colorado Springs, CO, where he leads the faculty in preparing a diverse group of candidates to succeed and lead at the Air Force Academy and beyond. A 1999 distinguished graduate of the Air Force Academy, he holds a PhD from the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, in educational leadership, a Master of Arts degree in counseling and human services from the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, and a Master of Arts degree in English Literature from the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. He is a scholar-practitioner whose research and writing has been informed by both his leadership experiences in the Air Force and his academic studies, addressing leadership, leadership development, and education. He teaches courses in leadership, leadership development, organizational culture and behavior, and communication.

their future selves in terms of being military officers, successful leaders, pilots, logisticians, or in social roles like being parents or spouses.

The notion of a possible self is important because it can have important motivational consequences. In cases where one's possible self is different from one's current sense of self, the gap can serve as a motivational spark. For instance, research by Oyserman and colleagues (e.g., Oyserman, Bybee, & Terry, 2006; Oyserman & Destin, 2010; Oyserman & Novin, 2014) show that thinking about a positive possible self can motivate people to make that self a reality. This is clearly demonstrated in the opening vignette when Col Murphy encouraged Capt Johnson to see herself in a future leadership role that she had never even considered until he intervened.

As suggested in the opening vignette, the possible self has implications for leadership development. As Markus & Nurius (1986) point out, there are many different possible selves. However, the possible selves people are most likely to adopt are those that are most salient—the ones embodied by their role models, illustrated in the symbols around them, and those that others hold as desirable. These environmental features are all conditions that are influenced and, in some cases, controlled by leaders. For example, a cadet may arrive at the Air Force Academy without any interest in pursuing a career in aviation. After immersion in an environment that emphasizes Air Force heritage and flying-related career fields, that same cadet may explore opportunities he or she had not previously considered.

To help others envision their best possible selves, leaders are encouraged to practice three actions in their day-to-day activities. First, leaders are encouraged to be mindful of the example they set–be an exemplar. By embodying the characteristics of their own best

possible selves, leaders can serve as role models. For instance, if a leader wants to encourage others to be people of integrity, it is important they act as a person of integrity committed to consistently doing the right thing. Second, leaders are encouraged to explore possible selves with others while encouraging and supporting them in efforts to work toward those aspirations. One of this paper's authors recently interacted with a fourth-class cadet (freshman) whose sense of self appeared to be defined by not being a good student. This belief was holding him back from effective academic efforts.

> *The notion of a possible self is important because it can have important motivational consequences.*

In this case, the faculty member demonstrated lifting others by helping the cadet see a better possible future. Effective follow through on this initial act also requires providing support and encouragement. Third, leaders canbe inclusive by being mindful of how their language and symbols may be perceived by members of different groups. For instance, only showing images of white, male pilots may send a message that the career field is not a realistic possibility for someone who does not look like those images. Instead, purposefully showing inclusive images that represent a diverse range of characteristics allows people to see themselves in similar roles and may motivate them to work toward being successful in those roles.

Responsibility #3: Lift others by motivating them to work toward their best possible selves.

When others envision their best possible selves, they acquire aspirational targets to reach for. Leaders play important roles in challenging and supporting those being lifted, but it is largely up to individuals to commit to and achieve the work. This work requires

more than just a motivational spark; it requires sustained commitment to achieve the aspirational goal. Our third responsibility focuses on what leaders can do to energize the people around them to strive for those targets.

Motivation. Motivation refers to the needs or desires that energize our behavior and guide us to act in particular ways (Myers & DeWall, 2018). One simple form of motivation has to do with maintaining the balance of our physiological systems. For instance, a feeling of hunger can motivate us to find something to eat, while a feeling of thirst can motivate us to find something to drink. A somewhat more complex form of motivation has to do with goal-directed behavior— the things we do to achieve the aspirations we set for ourselves. This form of motivation is what is needed for someone to work toward the target of their possible self.

As Ambrose et al. (2010) note, motivation to engage in goal-directed behavior is driven by two major factors. First, people are more likely to work toward goals they see as valuable. As leaders at the Air Force Academy, we frequently see the importance of this factor in our work with cadets. When cadets are engaged in work they perceive as being worthwhile, they work tirelessly on it, often with amazing results. In contrast, when tasks lack perceived value, energy and enthusiasm for the task are considerably less.

Second, people will work in goal-directed ways to the extent they believe they are capable of reaching their goal. Bandura (1977, 1982) referred to this belief as self-efficacy, and noted that self-efficacy impacts whether individuals will act in goal-directed ways and how much effort they will exert in doing so. Put simply, people are willing to exert effort toward completing tasks they believe they can manage, but will generally avoid activities they believe exceed their capabilities.

This phenomenon is also easy to see in our work with cadets. Cadets who believe they can be successful at a particular task will likely dedicate time and energy to completing it. If, however, they see themselves as incapable of doing what they are asked to do, they are likely to avoid it or they will show markedly less energy in working toward that goal.

Leadership Implications. Becoming one's best possible self is difficult, and it requires a lifetime of work and commitment. One of the reasons so many fall short is likely because they lack the motivation to work toward it. Leaders can fill this void by motivating the people around them to engage in this important work. We encourage leaders to hold up the ideal of a best possible self as a worthy aspiration to work toward and to help people achieve mastery on small tasks before tackling larger challenges, giving them a sense that success is indeed possible. We also encourage leaders to model what success looks like for the people around them and acknowledge that achieving success doesn't often come easily. Finally, we encourage leaders to promote a growth mindset, both in themselves and in others, by emphasizing that one's skills are malleable, success is a product of hard work, and failure is a natural part of the developmental process (Dweck, 2006). Thinking back to our opening vignette, Col Murphy showed Capt Johnson that being a squadron commander was a role worth pursuing and inspired her to believe she could actually do it successfully.

Responsibility #4: Lift others by guiding them in their progress.

Motivation provides people with the energy needed to journey toward becoming their best possible selves, but that does not necessarily mean their developmental path will be smooth. Indeed, no developmental journey worth making is. It often filled with fits and starts, momentary setbacks, changes, and doubts

about whether the hard work is actually worth it. This provides another important challenge for leaders: guiding others to ensure they stay on track.

Guidance. Imagine making a cross-country journey where you are relying on your car's navigation system to help you get to the intended destination. A navigation system is helpful in several ways. First, it provides a broad trip overview and helps manage realistic expectations about the overall journey, and how long it may take. Second, it helps anticipate parts of the trip that require making turns and transitioning between roadways. Third, the system monitors progress and alerts you when you veer from the designated course. Finally, the system provides real-time updates (e.g., about traffic or accidents) that may force you to alter your path.

Like navigation systems, leaders play an important role in guiding those in pursuit of their best possible selves. Leaders provide realistic expectations about what the journey will entail, to include acknowledging the path is a long one and sharing how they themselves are growing as well. One of the best ways for leaders to do this is to monitor their own development and to share their own successes and failures as they pursue their best possible selves. By sharing their experiences, leaders communicate that becoming one's best possible self is a lifetime journey worth taking. Leaders help anticipate challenges, those times when doing the right thing might be particularly difficult. Leaders are attentive to times when we deviate off course or make a decision to shift courses, and they provide encouragement or corrective feedback. Leaders also offer real-time updates about changes in the professional or organizational landscape. By doing so, they ensure the people they lead stay on a productive path to their best possible selves. Thinking back to our examples, Col Murphy didn't simply tell Capt Johnson

she would be a squadron commander one day and leave it at that. He followed up with guidance and support over the course of the next ten years. In addition, SMSgt Prudich continued to guide and mentor Lt Johnson while they worked together, not only when she needed educative feedback.

A key element of leaders taking on these roles is trust. While trust is considered an emergent state, or a result of team experiences (Marks et al., 2001), we know higher levels of trust among team members is linked to higher levels of team performance (DeJong, et al., 2016). Navigation systems in our cars are effective because we choose to use them when we trust them to provide accurate, real-time information about our path. If we lose trust in the system because of untimely inputs or wrong information, we switch it off. The same can be said of leaders, as their effectiveness is likely to plummet if the people around them do not trust them. Col Murphy inspired trust between himself and Capt Johnson based on his commitment to her continual development. She trusted his recommendations for which path would get her closer to her future role as a commander. The same can be said for the relationship between SMSgt Prudich and Lt Johnson. Because he was willing to mentor and guide her even though she outranked him, they established a level of trust that continued through other developmental conversations.

Responsibility #5: Lift others through a culture of accountability.

Where the preceding four responsibilities focus on personal agency, this responsibility focuses upon organizational ownership. Organizations cannot rely on individuals to practice lifting others solely based on personal discretion. The organization must create and maintain a culture where lifting others is evident in the way work is accomplished. Patterns of assumptions and behaviors held by organizational members are

indicators of organizational culture (Schein & Schein, 2017). While leaders can set expectations, culture is ultimately a consequence of what organizational members' experience. As members circulate ideas

> *We know lifting others is not just for leaders who hold formal authority and responsibility. Lifting others should also exist between peers and from members to their supervisors and leaders.*

and observations, they establish culture in its truest sense. Every experience provides members clues about acceptable ways to express emotion, behavior, and thought in and through work. This explains why it is insufficient for an organization to uphold lifting others as a value without considering the experiences they create for their members.

Cultivating lifting others as a normative practice depends upon creating and maintaining a culture of accountability. Accountability is a virtue that encompasses the interaction of personal values, professional responsibility, and relationships. Roberts (2021) contends there are three interdependent dimensions of accountability. According to Roberts, accountability is a personal characteristic (i.e., a quality of moral excellence), is state-like (i.e., attributed based on an assigned role or position), and requires action (i.e., interpersonal behaviors that produce emergent states such as respect, trust, truthfulness, and justice). These dimensions offer insight so organizations can establish a culture where lifting others is encouraged and expected.

Accountability: Lifting others as a personal value. Absent accountability, leaders can claim they value

lifting others while expressing incompatible patterns of emotion, behavior, and thought. In light of Hogan's (2007) observation that "Who you are, is how you lead," organizations need to consider that a leader's behaviors are representative of the leader's values. When leaders value lifting others, they are intrinsically driven to approach tasks and the mission through high quality, developmental relationships.

Organizations can enhance performance by strengthening every employee's readiness to engage the mission in and through lifting others. Thus, we encourage organizations to assess the role of personally-held values in their current culture and to provide opportunities to challenge and support members. As such, attending to their leaders is essential to creating and maintaining an organizational culture of lifting others. While not intended to be exhaustive, important areas for organizations to start their efforts include:

- challenging and supporting leaders with respect to empathy and perspective taking (Davis, 1983),
- growth mindset (Dweck et al., 1995),
- self-concept (Selenta & Lord, Brown, 2004),
- goal orientation (VandeWalle, 1997),
- social desirability (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960),
- self-monitoring (Lennox & Wolfe, 1984),
- humility (Owens et al., 2013), and
- psychological empowerment (Seibert, Wang, & Courtwright, 2011).

Leaders who demonstrate ownership of these and similar concepts are likely to discover intrinsic motives leading to a consistent approach work through lifting others.

Accountability: Lifting others in light of one's status. Roberts' (2021) second perspective is that organizational roles come with the expectation of being

accountable to others. Society commonly places greater expectations on leaders in formal roles. This condition is particularly evident when things go wrong and people call for leaders to be held accountable. For example, after an aircraft accident, people often ask what the pilot could have done to prevent the accident. These expectations persist even when there are contributing factors beyond the pilot's control, such as mechanical failures or adverse weather conditions. We know lifting others is not just for leaders who hold formal authority and responsibility. Lifting others should also exist between peers and from members to their supervisors and leaders. Nonetheless, by virtue of their roles and status, leaders are accountable for establishing and maintaining a culture where lifting others is widely practiced as an integral part of normal work.

Accountability: Lifting others in action. The third perspective that Roberts (2021) holds is that accountability is practiced. The organization must account for how members lift others. Organizations have a responsibility to address how leaders, followers, and contexts are or are not conducive to lifting others. Effectively implementing lifting others requires organizational members to master and practice foundational skills. As an entry point, organizations can leverage foundational skills including self-awareness, communication, and teamwork. These skills are common to leadership competency models as skills that enhance leader and organizational performance (for examples see Bartram, 1985; Lombardo & Eichenger, 2009; Scisco et al., 2017). Our perspective is that they are also foundational to lifting others.

Organizations have to develop people and provide resources so that lifting others is experienced as a valued practice. Accurate self-awareness depends heavily on practices such as providing and accepting feedback (e.g., Steffens et al., 2018), mentoring (e.g., Kram, 1985), and coaching (e.g., Ladegard & Gjerde, 2014).

Each activity represents invaluable opportunities to improve self-awareness and to contribute to self-awareness for others. Lifting others is enhanced when every organizational member capitalizes on reflection, feedback, and assessment as tools that inform and support development.

Organizations have to bring communication into focus as a skill that is highly relevant to effectively lifting others, to include structuring and rewarding processes that enhance the interdependence of every organizational member. As addressed elsewhere in this paper, lifting others involves the open exchange of ideas, actively listening, building rapport, and clarifying expectations and goals about best possible selves. Success or misfortune with lifting others rests heavily upon organizations that encourage, practice, and refine the routine expression and exchange of ideas between organizational members.

It should be abundantly clear at this point that lifting others is a team sport. Lifting others rests upon building and maintaining shared motives and aligning these efforts with organizational goals. Lifting others requires organizations to hold day-to-day organizational performance in tension with long-term personal developmental aspirations and needs. Looking back to one of our opening vignettes, SMSgt Prudich held Lt Johnson accountable for her actions. Her actions were important to what was happening in the unit at the time and to her future effectiveness as an organizational leader.

Responsibilities as the Person Being Lifted

While this paper primarily focuses on how we lift others, it is also important to acknowledge how we can allow ourselves to be lifted by others. As the Leader of Character Framework discusses, as developing leaders of character, we have responsibilities for our own

Table 1

Summary of Leader Responsibilities and Recommended Actions

Responsibility	Performance in Action
Lift others by being mindful of others.	Practice leading with empathy
Lift others by helping them envision their best possible selves.	Be an exemplar - Lead as a role model worthy of being emulated
	Be an encourager - Develop your coaching and mentoring skills to become better equipped to develop others
	Be inclusive - examine your own assumptions, seek to understand others' perspectives, invite collaboration, and promote a sense of belonging by sharing power and cultivating a growth mindset
Lift others by motivating them to work toward their best possible selves.	Draw attention to opportunities and challenges that result in development and growth
	Provide dedicated support for long-term development
	Practice influence to inspire action and commitment toward development
Lift others by guiding them in their progress.	Provide realistic expectations and help anticipate challenges
	Provide encouragement and corrective action, as necessary
	Offer real-time updates about changes in the professional or organizational landscape
Lift others by creating a culture of accountability.	Be accountable–how do organizational members' actions align with the value of *lifting others*?
	Establish accountability–how well are leaders fulfilling the expectations that accompany their roles or status in the organization to *lift others*?
	Practice accountability–what is needed to enhance supportive contexts and widespread skill development to normalize *lifting others*?

personal growth. These responsibilities include owning the pursuit of our identity as a leader of character, as well as embracing our role in responding effectively during purposeful developmental experiences. Essentially, the person being lifted must "show up" in a way that enables the lifting to be effective. Doing this begins with owning our attitude and effort toward being lifted (i.e., we should be responsive to feedback with an appreciative attitude as opposed to being resistant and resentful). In addition, we must embrace the efforts of the person who is lifting us. One simple way to do this is to get into the routine of asking: "How can I best engage with the leader's effort to lift me in order to further my growth and development?" or "What can I do to respond in a way that makes me perform better?" A great example of this behavior is being open to receiving feedback from others, and better yet, requesting such feedback. This kind of feedback includes elements that challenge us to grow while also providing support and encouragement along the developmental journey. Without these ways of responding to being lifted, we can certainly hinder the leader's efforts to lift us. Yet, by owning our responsibilities to respond to the lifting efforts, those efforts will be more effective as we grow toward our best possible selves.

Conclusion

This paper provides readers with access to what it means to lift others in practice—a getting started guide for leaders and organizations. We provide examples of what lifting others looks like in action by suggesting key behaviors that support lifting others. The five responsibilities, while not intended as exhaustive, span individual and organizational perspectives. We also know that from the perspective of the person being lifted, it's important to practice being lifted by others. Table 1 summarizes key responsibilities for lifting others.

Learning how to lift others is an essential part of being a Leader of Character. At the Air Force Academy we strive to be Leaders of Character who Live Honorably, Lift Others, and Elevate Performance, and this paper provides actionable behaviors cadets and other members assigned to USAFA (or any leader for that matter) can take to put the concept of lifting others into action. Knowing why we should lift others is an important first step. Taking practical steps to lift others is critical.

◆ ◆ ◆

References

Ambrose, S.A., Bridges, M.W., DiPietro, M., Lovett, M.C., & Norman, M.K. (2010). *How learning works: Seven research-based principles for smart teaching*. John Wiley & Sons.

Bartram, D. (2005). The Great Eight competencies: a criterion-centric approach to validation. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 90*(6), 1185-1203.

Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review, 84*(2), 191-215.

Bandura, A. (1982). Self-efficacy mechanism in human agency. *American Psychologist, 37*(2), 122-147.

Brown, B. (2018). *Dare to Lead*. Vermilion.

Brown, B. (2019). *Daring Classrooms*. Retrieved September 19, 2021, from https://brenebrown.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Integration-Ideas_Empathy.pdf

Center for Character and Leadership Development. (2011). *Developing Leaders of Character at the United States Air Force Academy: A Conceptual Framework*. https://caplalacaplpfwstorprod01.blob.core.usgovcloudapi.net/web/character-development-project/repository/developing-leaders-of-character-conceptual-framework.pdf

Crowne, D., & Marlowe, D. (1960). A new scale of social desirability independent of psychopathology. *Journal of Consulting Psychology, 24*(4), 349-354.

Davis, M. (1983). Measuring individual differences in empathy: Evidence for a multi-dimensional approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 44*(1), 113–126.

DeJong, B., Dirks, K., & Gillespie, N. (2016). Trust and team performance: A meta-analysis of main effects, moderators, and covariates. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 101*, 1134-50.

Dweck, C., Chiu, C., and Hong, Y. (1995). Implicit theories and their role in judgments and reactions: A word from two perspectives. *Psychological Inquiry, 6*(4), 267–285.

Dweck, C.S. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. Penguin Random House.

Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*. Bantam Books.

Hogan, R. (2007). *Personality and the fate of organizations*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Kram, K. (1985). Improving the mentoring process. *Training & Development Journal, 39*(4), 40–43.

Ladegard, G., & Gjerde, S. (2014). Leadership coaching, leader role-efficacy, and trust in subordinates. A mixed methods study assessing leadership coaching as a leadership development tool. *The Leadership Quarterly, 25*(4), 631-646.

Lennox, R., & Wolfe, R. (1984). Revision of the Self-Monitoring Scale. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 46*(6), 1349–1364.

Lombardo, M. and Eichinger, R. (2009), *FYI: For Your Improvement: A Guide for Development and Coaching*, Lominger International.

Marks, M., Mathieu, J. & Zaccaro, S. (2001). A temporally based framework taxonomy of team processes. *Academy of Management Review, 26*(3), 356-376.

Markus, H., Nurius, P. (1986). Possible selves. *American Psychologist, 41*, 954-969.

Myers, D.G., & DeWall, C.N. (2018). *Psychology*. Worth Publishers.

Owens, B., Johnson, M., & Mitchell, T. (2013). Expressed humility in organizations: Implications for performance, teams, and leadership. *Organization Science, 24*(5), 1517-1538.

Oyserman, D., Bybee, D., & Terry, K. (2006). Possible selves and academic outcomes: How and when possible selves impel action. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 91*, 188-204.

Oyserman, D., & Destin, M. (2010). Identity-based motivation: Implications for intervention. *The Counseling Psychologist, 38*(7), 1001–1043.

Oyserman, D., & Novin, S. (2014). The context-sensitive future self: Possible selves motivate in context, not otherwise. *Self and Identity, 14*(2), 173-188.

Quinn, R.W., & Quinn, R.E. (2009). *Lift: Becoming a Positive Force in Any Situation*. Berrett-Koehler.

Roberts, R. (2021, October 27). *Pride, humility, and practicing accountability virtuously* [Conference presentation]. Baylor Symposium on Faith and Culture: Living Accountably, Waco, TX, United States.

Schein, E., & Schein, P. (2017). *Organizational culture and leadership* (5th ed.). John Wiley and Sons, Inc.

Scisco, P., Biech, E., & Hallenbeck, G. (2017). *Compass: Your guide for leadership development and coaching*. CCL Press.

Seibert, S., Wang, G., & Courtright, S. (2011). Antecedents and consequences of psychological and team empowerment in organizations: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 96*(5), 981-1003.

Selenta, C., Lord, R., & Brown, D. (2004). Leadership and organizational justice. In R.G. Lord, & D.J. Brown (Eds.), *Leadership processes and follower self-identity* (pp. 155-184). Lawrence Erlbaum.

Steffens, N., Fonseca, M., Ryan, M., Rink, F., Stoker, J., & Pieterse, A. (2018). How feedback about leadership potential impacts ambition, organizational commitment, and performance. *The Leadership Quarterly, 29*(6), 637-647.

USAFA Manual 36-3526, Developing Leaders of Character at USAFA. (2021). [Unpublished manuscript]. Center for Character and Leadership Development, U.S. Air Force Academy.

VandeWalle, D. (1997). Development and validation of a work domain goal orientation instrument. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 57*(6), 995-1015.