JCLD

JOURNAL OF CHARACTER & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Editor in Chief:
Dr. Douglas Lindsay

CENTER FOR CHARACTER & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

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FROM THE EDITOR

The Need for the Journal of Leadership and Character Development

Dr. Douglas Lindsay, *Editor in Chief, JCLD*

We are told to do our best. This generally starts at a young age when we may have doubts about being able to accomplish a task. We are admonished to go out and try. It is better to try and fail, then to never try at all…at least that is the message. Following this advice, we occasionally succeed in areas that we never thought we would. We conquer challenges, feel good about ourselves, and seek out additional tests of our ability. However, there are also times when we fail. In these moments, we are left to process conflicting evidence often without the skills necessary to know what to do. We may think we are pretty good, but the information in front of us says that we weren't good enough (at least in that situation). It is often said, that in those moments we build character. I would like to challenge that notion. I would offer that in those moments, we don't automatically build character or anything positive. Instead, we must determine what are we going to do with that discrepancy? Will we use that failure to propel us forward and seek improvement or will we use it as an indictment on why we aren't good enough and run a negative narrative to ourselves. In both cases, development occurs. In the former, it can be growth. The individual reasons that their best isn't good enough, and they decide that they need to better their best. In the latter, the individual accepts the failure and can develop a host of behaviors or scripts that they tell themselves to rationalize the lack of success. Regardless, there is development.

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 The 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 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, a Master's Degree from the University of Texas at San Antonio, and a PhD in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from Penn State University.

For those who study human behavior, there are a myriad of processes, psychological theories, coping strategies, etc. that can be used to explain what is going on in that situation. Of particular interest to our discussion is the idea of development. Development occurs in both intended and unintended situations. It may not be the development that the organization wants or the individual needs from a functionality perspective, but it is development none-the-less. As an institution that is focused on development as it relates to character and leadership, we must not only understand the purposeful (functional) development, we must also be aware of the inadvertent development (dysfunctional). Put another way, it's not just what we do that has an impact on our development, but it is also what we don't do or what we do incorrectly.

About the JCLD

The JCLD exists to help facilitate a shared understanding and create a dialogue around development. For those of you familiar with this journal, you will notice a change in the name from the Journal of Character and Leadership Integration (JCLI) to the Journal of Character and Leadership Development (JCLD). This change more accurately reflects our purpose to understand how leadership and character are established and cultivated. While the integration of these concepts is still critical, we wanted to take a step back in that process so that we can more fully examine these two constructs and how they are developed across a leader's career. Therefore, we are not just interested in the front end of leader development. Helping us understand how leadership and character develop across a career helps inform not only our accession sources, but also our mid and senior level education, training, and development

programs. In addition, as we know from the literature, there are more aspects of effective leadership that are common across occupational domains than different. Therefore, we must make sure that we are not being myopic in our approach to understanding effective leadership by only looking inward within our organizations. The success of an endeavor like a Journal is fueled by different perspectives, experiences, and knowledge. The JCLD will leverage all of these aspects to produce a Journal that pushes our thought processes and programs to create intentional character and leadership development.

To help us on that journey, we are fortunate to have an exemplary Editorial Board to provide strategic guidance to help us accomplish our mission. The Board is composed of professionals from multiple domains who have been leaders, studied leaders, and are accomplished in their fields. This senior level perspective is critical to ensuring that we stay relevant, intentional, and applicable to character and leadership development.

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Current Issue

As mentioned, the JCLD is focused on publishing work dedicated to the exploration of character and leadership development. This is done through thought pieces, interviews, and scholarly work. This issue approaches the idea of development through several different perspectives. The first article is by Lieutenant

General Jay Silveria (USAF), the Superintendent of the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA). He provides a thoughtful and enlightening piece explaining how USAFA approaches the development of future leaders. To orient the reader, he starts with the purpose and mission of the institution. This sets the stage for why USAFA exists: to develop leaders of character and leaders of Airmen. He then goes on to explicate the differences between individual and organizational approaches to development through a discussion of leader development versus leadership development. This distinction is critical, he elaborates, because the organization can set up education and training experiences, but if the individual is not ready or chooses not to participate, the development will be hampered. After setting this context, he describes the underlying core values that serve as the foundation for USAFA's conceptualization of a Leader of Character. He wraps up his article with several examples of how USAFA is utilizing innovation to support cadet development. This article is the necessary first step for the JCLD as it sets our strategic direction.

The next section of the Journal focuses on interviews with several thought leaders with respect to character and leadership. The first interview is with Edgar Schein and Peter Schein. They are experts on organizational culture and leadership who founded and run the Organizational Culture and Leadership Institute. Recently, they have shifted their focus and just published a new book titled Humble Leadership. In this interview, they outline how they came to study this form of leadership and describe what they mean by humility. They frame the discussion around the power and importance of meaningful relationships and how that manifests itself across four different Levels of the relationship continuum. Through an examination of leadership of the past, they reference how the VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous) environment is changing the way that leaders must lead today. The interview wraps up with ties to the military and what humble leadership can look like through several examples.

The second interview is with Chad Hennings who is a USAFA graduate (class of 1988), combat pilot (45 combat missions in the A-10), 3 time Super Bowl Champion with the Dallas Cowboys, author, and speaker. In the interview, Mr. Hennings describes his approach to excellence and explains how one can be a Force of Character which coincides with a book that he recently wrote with the same title. He explains his journey from his time at the Academy to being a successful businessman and how identifying his "why" has helped guide his path. He discusses how character is a choice and how we can develop our character. Mr. Hennings introduces the idea of an intentional mentoring program and how that could add value to the Academy experience by linking cadets with graduates to help facilitate their growth and development. In addition, he describes how what we do and how we interact can be used to strengthen our communities.

The third section of the JCLD features a distinguished group of scholars who expand on important topics related to the development of character and leadership. The first of these Feature Articles is by Dr. George Reed from the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs. He provocatively writes on the rhetoric of character and what that means for leadership. In his article, he takes the Military Service Academies to task on whether their real focus should be on character development or more fully understanding the context in which leadership is enacted. Through a thoughtful examination of what we know about misconduct and the military context, he explains the power that situations can have on human behavior. He introduces several military examples (Abu Ghraib and annual compliance inspections) to highlight some of the situational demand characteristics. Dr. Reed closes the article by imploring leaders to understand the ethical climate that they establish as a possible precursor to undesired behavior in their organizations.

In the issue's second Feature, Dr. Arthur Schwartz of Widener University introduces a discussion on leader coaching. He takes a philosophical approach

by examining several key constructs such as mental models and wisdom and how they influence leadership. This is used as a foundation for why leader coaching is needed and he reports the results of a comprehensive review of the literature as to the benefits that leaders can take away from a coaching relationship. Through the Assess-Challenge-Support framework developed by the Center for Creative Leadership he describes the results of effective coaching. The article then concludes with an in depth discussion of 5 reasons that prevent leaders from growing via coaching. For anyone who has wondered about the efficacy of executive coaching, this article provides those answers.

The final Feature Article artfully covers the topic of authentic leadership. It is written by a two scholars from the Rawls College of Business at Texas Tech University. Dr. William Gardner and Dr. Claudia Cogliser expand the dialogue around this perspective of leadership by examining the boundary conditions to its effectiveness. After a description of authentic leadership, they discuss several of the core assumptions and principles to this approach to leadership. This serves as a springboard for a more in depth discussion of barriers to the successful implementation of authentic leadership. They do that through examining the individual, dyadic, collective, and contextual levels. The article closes with future research directions and practical recommendations.

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Looking Ahead

The JCLD exists to bring a concentrated focus on character and leadership development. This issue is a "line in the sand" of sorts in terms of setting the level of scholarship and application that needs to be brought to bear on these important topics. We hope you see the JCLD as an opportunity to not only facilitate your own development and thinking in these areas, but as a target for your own scholarship. Please join us in the pursuit of understanding how to develop leaders of character.

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SENIOR LEADER PERSPECTIVE

USAFA: Developing Leaders of Character - Leaders of Airmen

Jay B. Silveria, Lieutenant General, USAF

A year ago I was honored to assume command of my alma mater, the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA). In this unique role I serve as both the commander of a large and diverse military institution, and as the president of a leading undergraduate University. Over the last year I have come to more deeply appreciate this distinctive institution and the various constituents that it serves. I have found that this position presents unique leadership challenges as we develop our students (we call them cadets) in the context of the profession of arms that all of our graduates will enter. It has been an inspiring journey not only intellectually but also personally, as I interact daily with young men and women who have chosen to serve their nation. In reflecting on this year, I would like to share a little bit about our process in developing leaders of character, leaders of Airmen, and leaders for our Nation.

Lt. Gen. Jay B. Silveria is the Superintendent, U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colorado. He directs a four-year regimen of military training, academics, athletic and character development programs leading to a Bachelor of Science degree and a commission as a second lieutenant in the Air Force. Prior to assuming his current position, General Silveria served as the Deputy Commander, U.S. Air Forces Central Command, and Deputy Commander, Combined Air Force Air Component, U.S. Central Command, Southwest Asia. As Deputy Commander, he was responsible for the command and control of air operations in a 20-nation area of responsibility covering Central and Southwest Asia, to include operations Resolute Support in Afghanistan, and Inherent Resolve in Iraq and Syria. He has previously served as Commander, U.S. Air Force Warfare Center, Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, and Vice Commander, 14th Air Force, Air Forces Strategic at Vandenberg, AFB, California, as well as Director, Security Assistance in the Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq. General Silveria is a 1985 graduate of the Air Force Academy, holds a Master's Degree from Syracuse University, and is a Senior Executive Fellow at Harvard University.

Purpose

The mission of the United States Air Force Academy is to educate, train, and inspire men and women to become leaders of character, motivated to lead the United States Air Force in service to our nation. This mission is a critical one and certainly a worthy (and necessary) endeavor, as the news is replete with examples of leader shortcomings and failures across all occupational domains. While many organizations can endure multiple leader failures when outcomes revolve around such factors as profits and market share, the military does not have such a luxury. Since USAFA only provides leaders who will serve as part of the larger Air Force, nothing shy of excellence fulfills the needs of our vision of being the World's Greatest Air Force – Powered by Airmen, Fueled by Innovation. The word "only" is important and should not be overlooked. Unlike other universities, all of our graduates go to a single employer – the United States Air Force. It means that USAFA exists to develop, commission, and provide qualified and lethal officers to the Air Force. With that understanding, our mission is therefore not only to develop leaders of character, but also to develop leaders of Airmen. Our graduates, upon entering the Air Force, will be leaders and their followers will be fellow Airmen. This puts a unique context on what we do. We automatically know what each of our graduates will be doing upon commissioning and the accompanying characteristics they must possess. Our Air Force requires its officers to be lethal warfighters.

However, it is not enough that we develop leaders that have good character to lead our military forces. The battlespace that these leaders will face is dynamic and necessarily complex, and success demands qualified, educated, and agile leaders. The enemies of today are more capable, lethal, and unpredictable than we have experienced in past conflicts. This creates a demand signal that we must be ready for and must prepare future leaders to embrace. We must provide leaders who can leverage efficient and lethal warfighting capability to the Joint Force. Nothing less than that is needed and nothing less than that is acceptable. USAFA's purpose is clear.

USAFA

In order to develop these leaders of character and leaders of Airmen, we use an integrated 47-month combination of education, development, and experiential learning. Not only are cadets challenged with an arduous military regimen that helps them appreciate and prepare for service in the profession of arms (i.e., warrior ethos), they also undertake an extensive Bachelor of Science degree program, preparing them to be thought leaders in the career fields that they will enter upon graduation. In addition,

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all cadets participate in athletics to prepare them physically for military service, they develop leadership skills through leading organizations of their peers, and they have the opportunity to participate in airmanship programs. While our process ensures that they have the necessary skills and education for successful military service, the development of leadership and character are not simply process functions. Instead, they are more participatory and occur at the individual level. This creates a challenge for the institution, as individual development takes time and intentionality from both the individual and the institution.

This challenge was best articulated by David Day (2000) when he talks about the distinction between leader development and leadership development. Leader development focuses on human capital and

involves functions that occur at the individual level. This includes individual training on desired skills and abilities that are related to effective leadership. In addition, it helps leaders gain a realistic understanding of themselves and who they are as a leader. Typical skills for leader development include self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-motivation. Leadership

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development, on the other hand, focuses on the relational aspects of effective leadership referred to as social capital. Instead of focusing simply on training effective skills and abilities at the individual level (leader development), leadership development examines the interrelationships between individuals and the social processes that occur. Typical skills for leadership development include social awareness (i.e., empathy), team building, and interpersonal skills. As future leaders, this also includes a thoughtful understanding of such factors as culture, inclusivity, and diversity, as these leaders will be leading diverse organizations that are both joint (interactions with other US military services) and coalition (other countries' militaries). The reason that this distinction is important is that if we are interested in the development of leaders of character we need to be deliberate about challenging our cadets at not only the individual level (who they are), but also in their interactions with one another (how they show up) and the larger organization.

Core Values

It is important to mention that all of this occurs within a particular organizational context. Since USAFA develops officers – leaders of character and leaders of Airmen – for the US Air Force and our nation, there must be alignment between our Academy and the greater Air Force. Otherwise, we risk developing officers with inadequate skills to accomplish our mission. One way that we ensure alignment is with a common set of Core Values. These Core Values not only indicate what is important to the Air Force, they also serve as an orienting function by letting those in the organization know the standards to which they will be held accountable. They also send an explicit message to those outside of the organization on what we value as a military service. These Core Values, first established by USAFA in 1994 and later adopted by the Air Force in 1995, are *Integrity First, Service Before Self*, and *Excellence in all We Do.*

Integrity First means that all individuals will act with a soundness of character. We will be honest, truthful, and authentic in what we do and in our interactions with others, both inside and outside of the military. The significance of such a value is that it provides a common starting point of trust and respect in our interactions. When we consider that when accomplishing our mission (the delivery of lethal force) our lives could be on the line, we should expect no less.

Service Before Self indicates that military service can require sacrifice. We serve something larger than ourselves and we do this freely. In fact, the Commissioning Oath that every officer commits to includes the words, "...that I take this obligation

freely…" This means that there may be times where we need to suspend our own personal desires in order to answer the call to which we committed. There is a powerful point of connection when you understand that others that are serving by your side are willing to sacrifice for the greater good. When we look back in our military history, this sacrifice and commitment to something larger than ourselves has resulted in significant outcomes and results in the freedoms we enjoy today.

Excellence in all We Do is not just a mantra, it is how we approach our profession. It becomes the standard by which we can expect others to perform. It implies that we are always willing to better our best. As it fits the developmental approach at USAFA, this means that we are constantly challenging our cadets to be the best that they can be instead of being complacent with prior or current success. This is a point at which innovation can be leveraged, but more on that later.

These core values create a strategic direction for our members. Whether it is a military member leading a training program or a civilian academic professor in the classroom, we all understand what is expected of us and what we can expect from those around us. This becomes a powerful centering function for our personnel. However, while the Core Values provide a foundation for how we act and interact with one another, they alone do not ensure that our cadets actually develop along the trajectories that we want them to. We must also add intentional aspects to our developmental paradigm (leader development AND leadership development). We do this through our Leader of Character Framework.

Leader of Character

While there are numerous definitions of leadership and countless explanations of what good leaders do, there is less understanding of what a leader of character entails. Therefore, several years ago we codified what we refer to as the Leader of Character Framework. A leader of character is someone who:

- *Lives Honorably* by consistently practicing the virtues embodied in the Air Force Core Values.
- *Lifts Others* to their best possible selves.
- *Elevates Performance* toward a common and noble purpose.

From this definition of a leader of character, you can see multiple linkages between the mission of USAFA, the vision of the US Air Force, and the Core Values. This alignment ensures that we are working toward purposeful development. We enable this through a three step process. First, we teach cadets to *Own* their development. This means that we show them that their ability to develop is dependent on them being a participant in the experience. They must own their part of the process. Their part includes understanding their attitude and effort, their duty, their commitments, and owning their role in the developmental process. The next step is for them to *Engage* in purposeful experiences. This is done through a collaboration of

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the individual and the organization. The institution can provide developmental experiences, but if the individual is not willing to engage in the development, then the opportunity is of little value. The final step is to *Practice* habits of thoughts and actions. Based on earlier work by James Rest (1979; 1999), we implement his 4 step model related to ethical and moral concerns. This process includes the steps of Awareness, Reasoning, Deciding, and Acting. Cadets can utilize

this approach through intentional experiences, programs, and courses provided by the organization. From a developmental process, the challenge for most cadets comes between the Deciding and Acting steps. It is one challenge to decide what needs to be done, and another to take action. We call this the Decision-Action Gap, and we work with cadets to move past this gap toward intentional development.

Innovation

While this framework is grounded in theory and informed by practice, one of the things that we must constantly monitor is the operational context in which our future leaders must thrive. Not only must we equip our leaders to be successful in the situations they face upon graduation, we must also attend to trends and forecast an uncertain future. I view my leadership approach as Superintendent through a prism of firsthand experience gained in leading Airmen on the 21st century battlefield. As I have experienced throughout my career, modern warfare is complex, lethal, fast paced, and rapidly changing, and will require leaders who not only lead Airmen, but who can also lead in joint and coalition environments. Future

Future leaders will need to have a warrior mindset (understand their profession) and lead in austere situations. This means we must provide them both the skills and education to successfully lead today, and the tools necessary for making sense of the future.

leaders will need to have a warrior mindset (understand their profession) and lead in austere situations. This means we must provide them both the skills and education to successfully lead today, and the tools necessary for making sense of the future. In order to do this, we must be able to analyze and assess our current processes and be able to incorporate new ways of doing

things to ensure we are outpacing rivals in an uncertain future. To that end, one of my strategic priorities as the USAFA Superintendent is innovation.

Innovation in large, regimented, and traditional organizations can be challenging, and change of any kind can be difficult. When considering that USAFA is a military organization as well as a University, we face a daunting situation. Questioning assumptions, processes, and policies can often be seen as threatening as they challenge the status quo. However, we cannot let that stop us from being the agile organization that we need to be and the Air Force requires us to be. In order to do this, I will tirelessly focus on innovation for the duration of my tenure as Superintendent. A couple of ways that I am leading this charge involves USAFA's Center for Character and Leadership Development (CCLD) and the Journal of Character and Leadership Development (JCLD).

We have had a Center focused on character (and leadership more recently) for several decades. While our efforts have been in place for some time, we have been through several organizational iterations of this concept. In order to maximize CCLD's impact and relevance to the institution, I have taken steps to realign and clarify the mission of the Center in such a way that it will serve both an integration and an innovation facilitation function for the entire organization. For example, one of the common struggles of large organizations is that many people are doing great work (often very innovative work), but not everyone is aware of that work. That can often result in duplication of effort and a less than optimal use of resources. It can also stifle innovation by limiting it to pockets within the organization. CCLD's mission is now to interface with all organizations in the institution in order

to leverage best practices and highlight innovative practices, thereby acting as a force multiplier for the organization.

A second step has to do with an intentional focus on scholarship. USAFA has a proud tradition of scholarship and research. However, we haven't always been as effective at socializing that work outside of the organization. For example, most people don't realize that USAFA has 21 research centers and institutes and is rated as the #1 Undergraduate Research University. Hundreds of publications and presentations are produced every year by USAFA faculty and staff. This past academic year alone, our staff and faculty were multiple patents, published books in addition to numerous scholarly publications. The quantity AND quality of the scholarship at USAFA is truly outstanding. To facilitate the distribution of some of this work, we have reintroduced (starting with this edition) the Journal of Character and Leadership Development. Through the JCLD, its Editor in Chief, and a world class Editorial Board, we will facilitate communication to other organizations (academic, military, businesses, etc.) about all of the significant work that is being done (facilitate distribution of innovative practices) as well as partner with other thought leaders with respect to character and leadership development. We will also use it as a means to ask challenging questions about what we are doing and what others are doing to develop leaders.

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Conclusion

While we have a unique mission here at USAFA, it is not one that can be successfully done in isolation. In fact, in order to continue to be relevant moving forward, we must partner with other thought leaders to ask challenging questions, innovate, and further understand the relationship between character and leadership. Through such collaboration we can ensure that we are developing leaders of character, with lethal capability, for an uncertain future. I would like to invite you into that partnership and help us continue to develop the kinds of leaders of character, leaders of Airmen, and leaders of our Air Force that our nation deserves.

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VIEWS FROM THE FIELD

Humble Leadership

Edgar Schein, Professor Emeritus, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Sloan School of Management; Organizational Culture and Leadership Institute

Peter Schein, Organizational Culture and Leadership Institute

Interviewed By: Douglas Lindsay

JCLD: You have recently published a book called *Humble Leadership*. Could you please give a little background on how each of you got into this area of study.

Ed Schein: My version of this goes back to the decision to go into social psychology. Already in graduate school, I was interested in social influence in leadership as a topic because it is one of the central topics in social psychology. I was prepared for a career in that, but I was in the military. I was in the Army's Clinical Psychology Program and my first post-doctoral assignment was to the Walter Reed Institute of Research where I did a variety of odds and ends of research. In 1953, the armistice was signed with Korea and there was suddenly a repatriation of 3000 or more American POWs. So, the military created teams of social workers, psychiatrists, and social psychologists and sent us over to Korea to get on board a ship with a group of repatriates to interview them and find out what all of

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Ed Schein is a Professor Emeritus of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Sloan School of Management. He as degrees from the University of Chicago, Stanford University, and received his PhD in Social Psychology from Harvard University. Dr Schein is an accomplished author of numerous books such as *The Corporate Culture Survival Guide, Organizational Culture and Leadership (5th Edition, 2016)*, and a recently released book on Humble Leadership which he co-authored with his son Peter Schein that challenges our current theories of leadership and management. He is the recipient of the Distinguished Scholar-Practitioner Award from the Academy of Management, the Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Leadership Association, and the Lifetime Achievement Award in Organizational Development from the International OD Network.

Peter Schein spent over 30 years working in Silicon Valley in the areas of marketing and corporate development. His previous organizations include Pacific Bell, Apple, Silicon Graphics, Concentric Network Corporation, and Packeteer. He also spent 11 years with Sun Microsystems in strategy and corporate development. During that time, he led numerous acquisition efforts, drove innovation, and coordinated mergers. As a result of those experiences, he developed an interest in the organizational culture challenges innovative-driven enterprises experience with rapid growth. Currently, he runs the Organizational Culture and Leadership Institute with his father Edgar Schein. Mr. Schein received his BA in Social Anthropology from Stanford University and his MBA from the Kellogg School at Northwestern University.

this brainwashing was all about. There had been a lot of talk about indoctrination. I was literally handed, as a post-doc, a real case of social influence. So, I started to interview the repatriates to ask them: "What happened to you?" and "What impact did it have?" I learned right away that there is something important that no matter how much coercion the captor (in this case the Chinese interrogators) can exert and make you change your behavior, sign false confessions, and make you march in propaganda parades, no matter how much of that they can successfully do, it doesn't seem to change attitudes. None of those POWs, even those who had collaborated with the enemy, had any illusion about the content of what the Chinese captors were trying to get across. I think that was a very important lesson that applies to leadership today. A coercive leader who just issues orders can get the illusion of influence, because people will respond, but that is not the way to change attitudes, beliefs, and values. So, that early lesson stuck with me. Then the question that arises is "What does it take to be influential and to influence things that are more appropriately cultural?" So, I have been, in a way, working on that forever. It was enhanced by my first mentor when I left the Army. I went to MIT where Douglas MacGregor hired me. So, I immediately came under his influence. He sent me off to the human relations labs where I really learned all about systems thinking, openness, and spirit of inquiry. That was almost the opposite of the coercive persuasion stuff with the POWs. In a way, this humble leadership, working with Peter (Schein) is the final statement. I think I've got it together now. The point is that it is as much about leadership as a process, as it is about the qualities of the leader.

Peter Schein: The things in my background that are most pertinent are that I arrived at Stanford University as an undergraduate in the early 80's believing I would major in psychology because I knew that Stanford had a great Psychology Department. Nominally, my father Ed was a Social Psychologist, so that much I understood. I quickly realized that wasn't interesting to me. What was interesting was the sociological and anthropological point of view. So, I was majoring in anthropology when Ed was writing the first edition of the *Organizational Culture and Leadership* book. At the same time, my older sister was doing a PhD in anthropology. As a family, we kind of realized that was the family business. I went into a consulting job and I worked in some companies like Pacific Bell and Apple, and had done an MBA in marketing at

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Kellogg at Northwestern. Really though, marketing is anthropology as well. I've let anthropology have a very broad definition for me. In the early 1990s, I became really excited about what was happening in Silicon Valley. Apple in particular. So, I sort of rode the Silicon Valley growth wave working at a bunch of companies, large and small. I really felt like I found my passion when I was doing corporate development at Sun. A lot of the reason for that was that I was intrinsically interested in how cultures merged. I was doing mergers and acquisition work and found myself, as much if not more, focused on the cultural fit as the strategic fit. The other thing that happened for me in 30 years in Silicon Valley was starting to see things that didn't seem quite right. That there was such a relentless impetus for innovation, but there isn't necessarily a passion for management and good leadership. In general, in Silicon Valley, the invention and the creation of entire new industries is so rapid that you could see how it doesn't really matter how well companies are managed. We just need to create amazing things and we have to hire the most brilliant engineers. It doesn't matter if they can't get along with anybody. The emphasis on

innovation is so strong. At the same time, companies are growing up and some are run better than others. What was it that created that dynamic? Ed and I started exchanging stories. Interestingly, a lot of Ed's early work on culture was in the 20 years that he consulted with Ken Olsen at Digital Equipment Corporation. With my 11 years at Sun Microsystems, we had a lot to compare and not as much to contrast, honestly. With the stories, we found a lot of our own personal learnings about humble leadership. At the same time, we saw a number of things in mismanagement and some false notes in management that we thought would create a good foil and counterpoint to talk about in *Humble Leadership*. Starting with what we mean by that at a very fundamental level and recognizing that it was about how leaders get the most out of teams not about how leaders are the most brilliant or the most charismatic. That's sort of how we arrived at humble leadership from my perspective. The only other thing I will say is that we created the Organizational Culture and Leadership Institute (OCLI) as a way to provide some focus to the both of us. I took a fork in the road of

> *The other element is what we called "here and now" humility in one of our earlier books. This is where the immediate sense that the leader must have, and would apply now to an Air Force leader, that fits with what General McChrystal has tried to get at with his team of teams. That a good leader knows that the situation may require more than what he or she had in the way of knowledge and skill. So, it is humility in the face of a difficult task.*

my career and said, this is important and is what I want to do. It's a gift to be able to work with your father. We are fortunate in two ways, that we can do it and

that it is pretty easy to work together. We formed the Organizational Culture and Leadership Institute to give ourselves that focus and for me to put Ed's legacy in a more full and compelling way on the internet.

JCLD: Thank you for sharing that. With the OCLI, do you do consulting, thought pieces, or is it an organization that gets the word out about humble leadership? How have you been able to use that as a platform?

Peter Schein: It's sort of all of that and an opportunity to focus and pursue this work and dedicate our full attention to it. We also do consulting work.

JCLD: With the idea of humble leadership, what does that mean? What is the message behind it?

Ed Schein: Let me take a crack at that. There is a historical way of looking at it and there is a very contemporary way of looking at it. Peter referred to my consulting with Digital Equipment Corporation. Ken Olsen was a very dominating fixture as the founder, but when I would sit in on his meetings, he would bring together the best and brightest engineers that he could find, and say "What are we going to do?" Then, he would sit in the corner. That was rather dramatic behavior. What did it mean? It meant that he understood that even though he founded the company and sort of knew where they were trying to go, he knew enough not to try to dictate anything because the power was in the group. So, that's one important way of looking at humility. The leader understand his/her own limitations. You could say that characteristic can be right along with arrogance. Another character who is

very controversial that we talk about in the book is Lee Kuan Yew in building up Singapore. He was totally willing to listen to consultants, how companies did things, and to his colleagues. He knew where he was going and he was autocratic in the areas where he had to be, because it fit his design, but he was always learning and looking for new ways of doing things. Steve Jobs was very arrogant, but what he wanted was people as bright as or brighter than himself or nothing useful would happen. That is one element. The other element is what we called "here and now" humility in one of our earlier books. This is the immediate sense that the leader must have, and would apply now to an Air Force leader, that fits with what General McChrystal has tried to get at with his "team of teams." That a good leader knows that the situation may require more than what he or she has in the way of knowledge and skill. So, it is humility in the face of a difficult task. A complex task that is going to require that the leader draw on other resources, ask for help, and listen to subordinates. But it's not that leaders makes themselves subordinate, but rather that the leaders makes themselves dependent on others in the face of a difficult task. That's when humility becomes a critical variable.

JCLD: That's interesting and you write about the military in one of your chapters. It's because in a bureaucratic and hierarchically structured organization, you can't get away from the rank. It's always there and always salient. For the leader to be able to stay in that role and step back and not feel threatened by people who might have more information is very important right?

Ed Schein: Exactly. It's built into the system. In the Navy, at least, you don't have the Captain challenging the radar operator and saying, "let me look at the screen." He had better trust what that radar operator is telling him.

JCLD: When you do your consulting, or study leaders, how do you help them grasp that concept of getting out of their own way? Getting past their hubris or the identity that they have of themselves as the formal leader. How do you help bring in that idea of humility?

Ed Schein: If they have a hip pocket agenda and they are just looking for an opportunity to get it out there, then they aren't listening. They are only listening to themselves. To me, the most interesting book that we reviewed was the Marquet book, *Turn the Ship Around*, where he sits his Chiefs down and asks, "Are you guys satisfied?" An extraordinary thing for a leader to say to the troops.

> *We use the term VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous) in the book, and the military is where that term came from. They were the first to embrace the fact that at some level, no leader is going to have all the information that they need. 50 years ago, we held on to the notion that the smartest person in the room was the CEO and the leader, we just don't accept that premise any more.*

Peter Schein: We use the term VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous) in the book, and the military is where that term came from. They were the first to embrace the fact that at some level, no leader is going to have all the information that they need. 50 years ago, we held on to the notion that the smartest person in the room was the CEO and the leader, we just don't accept that premise any more. There is too much

volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity for one leader to physically know everything that he/she needs to know. It's just important to accept the present and the future that the world is just too complex. At a fundamental level, if you are not drawing all the information that is in the heads of all the people that are on your team in order to make the best decisions, your leadership decisions are going to be worse than the leader who is doing that. The person that is doing that is drawing all the information that is available, and then works with the group to synthesize it in a superior way. There is nothing that gets in the way of that more than ego and hubris. The other thing, Ed had mentioned historically, that we try to draw out in the book that is that the past rewarded the heroic leader. We created these myths around these iconoclasts. These forces of nature. Take us to the current time and we are still seeing these images of the great iconoclasts. Steve Jobs was one of them. Henry Ford was one of the first. We always have this image of these great individuals. Recently, we started to see a lot of literature suggesting how it's not about the individual. It's not about the ego. It is about reimagining organizations in a way that isn't an "I alone" top down hierarchy. We start seeing experiments in holacracy. Self-managed teams is a critical concept. We quote a Belgian business historian, Fredrick Laloux, that "something is in the air." What we are talking about in *Humble Leadership* is trying to put our own color on something that everyone is feeling. We've sort of worn out the well-oiled machine, top down hierarchy, heroic leader model of organizations. The interesting organizations that are innovating at a rapid pace, aren't the ones that are the top down hierarchies any more. They are much more organic and living systems organized as opposed to the command and control machine organized. What we are arriving at with Humble Leadership is being talked about in a lot of other places that are adjacent, and are being referred to in different ways. There is something in the air.

JCLD: I agree. When you look at the proliferation of writings out there on topics like shared leadership, relational leadership, and others, it's clear that it is becoming a more important topic. One of the nice things that is both part of it's simplicity and elegance of humble leadership is it is not negating the formal role of a leader, but it does a nice job talking about how a leader in that formal role of influence can utilize the relationships that they form at different levels. Some of the other theories and perspectives don't always do a proper valuation of the formal role of the leader and some of necessary accountability structures that go along with the leader's role.

Ed Schein: I'd like to come in on that discussion by introducing where culture comes in. The levels issue is that management and leadership over the last 100 or more years has evolved this Level 1 kind of culture of command and control, the machine model, the assembly line, and everything is organized. People are in roles. This whole culture of management has dominated organizational thinking. All our career systems and all of our reward systems. They are all geared toward individual competition and climbing the ladder. That's just as true today. The system is highly individualized and geared to being competitive. So, I think the young officer in the Air Force or the Navy, is coercively brought into that system. We don't say there are other ways to reward people or other ways to enter the career, they enter a system that is very locked in. Then, the question is, when you are a graduate of that, into the real world, the first problem the young military leader has is to get over some of the command and control routines that have been imbued in him/her. That may be one of the toughest problems for young leaders, for them to say to themselves, "I do have a choice in how I'm going to relate to the people under me." Even though during my training and most of my history it's been very rule based, orders, and that's the system. To discover that I have a choice and I can relate to people differently is counter cultural. So, the

question then for the Academy is, "How do you begin to raise the question within the culture you already have?" "Are we too much a Level 1 culture?" Do you even need to begin to teach the importance of knowing your people, listening to them, relating to them, in a more personal way, and arguing that, in fact, in the long run, that way you are going to be most successful. These are questions in my mind. I don't know how the Academies have dealt with this kind of issue. It seems to me that it is very intrinsically important that the whole society has to move from Level 1 to Level 2 and get over this very bureaucratic form of individual, competitive style management. The "how to" is going to require some innovative and new kinds of training and experience.

For example, Warren Bennis and I actually taught a leadership course using only movies because the movies can really bring out these contrasts beautifully. A lot of the things that we are talking about have been scripted out pretty nicely to show the effects. A good example is The Cain Mutiny (1954). You have several different types of leaders and leadership that are present. Part of the challenge is that the leadership literature is not always that helpful because it is all over the map.

Peter Schein: The other thing that comes out of this is comment about how the culture work and the leadership work connect, is that all of this is relative to the culture you are talking about or the culture you are in. Take a look at the military itself. The way I think about it is that it is entirely appropriate that culture expresses itself differently in the Army, Navy, and the Air Force because they are dealing with physics in a different way (land, water, and air—line-of-sight issues are different from oceanic/meteorological forces are different from gravity and atmospheric physics). That will naturally define the culture in a certain way and it will be expressed differently. So, how we think about humble leadership should always be relative to those tasks and basic survival issues that those cultures

have. Similarly, since our culture is such a moving target, the recruits come in roughly from 18-21 years old, their way of processing information is different than how we process information. Given that, we have to think about how we are going to express some of these ideas and how we are going to tell the stories that resonate with this different kind of learner. We need to be able to articulate the difference in our audience. Or the differences in the people we need to ask questions of rather than who we will be telling something to.

JCLD: Another wrinkle to the situation is that we are preparing Airmen today to fight in a future that is, as you mentioned earlier, in the VUCA arena. You had previously mentioned different levels of culture from your book. Could you please explain those for us?

Ed Schein: Level Minus 1 is pure domination, where the leader simply exerts power because he/she has the power, either economic or physical. You see that in a POW camp, you see it in prisons, you see it sweatshops. You see it in situations where leadership is the arbitrary exercise of power for whatever goals the leader has. That is pretty much irrelevant except in war, where you see samples of it here and there. What we have evolved as a society is this very powerful Level 1 combination of hierarchy and bureaucracy. Where we have figured out if you can specify people's roles, teach people etiquette and tact and how to behave, give them job descriptions, train them for their particular jobs, this produces a very powerful machine because you can then coordinate all these roles. This Level does depend, however, on psychological distance between the roles. The superior and the subordinate are not supposed to get too close. They are supposed to maintain a professional distance. This is because the idea has grown up that if you get too close, you are going to play favorites and your rational assessments of people are going to suffer. The justification for the distance is that it is going to be more objective/bureaucratic. However, our point

is that what we see in effective organizations is that leaders from different domains are violating that rule. They are getting closer to their people, creating more fluid jobs, recomposing groups. So, Level 2 is more like what we do in our families and social lives. We get to know each other and we collapse some of the distance. That enables more openness and more trust, because Level 1 is not particularly geared toward high trust. We are in a competitive and individualistic society where we are all in our roles. The rules are do what is best for yourself. Your boss may ask if things are going well down in your shop, and you know there are problems, but you are not about to tell the boss. He

> *Your boss may ask if things are going well down in your shop, but you know there are problems, but you are not about to tell the boss. He doesn't want to hear it and you may be afraid you will get blamed. So, what you see in Level 1 organizations is all kinds of deviant behavior, mistrust, lying, cheating, etc. which then erupts into the big scandals.*

doesn't want to hear it and you may be afraid you will get blamed. So, what you see in Level 1 organizations is all kinds of deviant behavior, mistrust, lying, cheating, etc. which then erupts into the big scandals. So Level 2 is geared toward building openness and trust. The only way you can do that is to get to know your people, make them feel psychologically safe, and create an open and trusting relationship, knowing that you don't want to go too far, unless the task demands it. For example, in a book about the Thunderbirds, Venable (*Breaking the Trust Barrier*), describes the amount of trust that they must have for each other. They probably go almost to Level 3 with the amount of trust that they have.

Peter Schein: We often use the example of "being able to finish each other's sentences". It doesn't mean intimacy, but it does indicate that you know someone very well and knowing how they are going to react to situations. Without that, in these high performance teams (in the military), people can die. There is a different expectation and different requirements that we feel moves beyond Level 2 for these teams. We often say that some of the best sports teams have a level of connection to each other that can go beyond the Level 2 personized connection. It's common to hear coaches talk about how much their players "love" each other. It does suggest how that deeper level of connection allows you to create extraordinary results at the margins.

Ed Schein: The work on some of the psychiatric breakdowns in the Army shows that a major cause is the loss of a buddy. Because then you feel guilty that you should have done more. I want to throw in one sports example because it makes it so clear. At the end of the game, the quarterback says to the right guard who is there to protect him, "You have to do better because I got sacked 3 times." That's Level 1. Level 2 would be the quarterback says to the guard, "You know, I got sacked a few times, what can we do about that?" The guard says, and this is the key, the guard says, "When we play the Packers, at Lambeau Field, they have a guy who always gets to me. I can do my job with most teams, but on that day, give yourself an extra bit of protection yourself because I'm not sure I can handle that guy." That's the missing component in Level 1. Where the guard would say, "Hey, I'm not perfect. You better know that."

JCLD: And the guard has the psychological safety to say that because of the relationship.

Peter Schein: Exactly. The quarterback is not going to hold that against him if he is candid about the actual situation that they are going to be presented with.

JCLD: Is that because the quarterback now has information about the capacity of the individual that he did not know before?

Ed Schein: Exactly.

JCLD: Based on your work on humble leadership, what advice would you give to a new leader as they are getting ready to go into a leadership position. What advice would you give them about how to be as a leader?

Ed Schein: The reason that I am reluctant to answer that is that I have learned that life is so situational. I guess the advice that comes out of that is to know your people and be very good at situational awareness. And then make some good on the spot decisions as to whether to inquire or tell.

Peter Schein: I guess I would be a little stronger by saying, step away from the mirror. Don't be thinking about what are the 12 things that I need to do today to be a better leader. Think about whether or not your team, or the people you are working with that day, are feeling psychologically safe enough to really tell you what is going on. If you approach each day with that, rather than what are the things that I need to be doing, and focus on what's the information that our group needs to share, it could make it easier for the leader to, as you said earlier, to get out of their own way. It takes the pressure off thinking about your personal development list and think about what ways the group you are working with might operate with psychological safety and share the information that is needed.

Ed Schein: I would add something to that. I have observed that more and more good leaders are using the "check in" format to support that and make it routine. What that means is that they never start discussing the task until all members present have checked in with a word or two about how we are doing today and what is going on. So, everyone's voice is heard before we launch into what we are going to do. For example, in the operating room, the surgeon says "let's use the checklist to connect." Then the nurse, as she goes though the checklist, makes a lot of eye contact. In other words, create an in-the-moment groupness.

JCLD: That's great. Thank you for that advice. As we close, what is next for humble leadership or OCLI?

Ed Schein: We are in the middle of revising out book called The Corporate Culture Survival Guide. It is about how you change culture. Leadership and culture are two sides of the same coin.

JCLD: Thank you both for your time.

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VIEWS FROM THE FIELD

A Force of Character

Chad Hennings, Hennings Management Corp

Interviewed By: Douglas Lindsay

JCLD: Thank you for your time today and willingness to have a conversation about character and leadership. You have agreed to serve on the Editorial Board for the Journal of Character and Leadership Development (JCLD). As busy as you are, why are you interested in being a part of the JCLD?

Hennings: In my life, I've been fortunate enough to achieve some semblance of success. Now, my focus is on pursuing significance. I want to challenge people on what their legacy is that they are leaving – on why they do what they do. Why their identity is important. Why character is important. Why living a life of excellence is important. I've had several unique experiences in life and have come across individuals that, in the eyes of the world were considered a success, but behind the scenes when you peek behind the curtain, they were train wrecks. They do things for the wrong reasons and the legacy that they are ultimately leaving behind is not a positive one. For me, it is about spreading the message as to why character is important. Why solidifying identity is important. And why living a life of excellence is important.

JCLD: I appreciate you bringing up the point about excellence. In your previous work you have written about excellence and creating cultures of excellence. Can you talk a little bit more about what you mean by excellence?

Hennings: I believe that identity is the filter. Character is the process. Living excellence is the journey. What I mean by that is, if you don't have identity, the filter by which you process your thoughts, words, and experiences through in life, the decisions that you make and how you live your life will be made in a vacuum. The decisions you make are reactive, instead of proactive. Character then becomes the process. It's how you tactically execute. Do I want to be an individual of virtue? Do I want to be courageous? Do I want to listen to others? Be a good teammate? Living excellence is a journey and not a destination. It's a constant state of being, a thought process - a mindset.

Chad Hennings is a successful businessman, former Air Force Officer (45 combat missions in the A-10), 1988 USAFA graduate, professional football player who won 3 Super Bowl Titles with the Dallas Cowboys, and one of the most decorated college football players in NCAA history. He is a sought out speaker and author who uses a message of excellence and character to encourage and motivate others to be a Force of Character to develop, grow and serve their communities. He currently runs a commercial real estate company (Rubicon Representation) and consults with major organizations (American Airlines, Bank of America, General Motors, Citigroup, and many others) on building cultures of excellence.

People who strive for excellence are people who have identified who they are, who they choose to be, and that they choose to be the virtuous individual. These are people I refer to as being a "Force of Character." They are people who live to be their best self every day. They encourage others to do the same. And they encourage the organizations that they are affiliated with to rise to a higher noble purpose or cause.

JCLD: That idea of identity is the filter, character is the process, and living excellence is the framework for the book you wrote called *Forces of Character: Conversations About Building a Life of Impact*. Was that the impetus for writing that book?

Hennings: The reason I wrote the book was to be a conversation starter about character being a choice. How you live your life is a choice. No matter what your past is, we all have a choice or an option as to how we interact with the world around us. That is why I interviewed the people that I did and had conversations with them, because they come from varied backgrounds. For them, they came to the realization that character is a choice.

JCLD: What did you learn through the journey of writing that book? Did it confirm what you knew or were you able to walk away from that experience a little bit different?

Hennings: It confirmed to me that there are certain universal truths to this life like: always be in a constant state of learning, your past is your past, don't allow past mistakes to define you, what you do does not define who you are, that people matter, etc. Those were solidified through the development of that book. I don't think that we talk about it enough. I don't think schools,

and parents in particular, with so many activities that kids do and as busy as they are, we don't talk about topics like character and virtue enough. A lot of times schools will talk about it in an academic setting, that this is character, but we don't give kids an opportunity to exercise character and leadership with real hands on experience. We don't allow them opportunities to make mistakes. That is why I think athletics is the greatest character and leadership laboratory that there is. That is because there are boundaries set up and they can go out, make mistakes and learn and grow. To see what works and to work through different social constraints. So they can grow as leaders and individuals of character.

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JCLD: I'm glad you brought up the issue of athletics. I'm not sure that everyone understands the value of athletics and the opportunities that it affords to practice leadership and character.

Hennings: That to me is hands on experience. They can start to learn that when they are only 5 or 6 years old playing recreational league sports. They can start to learn the lessons about character and leadership from day one and that is essential.

JCLD: As you know, that idea fits in with the mission here at USAFA to develop leaders of character. We want to make sure that we are doing that in our programs and through our processes. It sounds like you are like minded in the belief that character is something

that can be developed. What were your thoughts about that as you went through the Academy experience? Was that something that was salient to you at the time or was that something that you developed as you were in the Air Force, played Professional Football, and now in Business?

Hennings: I came across it somewhat haphazardly through experience, but while at the Academy it started to become intentional. I began to understand the "Why." Not just that this is something that you do, but why does it matter? That's what I took away from the Academy into my other experiences. That "Why" is

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what I carried away and what has stuck with me. I got to understand the nuances of character and leadership, but I also got to practice hands on in athletics and in the Squadron and Wing.

JCLD: Did the Academy give you the space to come to that on your own or is there something that we can do to help cadets with that process?

Hennings: That's a good question. During my time at the Academy, I felt like I didn't get enough opportunities to sit down and listen to and engage with leaders in regards to their real world experience. What mistakes they made, how they were able to correct them, how they grew from that. How they dealt with

real world situations. For me, I wish we had more of that. That's why I wrote the *Forces of Character* book. I wanted people to read the stories of Roger Staubach, Troy Aikman, Jason Garret, Justice Clarence Thomas, among others.   How ironically all the former Dallas Cowboy players, myself included, when we were little we stole something. It was something like a pack of gum or a pocketknife and we were caught and subsequently disciplined. We all came to the realization and we really understood there is a right and a wrong (I can hear all those jokes now from fans who dislike the Cowboys). This was also the motivation behind our Class of '88 gift to the Academy – to endow the Profession of Arms Speakers Series. We wanted to make sure the Academy could continue to bring individuals back to talk to the cadets about their Academy experience, what it meant to them, and why it is important. And also share their real world experience – their challenges of leadership and life. So instead of just having cadets go to a mandatory session where they are going to get a lecture about a topic, where it feels like just another class, you can put in front of them someone who has actually been through those life's experiences. It resonates with the cadets. It is a point of connectivity and it means more.

JCLD: With that in mind, how would you encourage a cadet to take a pause, while they are at the Academy, to do exactly what you are suggesting?

Hennings: It's certainly not something that you can force upon someone. Sometimes you have to go through an experience in life to get to the point where you can own it. Where the light bulb moment happens. The one speech that I remember to this day from when

I was a cadet was from a Medal of Honor winner. He talked about his experience in Vietnam. The thing that stuck out for me, and that still resonates with me is, "You can never compromise your integrity, or who you are, because once you give it away it is very difficult to get it back in a leadership position." You lose that trust.

What I think is needed, and I'm not sure it is feasible, is a mentorship program. Being able to have communication between former alumni, who are willing to be mentors that can communicate on a regular basis with a cadet. They can talk about life. It could be a recent graduate or someone who is senior in their career field. If we can pair these cadets with mentors, that is where I think we can have the messages reinforced versus just hearing about it in an academic setting. It is with someone who has been there and done that – someone who has credibility and experience. I think that would really resonate with cadets. I know I would have appreciated the ability to talk with someone. I felt like I was shooting from the hip and blind sometimes when I got on active duty. I would wonder "What is coming at me next?" I had no idea.

JCLD: The nice part about what you just said is that it not only helps the cadets to start to get a sense of the "why," but it also helps the graduate community stay connected in a meaningful way and contribute back to the institution.

Hennings: Exactly. When the graduate community has that connection, it's natural to want to be more a part of what is going on and contribute in many ways. They are a part of the team. As an example of its effectiveness, Jerry Jones did this with the former Dallas

Cowboys players. For most teams, when individuals are no longer playing, they are just gone. Jerry set up a Legends Committee that allowed us to come back to do different functions and to engage with players, businesses, other organizations, sign autographs, and attend the games. As a result, we still feel connected and a part of the team. Otherwise, if we didn't have that we would just be another former player. This is something (the mentoring at USAFA) that would be awesome. The benefit is that it works both ways (for cadets and for alumni). I know I would get as much out of it as the cadet would.

> *I was fortunate to be able to achieve several things but my "why" really became solidified when I became a parent. I saw my children struggle. I saw my son go through a medical issue and when I couldn't fix it based on my own efforts and abilities, that's when I realized that there has to be something more that holds us together as humans.*

JCLD: I agree. It gives the alumni who came through USAFA, where it had a significant impact on them, the opportunity to pay that back and stay connected to the university. Whereas a traditional university may have many graduates stay in the local area, by design, all USAFA graduates leave either immediately after graduation or soon thereafter.

If I could go back a little earlier in our conversation, you said earlier that you were able to find your "why." How has that changed over the years as you have gone through your different phases of your life (military, professional athlete, businessman)? Has your "why" changed?

Hennings: My "why" has become more refined. I was fortunate to be able to achieve several things

but my "why" really became solidified when I became a parent. I saw my children struggle. I saw my son go through a medical issue and when I couldn't fix it based on my own efforts and abilities, that's when I realized that there has to be something more that holds us together as humans. It can't just be about the accomplishments. That's not what truly defined me. I want to be remembered as an individual of faith, an individual of character, and someone who it wasn't all about accomplishing things and acquiring material possessions. Having had those experiences and having met so many different people and to see how they have lived their lives, I have been able to refine my "why" to what it is today.

JCLD: Thank you for sharing that. While the accomplishments can provide a platform to give an opportunity to talk about things of significance, they certainly don't define who we are. Can you talk a little bit about some of the things that you do in the community and how you work to make your "why" happen?

If I can impact one individual, who wants to be that force of character, that's significant. Because that person can then go out and impact someone else. Then that person can go out and impact someone else. Then you are impacting your community, your culture, and your society.

Hennings: Of course. I started a non-profit men's ministry called Wingmen. We encourage men to be husbands, fathers, and friends of purpose and to be engaged in the community from a faith based, servant leaders perspective. I have also written 3 books and I do a lot of public speaking. I talk to audiences on character and leadership. I mentor young professionals through my Commercial Real Estate Company that I

helped found (Rubicon Representation). I work with other non-profits in my community. I also have the opportunity from time to time to speak at military bases. For example, in a few weeks I will be going to Dyess Air Force Base and spend a whole day there talking to all levels of the organization. That evening, I will have the opportunity to speak at their Air Force Ball along with members from the local community. I will talk to them about the things that we have just been talking about. The "why." Why do you do what you do? To hopefully inspire them to go out and continue to serve, to be that servant leader. I see a need and I try to fill the need. It's been a lot of fun.

JCLD: When you go out and give these speeches and talk to people, what do you take away from those opportunities? What does it mean for you personally to be able to give back in that way?

Hennings: What it means to me is that, hopefully, I am making a difference. I want to make a difference in people's lives. Life always comes down to the smallest common denominator: the individual. If I can impact one individual, who wants to be that force of character, that's significant. Because that person can then go out and impact someone else. Then that person can go out and impact someone else. Then you are impacting your community, your culture, and your society. Not to get off on a tangent, but if you look around, we are in a crisis of identity. I've read a lot of Jonathan Haidt's books. I've read *The Righteous Mind, The Happiness Hypothesis* and I'm currently reading *The Coddling of the American Mind*. In his first two books, he refers to a study by pioneer sociologist Emil Durkheim. Durkheim studied communities in Western Europe in the late 19th century. What he found was that where communities

don't have the same moral foundation and the same social constraints, there is a decrease in happiness and an increase in suicide. It broke my heart when I read just yesterday an article where it's not just teenagers or millennials where suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death, but it's at the point now where young kids, ages 8-11 years old, suicide is on the rise. I think a lot of it is because we don't emphasize those things that bring us together in community. It has become so divisive. It is all about identity politics from a variety of competing interests. Where our culture is almost bordering on anarchy. I'm sorry to go off on a tangent, but I'm passionate about this. I don't want to see our communities fail. It's become about the "me" and not about the "we." That is what I talk to and share with people. There were studies done over a 100 years ago that looked at this and these are the consequences. Look around. There are reasons why if we go down this path, it's not going to end well. And that's not just my opinion.

JCLD: I appreciate you sharing that. I agree that whenever we take our focus off of others and put it on ourselves, we get very predictable results as communities and as a larger society. You highlighted something that I thought was really interesting. It sounds like you are a pretty avid reader.

Hennings: Absolutely. What I have found is that what I am drawn to are historical works, predominately biographies - individuals in the military, politics, and theology. I also enjoy reading books on social psychology. I love reading about why people think the way they do and what makes them tick.

JCLD: Have you always been a big reader or is that something that has developed over time?

Hennings: It has been more over time. When I separated from the Air Force and started playing for the Dallas Cowboys, that's when I started to read more.

JCLD: As you know, one of the things that the Academy tries to instill in cadets is the idea of lifelong learning. That we can always continue to learn. One of the things that I have found in my experience is those that are thought leaders, those that are leaders in their field, and those that have had real success are readers. They are always on that path to continue to develop and refine themselves and their thought processes. Is that something that you have found as well?

Hennings: Yes. Leaders are readers. It truly is a lifelong process. I couldn't agree with you more.

JCLD: On a little bit of a different note, we talked about character and a bit on excellence, and one of the other things that we focus on here at USAFA is being a leader. When you think about leadership and being a leader, what comes to mind? In your experience and in your reflection back on the leaders that you have come into contact with, what do good leaders do?

Hennings: Good leaders are constant learners and they know their craft. They set the example. It's do as I do, not just do as I say. They also have the intangible quality of those under them knowing that they truly care for them and have their best interests at heart. I may have gotten "chewed out" by a leader, but I knew that they always had my best interest in mind. I knew that I needed it and they held me accountable. Leaders are also always looking to find their replacement. Who can I mentor to step up to the plate and replicate good leadership?

JCLD: Thanks for sharing those points. Along those lines, the Academy has defined a leader of character. A leader of character *Lives Honorably, Lifts Others, and Elevates Performance*. You talked about character, excellence, pursuing significance, mentoring others, bringing in thought leaders to interact with junior leaders (Speaker Series), and more. It's interesting that you have covered

those three ideas over the course of our conversation. Does that framework of a leader of character resonate with you?

Hennings: Very much so. If you do those things, good things can happen. I agree wholeheartedly.

JCLD: If you had the opportunity to give advice to the class of 2019, around the ideas of character and leadership, what might be some things that you would want to pass on to them?

Hennings: When you graduate from the Academy, now your real world experience begins. Be in a constant state of learning. As a leader, it's not about you. It's about the people that serve under your command and about those that you serve. Give of yourself.

JCLD: That's great advice. Thank you very much for your time.

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FEATURE

The Rhetoric of Character and Implications for Leadership

George Reed, Dean, School of Public Affairs, University of Colorado at Colorado Springs

ABSTRACT

This article casts a questioning eye upon the way the construct of character is used in military organizations and especially the military service academies. After examining what is typically meant by character from a historical perspective, this article considers insights from contemporary social-psychology and empirically informed moral philosophy. After making the case that character may be too unstable a construct for military leaders to rely upon, it suggests that efforts to develop character may still serve a useful purpose even if they aren't building character. Implications for leadership are also explored.[1]

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1   This manuscript is based on the Alice McDermott Lecture on Applied Ethics provided to cadets at the Air Force Academy in April 2018. The lecture was well-received by cadets and faculty as evidenced by a useful and energetic question and answer session. The audience seemed open and willing to consider the possibility that something so central to the Academy's self-perception rests on a shaky foundation (my opinion). No small amount of credit is due to the organizers of that lecture from the Philosophy Department as well as the editors of this journal for entertaining such a heretical questioning of a revered concept in the canon of military leadership.

George Reed is the Dean and a Professor of the School of Public Affairs at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs. Prior to joining the faculty at the University of Colorado he served as a faculty member and administrator at the University of San Diego's School of Leadership and Education Sciences and as Director of Command and Leadership Studies at the U.S. Army War College. He served for twenty-seven years as a military police officer, criminal investigations supervisor and paratrooper, retiring as a colonel. He has a Ph.D. from Saint Louis University in Public Policy Analysis and Administration, a Master of Forensic Science degree from The George Washington University, and Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice Administration from the University of Central Missouri. He is a thought leader and award-winning author on the subjects of public-sector leadership and ethics. His book *Tarnished: Toxic Leadership in the U.S. Military* was released in September of 2015.

The notion of character is central to the identity and core work of the United States (US) military. The rhetoric of character is especially common among the military service academies. The United States Military Academy's (West Point) stated mission is to, "Educate, train and inspire the Corps of Cadets so that each graduate is a commissioned leader of character…" (US Military Academy, 2018). The US Air Force Academy states they …educate, train, and inspire men and women to become leaders of character, motivated to lead the US Air Force in service to the nation," and asserts "Character and leadership are the essence of the United States Air Force Academy (US Air Force Academy, 2018). The Air Force

How much stock should be put in the notion of character? Is there evidence that we can actually develop or change character? What are we really doing when we attempt to develop character and is that helpful to the purpose of the armed forces?

Academy has a magnificent Center for Character and Leadership Development that seeks to "integrate character and leadership into all aspects of the Cadet experience…" (2018). The mission statement of the US Naval Academy also includes a reference to character, "…to graduate leaders who are dedicated to a career of naval service and have potential for future development in mind and character… (US Naval Academy, 2018). Such an important construct deserves thoughtful examination. In light of the significant amount of public resources that are dedicated to the processes of character development, good stewardship suggests some questions: How much stock should be put in the notion of character? Is there evidence that we can actually develop or change character? What are we really doing when we attempt to develop character and is that helpful to the purpose of the armed forces?

Some might view this questioning as an impudent attack on a venerable construct that has served the nation well. It is intended as a thoughtful examination and questioning in the best spirit of applied philosophy. When engaging in an activity as important as creating future generations of military leaders, perhaps we should be clear as to what we are about. The distance between intentions and outcomes can be vast. Then Chair of the Stockdale Chair of Professional Ethics at the Naval War College, Martin Cook (2013) suggested that designing programs and training personnel on a basis of flawed assumptions can result in unexpected and sometimes disastrous results. He further asserts that faced with an outcome that should not happen based on accepted assumptions, we rarely go back and examine the assumptions on which the whole program was built.[2] Military programs can take on a life of their own and can be quite resistant to change even with evidence to the contrary. Therefore, we should expect undesired outcomes if our assumptions about character are false. The belief that we can inculcate good character in such a way that military personnel can be counted on to avoid moral failure across different situations and environments is increasingly questionable.

Character and Misconduct

One of the reasons the notion of character remains a focus of the military relates to the ubiquitous problem of misconduct. Violations of the norms and laws of society are unfortunately commonplace even in organizations that are well-trained and well-led. Thus, an activity that would guarantee desired behavior, no matter the situation, especially by those who wield great power and destructive capacity, has strong allure.

It would be a wonderful thing if we could develop character. We could then depend on those of good character to act virtuously no matter the provocation or inducement to do otherwise.

Character is an ancient concept. We owe much to the Greeks and specifically to Plato and Aristotle for our understanding of the notion. In *The Republic* Plato wrote of the dyers of wool who had to prepare fiber in specific ways to take the dye so it sets fast such that no washing can take away its vivid color. He suggested in selecting and educating soldiers we want to indelibly fix by their nurture and training a perfect inculcation of the laws so they would not be diminished by pleasure, sorrow, fear or desire. Aristotle suggested that we can instill character as a trait through habituation and emulation of those who are just and noble (Aristotle, 1995). The way to good character is to understand the good and then practice it over time until it becomes second nature. Good behavior comes from the person who develops an intrinsic motivation to be good. The quality of character can be determined by how a person consistently thinks and acts over time. Aristotle saw vice is an individual choice (p. 689). The locus of control is squarely on the individual. When confronted with a choice between vice or virtue, those of good character can be counted on to choose virtue. While he recognized that some could be compelled to do wrong, he also felt the virtuous should accept death rather than engage in some acts. The impact of Aristotle's idea that virtue can be habituated is hard to overestimate. We see it in the service academies, in character development initiatives targeting primary school children, and especially throughout our systems of discipline and justice.

When the locus of control is set so securely on the individual, the role of authority is clear. When individuals engage in misconduct, the organization or society intervenes, holding them accountable for their lack of character. Those who misbehave are investigated, punished, and sometimes banished from the organization. Their actions are ascribed to a lack of integrity and poor character. There are sociological benefits to this approach from an organizational perspective. The miscreant can be ostracized, shunned and designated as an outlier, thereby absolving the organization for any role in the undesirable conduct. The response by those in authority is predictable and dependable. The cycle of investigation and punishment can go on with vigor without having to acknowledge or discern how systems and processes of the organization might be contributing to the misconduct.

The Power of Situation and Context

Organizational members take cues from the network of incentive structures, both intentional and unintentional that exist in human social systems. Weisbord (1976) encouraged examination of both formal and informal systems imbedded in organizational culture. Formal structures can be observed in line and box charts and via official pronouncements such as mission statements, slogans and policies. Informally, members of the organization develop their own sets of beliefs about how to survive and thrive. Schein (2010) described the variation as the difference between beliefs and values that are espoused as compared to those actually enacted. The distance between intentions based in formal structure and actions by organizational members can be significant, sometimes to the dismay of those in authority. A case might be useful to illustrate the point.

Consider a situation that repeatedly arises in all military services in one variation or another. A unit that prides itself on excellence faces an annual inspection. The inspection largely relies on an examination of files and records of activity. Inspectors come in from out of town, examine the records and then provide a report on compliance with various directives. Much depends on the inspection, both formally and informally. Unit members, and especially the formal leaders, have

thoroughly bought into the inspection framework. A favorable inspection report is interpreted as evidence the unit is good and worthy of accolades, career enhancing fitness reports (performance reports) and bragging rights. Poor performance on the inspection can result in shame or even career failure. Failure is simply not an acceptable option. Now let's add some additional stressors to the mix. Let's say the unit is experiencing high turnover and shortages, especially among the most senior and experienced personnel. Add a significant increase in workload, perhaps due to an aggressive exercise schedule or deployment. The inspection is looming and again, failure is not an option. As familiar as the scenario, so is a likely response. Unit members are tempted (and some likely will) to put into the record activities they did not perform. Caught in a situation they cannot win and motivated by unit pride, they cheat. They do not cheat for self-aggrandizement or personal gain, but to enhance or maintain the reputation of the unit. Services even have euphemisms for such activity thereby indicating its prevalence. The Army and Air Force might refer to it as "pencil whipping" or "checking the box" while the Navy calls it "gun decking" or "cross decking."

The above scenario represents a situation created by the organization through an inspection and evaluation regime and a system of incentives fueled by an otherwise desirable culture of excellence. Perhaps unintentionally, it also incentivized misconduct. Kerr (1975) refers to such a situation as "the folly of rewarding A, while hoping for B." What happens when the cheating is inevitably discovered? The offenders are excoriated, punished, and labeled as those of poor character. One might argue that those of good character would never fall to falsely documenting unit activity to obtain a favorable inspection report. While that may be true, it also underestimates the power of the situation in influencing human behavior. Perhaps it should be a maxim of good leadership that those in position of authority who develop and maintain such

systems ought to be alert to unintended, yet powerful incentives that drive otherwise good people to bad behavior. Some focus on the external locus of control could be more productive than depending on character alone.

Detainee abuse at the Abu Ghraib central prison provides another example. The now infamous misconduct by the midnight shift of Tier 1 by a poorly resourced, poorly trained and poorly led reserve unit seemed to replicate the famous Stanford Prison Experiments conducted by Philip Zimbardo. Detainees were subjected to humiliation and physical abuse at the hands of US military police in ways reminiscent of what played out in the mock prison located in the basement of the Stanford Psychology Department. The environment in which the unit operated was abysmal. The prison was under frequent mortar attack and subject to eruptions of violence among detainees. There was also pressure to provide actionable intelligence. Perhaps there were a few predisposed individuals who answered the call to sadism, but there were also some who found themselves drawn in by the psycho-social cues loaded into the situation and reinforced by their peers (Adams, Balfour & Reed, 2006). Zimbardo actually testified as a defense witness at the court martial of the non-commissioned officer (NCO) in charge, but to little effect since the NCO was sentenced to confinement with hard labor (Zimbardo, 2007).

In a useful critique of character rhetoric, social psychologist John Doris (2002) asserts our desire to seat the locus of control so firmly on the individual, leads to an underestimation of the power of psychological and social cues that are powerful drivers of human behavior. The argument might be summarized by stating the power of the situation trumps character more often than we want to believe. This is not new information as the power of situational influence has long been a focus of psychology, noting Milgram's famous shock experiments (1974) and Zimbardo's

Stanford Prison Experiment (2007). As Doris states in the first sentence of his book, "I'm possessed of the conviction that thinking productively about ethics requires thinking realistically about humanity" (p. 2002, p. 1).

Doris (2002) also notes the inconsistency of character as a construct. If character is a trait, we should be able to depend upon it regardless of situational factors. Human beings, however, can be extremely virtuous in many aspects of their lives, yet despicable in others. A person who is virtuous and of seemingly good character most of the time, can be unvirtuous at another time. We need look no further than some of our most vaunted military leaders and their moral failures for examples. After a career and perhaps lifetime of seemingly exemplary character, some apparently go off the rails and engage in unseemly and even illegal activities. Were they not of good character in the first place, or did they have good character and lost it? Military leaders might hope for units full of those with good character but they would be well advised not to depend on it.

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Contributions of Experimental Ethics and Social Psychology

Daniel Ariely's entertaining Ted Talk YouTube video, entitled "Our Buggy Moral Code" (2012) has over 170,000 views. In the video, he addresses cheating, acknowledging there is an economic benefit to the practice provided one does not get caught. He boldly asserts that given the opportunity and absent a high probability of getting caught, most people will cheat. They tend however, to limit their cheating to a little bit so they don't feel bad about themselves. He arrived at that conclusion after a series of clever experiments. Students were given a sheet of simple math problems to complete within a limited amount of time. They would pass the answer sheet forward and be paid one dollar for each correct answer. The average number of correct answers in the time given was four. He would then manipulate the environment to see if he could increase or decrease the amount of cheating that took place. For example, he would direct students to shred their answer sheets before stating the number of self-scored correct answers. The average number of correct answers increased to seven. "It wasn't as if there were a few bad apples that cheated a lot, instead what we saw was a lot of people who cheated a little bit" (Ariely). No matter what the reward, cheating occurred, but only a little. Students did not cheat more when offered increased rewards. The experiment suggests that it is important to people to be able to feel good about themselves so they cheat enough to obtain some gain, but not enough to feel bad about it.

In a variation of the experiment, participants were asked to recall the Ten Commandments or ten books they read in high school before completing a series of math problems. The groups who attempted to recall the Ten Commandments did not cheat when completing the math problems. In another variation they asked students to sign a sheet acknowledging they understood the university's honor code. Despite the fact that the university did not have an honor code, with that prompt cheating did not occur. Both

experiments suggest that when it comes to obtaining ethical conduct, human behavior can be influenced (i.e., primed) to the positive or negative with rather subtle cues.

A variation of Ariely's math problem experiment that has particular saliency for military organizations involved the introduction of student actors who would blatantly cheat. Would the students take the cue and emulate the actor's behavior? After thirty seconds the actor would stand up and announce that they solved all of the problems (an impossibility) to no ill effect. If that student was perceived as being a part of the group (e.g., wearing collegiate wear from the same university), cheating increased. As long as the cheater was an in-group member, they took the cue. If, however, the student wore clothing that identified them as from a nearby rival university (an out-group member), cheating actually decreased. The experiment underscores the power of group identity in influencing ethical behavior. Members are alert to behavior that is acceptable to the group and susceptible to emulation. "We don't do that here" is a powerful message when it comes from peers. When it comes to behavior that is questionable, group members apparently look to their in-group for reference.

As additional evidence of the malleability of human ethical behavior, consider an experiment conducted at the University of Newcastle where people had the option to pay for tea and coffee using an "honesty box" (Bateson, Nettle & Roberts, 2006). It was a place where patrons could obtain a beverage on the honor system of payment. Experimenters counted over time the number of people who paid and the number that did not. Having established a baseline, they set about altering the environment to see what impact changes might have on the rate of payment. While the posted instructions for payment remained constant, experimenters changed an image on a banner each week, alternating between an image of flowers and images of eyes. Everybody knows that a paper image

can't actually see whether people pay or not, but the symbolic reminder that someone might be watching was enough to significantly increase the number of people who actually paid for their drinks. When the image of eyes were present people paid nearly three times as much as when images of flowers were displayed.

Both of the above examples involved quasi-experimental settings with relatively low stakes. We are left to consider what would happen if the outcomes were vital to participants. The American experience with high stakes educational testing serves to suggest a likely result. In an effort to establish accountability for student learning, states and the federal government initiated mandatory standardized testing of elementary school students. Test results not only determined whether a student passed a grade, but could also drive removal of teachers and administrators or comprehensive changes to the school. In some jurisdictions, teacher pay was tied to performance on the annual tests. An unintended result of the approach was widespread cheating and gaming of the system at nearly every level of the public school system (Nichols & Berliner, 2005). As one administrator put it, "...a teacher knows that his whole professional status depends on the results he produces and he is really turned into a machine for producing those results; that is, I think, unaccompanied by any substantial gain to the whole cause of education" (p. 2). Few major school districts in the US have escaped resulting scandals associated with organized cheating by students and administrators.

Don't Give Up, There is Hope

The message from these experiments might be disappointing from a character standpoint. All too many appeared to fail the character test. The bar for good character is high, and while there might be an admirable few who achieve it, all too many do not. Looking at the experiments from a behavioral perspective however, the results provide a ray of hope. It is apparently just not that hard to positively influence people's ethical

behavior. Subtle cues can make a positive difference. Rather than focusing on character as a fire and forget notion, front-loaded at the pre-commissioning stage of a career, perhaps we should instead focus on repeatedly exposing military personnel to a series of psychological and social cues throughout their tenure of service. An approach of lifelong ethical learning combined with reminders might provide a more effective approach. It is easy to poke fun at slogans, key chains, and bumper stickers, but there may actually be some benefit if they cue behavior. What currently passes for ethics training for mid-career and senior officers is insufficient and frequently disappointing. If the assumption is that character is already formed at pre-commissioning or before, there is no impetus to engage in efforts to influence continuing ethical behavior. Addressed to a population that is convinced of its own moral superiority, the state-of-the-art approach to in-service ethics is typically compliance-oriented and legalistic in nature.

Mandatory training is despised by many in uniform, yet it serves the purpose of convincing external stakeholders that the military is taking seriously the crisis of the day. The rise of discussions about professionalism and the military professional ethic are heartening developments worthy of additional effort. Don Snider's book, *The Future of the Army Profession* (2005) invigorated a multi-service examination of what it means to be a military professional that extends beyond character and integrity rhetoric. Efforts to focus on what is actually happening rather than what should happen based on ancient notions are valuable. As an example, US Army War College faculty members Leonard Wong and Stephen Gerras published an insightful monograph, *Lying to Ourselves: Dishonesty in the Army Profession* (2015). They asserted that repeated exposure to a deluge of impossible demands requiring certification by officers created situational imperatives that rendered them "ethically numb" (p. ix). Despite widespread rhetoric of virtue and trustworthiness, dishonesty and deception were common in certifying training compliance, readiness reporting, personnel evaluations, and other forms of reporting. It would be naïve to think such routine dishonesty is limited to the Army.

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More importantly, leaders should be especially alert to the unintended consequences of organizational climate and culture, systems and processes that are of key importance in establishing powerful situational imperatives. Recognizing the power of situations, those in positions of authority might receive a higher ethical payoff if they relied less on character and focused more on establishing environments and unit climates that facilitate good behavior. The character project does not incentivize examination of situational factors, yet we know that they are powerful drivers of human behavior.

Having engaged in the deconstruction of military rhetoric of character and the very construct itself, some reconstruction is warranted. It might be foolhardy

to abandon character development altogether. Our institutional efforts to develop character may not be having the intended effect of instilling good character, but they could still be having a positive impact. Character may be too unstable of a concept to put much faith into but there is substantial evidence that human beings can be influenced by situations and incentives we create, especially when aided by psychological and social cues and reinforced by peers. Character rhetoric does provide reminders of the kind of behavior the organization desires and wishes to avoid. Abandoning the character development project altogether could have deleterious effects. It would be a fair question to ask that despite the fact that our attempts to build good character seem to fail often, how much worse would it be without the attempt and how much better can it be if we consider situational factors as well?

Conclusion

Implications of the above exploration lead to some suggestions for military leaders who seek to positively influence behavior. There may or may not be such a thing as good character. If speaking of character as a stable and dependable trait, evidence weighs against it. Leaders of military organizations should not solely depend upon it lest they be surprised and disappointed. Those engaged in character development efforts might consider reframing their attention to how human beings actually behave rather than subscribing to ancient and venerable suggestions about how humans should behave. Humans are much more influenced by roles and situations than we might want to believe. That is not an excuse for bad behavior, but it can serve as an explanation. We should not underestimate the power of situational imperatives as drivers of human behavior. Good leaders will look for and address systems and processes that drive otherwise well-intentioned people to bad behavior. Patterns of repeated misconduct might serve as a clue that interventions targeting ethical climate and not just unethical individuals are warranted. At the very least, an examination of

the reward structure and unintended consequences deriving from it should be carefully considered. When faced with repeated incidents of misconduct, leaders should not content themselves with investigation and punishment alone. They should take a hard look at how the organization might inadvertently be incentivizing bad behavior. Finally, and on a hopeful note, human beings can be positively influenced to act in ways that are in keeping with the high standards of the military profession. It doesn't take much to remind unit members of desired behavior, especially when it is reinforced by peers and repeated throughout a career.

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Why Leaders Need Coaches

Arthur Schwartz, Widener University

Introduction

It's 2011 and I'm at the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, serving as that institution's senior scholar. During an Honor Code meeting I'm confused when I hear an officer say that a cadet should have gotten "on the balcony." I had no idea what the expression meant. That night, through the wisdom of Google, it quickly became clear to me why the officer used that expression.

Coined by Ron Heifetz, founder of the Center for Public Leadership at Harvard, "on the balcony" refers to the capacity of a leader to observe and reflect while in the midst of a conversation, situation or complex activity (Heifetz, Grashow & Linsky, 2009; Parks, 2005). Heifetz uses the example of a dancer who has developed the ability to work on particular steps and movements on the dance floor while simultaneously getting "on the balcony" (metaphorically) to observe the patterns of the choreography and the interactions between the dancers.

Heifetz uses the metaphor to challenge leaders to think about their own thinking (and actions). The challenge for any leader, he suggests, is to develop the cognitive agility to transition effortlessly from the action on the "dance floor" (everyday conversations, meetings, decisions) to getting "on the balcony" to observe, reflect and "see" larger patterns of behaviors, relationships, etc. Indeed, one of the benefits of getting "on the balcony" is that the leader begins to develop the capacity to identify his/her "blind spots" (see Shaw, 2014). This intentional process of reflecting harkens back to the owl of Athena in Greek mythology and the creature's ability to "see" things in the dark as the symbol of wisdom.

Dr. Arthur Schwartz is Professor of Leadership Studies and the Founding Director of the Oskin Leadership Institute at Widener University (PA). He came to Widener from the United States Air Force Academy where he served as that institution's Senior Scholar. Prior to his Air Force Academy appointment, Dr. Schwartz served fourteen years as a senior executive at the John Templeton Foundation. He is widely-known for collaborating with Dr. Martin E.P. Seligman at the University of Pennsylvania in catalyzing the field of positive psychology. Arthur's research focuses on the antecedents of moral courage and ethical leadership. Most recently, he wrote the lead chapter and edited the Jossey-Bass volume Developing Ethical Leaders. Dr. Schwartz has proudly served on the board of the International Leadership Association (ILA) and he is currently on the board of Character.org (formerly the Character Education Partnership). He received his doctorate from Harvard University where he studied adolescent moral development.

Indeed, Russell (2009) reminds us that the Greek philosopher Aristotle frequently employed the "vision" metaphor in his writings on character and leadership. The phronimoi (wise persons), suggests Aristotle, know what to do in particular situations "because they have an eye, formed from experience....they see correctly" (NE VI.II, 1143b13-14).

In addition to "vision" metaphors, scholars and leader-practitioners frequently employ "spatial" metaphors to describe the ability of leaders to reflect on their behaviors even in the midst of action. For example, Russell (2009) asserts that virtuous people need "critical distance" (p. 388) in order to evaluate one's character, aims and desires. Additionally, the language of "standing back" or "stepping back" is widely used to extol the virtue of testing our assumptions, behaviors and mental models (Dewan & Myatt, 2012).

Mental Models

One purpose of this article is to consider whether too many leaders are caught in a web of "mental models" that limit their capacity and effectiveness. Mental models have been defined as the extent to which "people's view of the world, of themselves, of their own capabilities, and of the tasks that they are asked to perform, or topics they are asked to learn, depend heavily on the conceptualizations that they bring to the task" (Gentner & Stevens, 1983). Plato, in his parable of the cave, warns us that the capacity to "step back" from our mental models is not easy. We all have settled habits of mind, heart and hands (e.g., our behaviors and actions). In her book *Virtue as Social Intelligence*, Nancy Snow (2010) draws on the research of Walter Mischel & Shoda (1995) to explain how difficult it is to change our thoughts and behaviors. Mischel & Shoda posit that each of us have developed a "bundle" of distinctive motivations, cognitions and affective responses. These elements form our personality, or what they call our Cognitive-Affective Processing System (CAPS). For example, a "shy" person will typically react to a situation differently than an extremely outgoing person. This

"system" also includes our beliefs, goals, feelings, values, desires, self-regulatory plans, self-attributes, etc. The CAPS model suggests that our typical response to any situation depends on our personality, temperament and dispositions.

Moreover, we all have internal schemas, scripts, routines, habits and behavioral repertoires that are primed and activated by particular people, situations or contexts. Mischel & Shoda call these responses "behavioral signatures" – automatic "if-then" responses to different stimuli and events. For example, my CAPS explains why, all things being equal, I will respond to meeting people at a conference using behaviors, language and affect typical to how I've met people at conferences for the past 40 years. We all have "default" or automatic thoughts and behaviors ("if-then" responses). This article seeks to examine the ways in which our "behavioral signatures" limit and inhibit men and women in positions of leadership within their professions. More specifically, I aim to persuade the reader that most of us need support to grasp the ways in which our personality structure limits our cognitive, affective and behavioral agility.

Developing Wisdom

It has never been easy for me to get "on the balcony." I prefer to stay on dance floor (metaphorically). Thus, I understand first-hand the resistance that leaders may have when it comes to asking for support (often referred to as coaching). Most leaders have demonstrated success in their field or profession. They've been promoted, often several times. Clearly, their "default" scripts, schemas, routines and behavioral repertoires have served them well. Why change?

Aristotle is not especially helpful here. While Aristotle's theory of the virtues is surely a "theory of getting better," Russell (2015) aptly points out that Aristotle does not articulate any special theory or set of interventions on how we can most optimally enhance our practice of the virtues -- except to insist

that acquiring a virtue is like acquiring a skill. In fact, a close reading of Aristotle seems to suggest that all it takes to develop a virtue is the right amount of focus, effort and practice.

While we may be able to develop such virtues as generosity or gratitude using this focus-effort-practice formula, I doubt whether we can fully develop wisdom in this manner. This is especially true for leaders who

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need to access complex cognitive skills (Hannah, Lord & Pearce, 2011), whether it's to make a "hard decision" in the face of uncertainty and ambiguity or to know when to demonstrate the "soft skills" of caring, listening or compassion.

Aristotle, however, does explain the different functions and abilities of wise persons. In his book *Practical Intelligence and the Virtues*, Daniel Russell (2009) offers us a chain of factors that form the virtue of wisdom (*phronesis*). First, the wise person has the ability to look at any situation from multiple perspectives. Second, after weighing and discerning these multiple perspectives, the wise person is able to discriminate between the most likely right and wrong response. In other words, the wise person can ultimately grasp ("see") what is actually going on. Next, the wise person exhibits the ability to bring this deliberative process to a conclusion and determine what needs

to be done. Finally, based on the steps described above, the wise person actually responds to the situation, avoiding the dreaded "decision-action gap" (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2013).

In many ways, wisdom is the ability of a person to extract relevant information that might be lost on others. Indeed, Aristotle seems to suggest that experience is the great equalizer. My argument is that self-scrutiny – the capacity to reflect consistently on the range of your leadership behaviors, from strategic decisions to what "pushes your buttons" – becomes for many leaders more critical than mere experience, especially for leaders who have taken on significant responsibilities and enormous pressures. Once again, I want to emphasize how unlikely it is for anyone to develop the virtue of wisdom without taking intentional steps to learn how his or her personality structures (our cognitive-affective processing system) limits and restrains them. A growing number of leaders are beginning to recognize this limitation (often after talking to their mentors) and increasingly they are working with a leadership coach who helps them "see" their blind spots (Berglas, 2013; Coutu & Kauffman, 2009).

Coaching Leaders

The coaching profession is exploding across a number of dimensions and domains (Cox, Bachkirova, & Clutterbuck, 2014; Palmer & Whybrow, 2014). According to Connie Whittaker Dunlop, a member of Forbes Magazine Coaches Council, coaching is a $2 billion global industry with 36 active professional coaching associations worldwide (Dunlop, 2017). Of course, such dynamic growth has produced significant challenges for the industry, including the standards used to accredit training programs for leadership coaches. Yet the proliferation

of these programs and associations all cohere around the belief that "coaching is a powerful vehicle for change" (excerpted from the mission statement of The Institute of Coaching, affiliated with the Harvard Medical School).

Broadly defined, leadership coaching (often referred to as executive coaching) is a relationship between a coach and a person in a leadership position. The purpose of the relationship is for the coach to help the coachee become a more effective leader. There are three components to this one-on-one relationship: (1) the strict confidentiality of what's discussed during the coaching session; (2) the willingness of the leader to learn and grow from the coaching experience; and (3) the ability of the coach to use the right coaching model with the right person at the right time to create the ideal environment for the leader to solve or understand the right problem (Kauffman & Hodgetts, 2016).

While approaches to coaching leaders may differ, most coaches aim to support the efforts of leaders to examine their assumptions, attitudes and default mindsets across a wide range of leader behaviors, cognitions and emotions. After conducting a comprehensive review of the literature, compiled below is a list behaviors and cognitions that coaches report are common to their coaching experience. What is startling to me is how this list incorporates the different functions and abilities Aristotle ascribed to the wise person:

1. Self-knowledge (from awareness to deeper meaning and insight)
2. Mental attention and mindfulness
3. Learning from past mistakes
4. Ability to recognize patterns of behavior
5. Ability to find creative or novel solutions to problems
6. The capacity to think dialectically (to grasp opposite values or perspectives)
7. Developing a questioning spirit (leaders ask questions)
8. Adaptability (across situations and domains)
9. Improving interpersonal relationships
10. Thinking strategically
11. Understanding emotions (in both self and others)
12. Ability to self-regulate (anger, choice of words)
13. Ability to actively listen
14. Ability to give feedback
15. Ability to question assumptions
16. Admitting when (and what) one does not know
17. Develop new skills and behaviors (growth mindset)
18. The courage to stand up for one's values and convictions

Assess-Challenge-Support

The Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) has developed the Assess, Challenge, Support (ACS) model of coaching that many leadership coaches use (Ting & Scisco, 2006). During the assessment phase, the coach and leader work together to identify precisely what the leader wants to work on. For example, the leader may have participated in a 360-degree review and the coach will spend time with the leader to help him or her identify significant themes and questions that emerged from the 360-review. Significantly, we know from the literature that a 360-degree assessment often reveals a gnawing gap between how leaders see themselves and how others in the organization perceive them (Lepsinger & Lucia, 1997). In other coaching situations, the leader has taken a battery of inventories (personality tests, emotional intelligence scales, transformational leadership questionnaire, etc.) that reveal certain themes the leader will likely want to explore with his or her coach (e.g., "I was surprised to see that I scored so low in the "individualized consideration" area of transformational leadership"). Other times, the leader has already determined a specific skill or organizational challenge he or she

wants to focus on (e.g., team dynamics or a relationship with a specific colleague).

The challenge component focuses on the opportunity for the coach and leader to identify a particular context or situation in which the leader can practice the new behavior or approach. For example, perhaps the coach has been working with the leader on how to observe patterns of behavior or communication during a particular meeting or situation (e.g., the ability to get "on the balcony"). During this challenge phase of coaching it's essential that the coach create a disequilibrium or imbalance so the leader can stretch beyond his or her comfort zone.

The third component, support, is the ability of the coach to maintain the leader's motivation, whether it's by continuing to offer new resources and strategies, managing setbacks, and perhaps most critically, affirming small wins (e.g., celebrating the first time the leader effectively delegates responsibility rather than hording control).

The effectiveness of the coaching experience is usually measured along two distinct dimensions: (1) the extent to which the leader has attained or reached his or her stated goal (e.g., to listen better); and, (2) the extent to which the leader has made a commitment to create a sustained "learning agenda" whether the coaching experience continues or not.

The effectiveness of the coaching experience is usually measured along two distinct dimensions: (1) the extent to which the leader has attained or reached his or her stated goal (e.g., to listen better); and, (2) the

extent to which the leader has made a commitment to create a sustained "learning agenda" whether the coaching experience continues or not. While several modest studies have shown the benefits of the coaching experience, ranging from increased leader-efficacy to a leader's trust in subordinates, the field has yet to produce a definitive outcomes study to determine the efficacy of the coaching experience across the professions (Page & De Haan, 2014; Tamir & Finfer, 2017).

Five Reasons That Prevent Leaders From Growing Via Coaching

While there is empirical and anecdotal evidence that coaching can significantly increase leader effectiveness, there are five reasons why the coaching experience does not result in new insight or skill, even when the leader works with a skilled and effective coach. These are:

1. Leaders are driven by performance goals, not learning goals

Most leaders are achievement-oriented. They like excelling, whether it's acing a test in high school or accepting a professional stretch assignment. Learning goals are not so simple or easy (Dweck, 2007). Too many leaders just don't like being a beginner, especially when "mastery" seems so distant and unattainable. Moreover, leaders catch on fast that organizations (whether the military or companies) are far more likely to reward the attainment of a performance goal than recognizing and rewarding a leader who has learned something about herself that has previously limited her behavioral repertoire. To guard against this constraint, organizations should braid into their performance evaluations annual learning goals; moreover, leaders should take the proactive step to

work with a colleague to hold each other accountable to demonstrate progress toward a learning goal.

2. Leaders spend too much time preserving their reputations and hiding their inadequacies

In their book *Immunity to Change* (2009), Robert Kegan and Lisa Lahey write "if you are leading anything at any level, you are driving some kind of plan or agenda, but some kind of plan or agenda is always driving you (p. 6, emphasis in original)." For many leaders, the agenda driving them is finding ways and taking steps to preserve their reputations and hide their inadequacies (from themselves and others). For most leaders, vulnerability is a recipe for disaster (Kegan, Lahey, Fleming, & Miller, 2014). Years ago, when I started working with my coach, vulnerability was one area I desperately wanted to avoid. Looking back, I'm thankful he encouraged me to examine this critical aspect of my leadership practice. To guard against this constraint, emerging leaders should observe how being vulnerable benefits leaders they respect and admire. Second, they should fiercely reflect and consider the possibility that being vulnerable is an act of personal courage.

3. Leaders like being the "hub" rather than the "bridge"

These metaphors are used by Herminia Ibarra in her book *Act Like a Leader, Think Like a Leader* (2015). Most leaders are comfortable being at the "hub" of activity, such as controlling the flow of information, overseeing critical tasks, establishing goals and objectives. Ibarra suggests, however, that the most effective leaders become "bridges." These leaders spend much of their time serving as a bridge between their team and the "higher ups." They are constantly connecting members of their team to key outside people; they strive to provide new and timely information to members of their team. Regrettably, too many leaders cannot let go of their "hub" role, even with the support of a leadership coach. There is this persistent, gnawing reality in the coaching literature that some leaders simply want to keep

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doing what they already do well (Goldsmith, 2007). To guard against this constraint, organizations could braid into their performance evaluations, including the leader's 360-degree review, the extent to which an emerging leader is able to demonstrate "bridge" behaviors. In addition, a leader could simply ask a trusted peer to offer honest feedback on his or her ability to exhibit "bridge" behaviors.

4. Leaders avoid confronting the "undiscussable issues"

Robert Quinn used this phrase in his book *Deep Change: Discovering the Leader Within* (1996). Every family and group has a cluster of undiscussable issues. These issues are the "sacred cows" that even the most authentic leaders are reluctant to discuss. Sometimes we avoid bringing up "undiscussable issues" because there is simply too much history involved. Or past efforts failed miserably. There is also the perception that raising the issue will likely hurt one or more individuals and sometimes focusing on the issue is perceived as an act of disloyalty. In short, leaders too often avoid these

"undiscussable issues" because who wants to risk experiencing fear or embarrassment? This is a hard constraint to overcome, but the most effective leaders have learned that it's best to name the elephant in the room. They know from past experiences that too much energy can be spent on finding ways to avoid the "undiscussable issues" rather than harnessing that energy to find a solution. Sometimes all it takes is for a leader to set the example; to communicate to his or her subordinates that it's okay to talk about an issue that others sought to dismiss or sweep under the table.

5. Leaders focus too much on skills, rather than on developing virtue

Too many leaders come to coaching for answers to a simple question: "What should I do?" Yet Hursthouse (1999) argues that the wise person asks

Sometimes all it takes is for a leader to set the example; to communicate to his or her subordinates that it's okay to talk about an issue that others sought to dismiss or sweep under the table.

a radically different question: "What sort of person ought I be?" Recent research on leader identity reveals that the most effective leaders have the right sort of life goals, motives and purposes (Hannah, Woolfork & Lord, 2009; Hess & Cameron, 2006; McKenna, Rooney & Boal, 2009; Yang, 2011). These leaders strive to find harmony and consonance between their different values and commitments (Kristjansson, 2016). Aristotle hit the mark when he wrote "virtue makes one's end the right end and phronesis (practical wisdom) makes right the things toward that end" (NE, VI, 12, 1144a7-9). Anecdotal evidence suggests, regrettably, that leaders across all professions focus significantly more attention

on developing the requisite skills of their chosen profession rather than cultivating the virtues aimed at a good life (Kilburg, 2012). To overcome this constraint, an emerging leader could identify a virtue that he/she wants to strengthen or enhance, such as patience, and during the next three months challenge himself/herself to intentionally practice this virtue.

Conclusion

Rare is the leader who has not uttered the words: "What was I thinking?" While every mentor and coach since Socrates has urged us to examine our beliefs, behaviors and emotions too many leaders revert back to what they're comfortable saying and doing. It's safe. Predictable. But a growing chorus of scholars and leader-practitioners are calling for leaders to resist the status quo and their long-held assumptions (Bennis, 2009; Sharmer, 2016). They are challenging each of us to develop the radical mindset of a life-long learner. In addition, leaders are beginning to recognize that leader humility (Owens & Hekman, 2016) is strongly associated with group cohesion, innovation, and a promotion-focus orientation. Coaching can help leaders develop and cultivate the virtue of humility.

There is much wisdom in the Talmudic expression "we do not see things as they are...we see things as we are." At the core of this wisdom is the call for leaders to recognize and accept that everyone has weaknesses and blind spots. Looking into the mirror may not be easy, but it's what the most effective leaders consistently do. They have learned that the most effective way to motivate and inspire their subordinates to improve is to model and communicate the ways they are striving to improve themselves.

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"Walking the Talk" Alone: Leading and Following Authentically in an Inauthentic World

William L. Gardner, Rawls College of Business, Texas Tech University

Claudia C. Cogliser, Rawls College of Business, Texas Tech University

ABSTRACT

The evolving literature on authentic leadership rests on an implicit assumption that leaders and followers who strive to promote authentic relationships in organizational settings can achieve them. However, organizations are rife with potential barriers to authenticity, including ego defense mechanisms, interaction partners who are either unwilling or unable to attain authenticity, and organizational contexts and cultures that apply pressures to compromise one's core values or true emotions. Under such circumstances, authentic behavior may be naïve, risky, and even counterproductive. As such, many leaders faced with such pressures may fail to act with character and integrity. To explore these barriers, this paper reviews a diverse body of literature to identify potential boundary conditions for authentic leadership and followership that are operative at the intrapersonal, dyadic, group, and organizational levels. We conclude by suggesting avenues for future research to explore the circumstances that constrain leader and follower efforts to promote authentic relationships.

Much discussion has arisen over the past fifteen years about a new perspective on leadership, called authentic leadership, which enables both the leader and follower to develop a relationship whereby they can be true to the self (Gardner, Cogliser, Davis, & Dickens, 2011; George, 2003; George & Sims, 2007). But what happens if the other party in the relationship is unwilling or unable to be truly authentic? Or, what happens to leaders and followers who strive for authenticity, but work in a climate where pressures to compromise their core values or true emotions make authentic behavior risky or ineffective? Are there relationships and environments where the quest for authenticity is simply naïve? Or, worse yet, counterproductive? While much scholarly attention has been devoted to the study of authentic leadership in recent years (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Avolio, Griffith, Wernsing, & Walumbwa,

2010; Banks, McCauley, Gardner, & Guler, 2016; Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa, 2005; Gardner, Avolio, & Walumbwa, 2005; Gardner et al., 2011; Gill, Gardner, Claeys, & Vangronsvelt, 2018; Karam, Gardner, Gullifor, Tribble, & Li, 2017; Sidani & Rowe, 2018; Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008), these are questions that remain unanswered.

One of the basic properties of good theory is that it identifies the boundary conditions under which the theory is valid, as well as the limits to the theory (Bacharach, 1989). As the study of authentic leadership matures, it is important to more thoroughly explicate the boundaries of the theory (Gardner et al., 2011). Toward that end, this paper seeks to identify promising directions for theory building and testing that explore potential limits to authenticity within organizational settings. That is, what are the circumstances, if any, within which the ability of a leader and/or follower to form an authentic leader-follower relationship are severely constrained by the shortcomings of the other party or the context within which both parties interact?

William (Bill) Gardner is the Jerry S. Rawls Chair in Leadership and Director of the Institute for Leadership Research in the Rawls College of Business at Texas Tech University. Additionally, he serves as the Editor-in-Chief for *Group & Organization Management* and an Associate Editor for *The Leadership Quarterly*. He received both his doctorate and MBA degrees from Florida State University. Dr. Gardner's research focuses on leadership and leadership development, business ethics, and social influence processes within organizations. He has published numerous peer reviewed articles in such scholarly outlets as the *Academy of Management Review, Academy of Management Journal, Group & Organization Management, The Leadership Quarterly, Journal of Management, Journal of Management Studies, Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, and the *Journal of Organizational Behavior*. Extremely active in the Southern Management Association, Dr. Gardner served as the President from 2006-2007. In 2011, he received the Distinguished Doctoral Alumni Award from the College of Business at Florida State University. The Rawls College of Business recognized his research contributions in 2013 with the Outstanding Researcher Award and in 2014 with the Distinguished Faculty Research Award. In 2015, Texas Tech recognized him as an "Integrated Scholar", and in 2016 he received the President's Academic Achievement Award. In 2017 he was recognized for his extensive contributors to the Southern Management Association through the "James G. (Jerry) Hunt Sustained Outstanding Service Award."

Claudia C. Cogliser Claudia C. Cogliser is Professor of Management and Faculty Director of Assessment in the Rawls College of Business at Texas Tech University. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Miami, and previously held faculty positions at the University of Oklahoma and Oregon State University. Claudia teaches courses in organizational behavior, leadership, and research methods and was inducted into the Texas Tech Teaching Academy in 2013. Her research interests include leader-follower relationships, entrepreneurial orientation, scale development, and multi-level analysis. With over 40 publications, Claudia's research appears in scholarly outlets such as The Leadership Quarterly, Journal of Management, Journal of Organizational Behavior, Entrepreneurship Theory & Practice, Organizational Research Methods, and Educational and Psychological Measurement. In 2013 she received the Texas Tech Chancellor's Distinguished Teaching Award and the President's Excellence in Teaching Award. Claudia serves on the editorial boards of The Leadership Quarterly and Group and Organizational Management. She is a member of the Academy of Management, the American Psychological Association, Southern Management Association, and the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology.

To identify promising directions for examining these questions, we will consider potential barriers to authenticity at the individual (e.g., fragile self-esteem), dyadic (e.g., abusive supervision), collective (e.g., ethical climate), and contextual (e.g., hypercompetitive industries) levels. Because our purpose is to initiate a dialogue about, as opposed to an exhaustive examination of, potential boundary conditions, we focus initially on a limited set of barriers at the individual, dyadic, collective, and contextual levels for illustrative purposes, while briefly identifying other barriers at each of these levels as additional avenues for future research. However, before we consider these barriers to authenticity, we lay the groundwork by providing an overview of authentic leadership theory. We conclude with an agenda for future research and recommendations for overcoming the barriers to workplace authenticity and authentic leadership.

Authentic Leadership Theory and Development: Core Assumptions and Principles

Authentic leadership can be thought of as an approach to leadership that allows both the leader and follower to be true to the self and truthful with others (Hannes Leroy, 2012; personal communication). That is, the leader exhibits a genuine form of leadership that reflects personal values and builds on his or her strengths, while encouraging followers to do likewise. More formally, authentic leadership has been defined as "a pattern of leader behavior that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate, to foster greater self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers, fostering positive self-development" (Walumbwa et al., 2008, p. 94).

The preceding definition reflects well the essential components of authentic leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, et al., 2005). To be true to the self, one must know the self; hence, self-awareness provides a foundation for authentic leadership and authentic followership. An internalized moral perspective involves a conviction to remain true to one's personal moral values, rather than succumbing

What are the circumstances, if any, within which the ability of a leader and/or follower to form an authentic leader-follower relationship are severely constrained by the shortcomings of the other party or the context within which both parties interact?

to external pressures or incentives to compromise those values. Note that this component is consistent with the concept of character, which Wright and Quick (2011, p. 976) defined as "those interpenetrable and habitual qualities within individuals, and applicable to organizations that both constrain and lead them to desire and pursue personal and societal good." Balanced processing refers to an ability and willingness to accept both positive and negative information about the self in a non-defensive fashion as one processes feedback from others. Relational transparency involves being open and forthcoming in conveying self-relevant information to close others. In addition to these core components, authentic leadership is posited to stem from and promote positive psychological capacities (e.g., confidence, optimism, hope, resilience; Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2015; Rego, Sousa, Marques, & Cunha, 2012; Wang, Sui, Luthans, Wang, & Wu, 2014) and a positive ethical climate (Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, et al., 2005). However, just as high levels of these factors facilitate authentic leader-follower relationships, it follows that low levels serve as barriers to such relationships.

We consider the role that such barriers play at the individual, dyadic, collective, and contextual levels below.

Barriers to Authentic Leader-Follower Relationships: Individual-Level Barriers

If self-awareness serves as a requirement for authentic leadership and followership, it follows that the absence of self-awareness represents one of the biggest obstacles to the formation of authentic leader-follower relationships. Potential insight into such intrapersonal boundaries to authentic functioning is provided by theory and research on optimal secure versus fragile self-esteem and its implications for authentic functioning (Kernis, 2003). Because persons who have optimal high self-esteem are secure about their personal identities, they are accepting of both their strengths and weaknesses, and better able to achieve authenticity by remaining true to the self. Specifically, because persons with optimal high self-esteem know and accept themselves (self-awareness), they are not threatened by negative self-relevant information (balanced processing), and able to form close and open

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relationships with others with whom they self-disclose both their strengths and weaknesses (relational transparency), while remaining true to their core values in their conduct (internalized moral perspective).

While persons with fragile high self-esteem may profess to have high positive self-evaluations, their self-esteem crumbles when they are confronted with ego-threatening information. Hence, negative feedback

often results in the evocation of ego defense mechanisms that produce biased information processing and non-transparent relationships with others (Kernis, 2003). Thus, our ego, and the psychological mechanisms we have learned to protect it, represents the greatest intrapersonal barrier to authenticity. The threat of the ego to authentic leadership is captured well be this quote from Andrew Cohen: "The thought of being a leader may seem like an appealing idea to the ego, but the reality of what being an authentic leader implies scares the ego to death."

At the extreme, pathological levels of ego defense mechanisms may contribute to the emergence of narcissistic leadership (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1985; Padilla, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2007; Petrenko, Aime, Ridge, & Hill, 2016; Resick, Whitman, Wengarden, & Hiller, 2009) – a form of leadership that appears to be the antithesis to authentic and character-based leadership (Wright & Quick, 2011). Narcissism is "a personality trait encompassing grandiosity, arrogance, self-absorption, entitlement, fragile self-esteem, and hostility", while "narcissistic leaders have grandiose belief systems and leadership styles, and are generally motivated by their needs for power and admiration rather than empathetic concern for the constituents and institutions they lead" (Rosenthal, 2006, p. 617). While narcissistic leaders often give the appearance of supreme confidence, at their core they possess low and fragile self-esteem that is easily threatened by information that contradicts their illusions of grandeur. Hence, the psychological demons that haunt narcissistic persons operate to blind them to reality, particularly when it comes to developing awareness about their personal shortcomings. Because narcissism represents a severe psychological disorder that, even with clinical treatment and years of therapy (Horwitz, 2000), remains relatively resistant to change,

it represents an enormous barrier to authenticity that inhibits efforts to promote self- and leader development through coaching and other processes (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1985). Although narcissism and narcissistic leadership are extreme cases, they illustrate well the barriers to authenticity that arise from the ego, and the psychological processes humans use to defend it.

The preceding discussion illustrates the kinds of barriers to authentic functioning in the workplace that can arise at the intrapersonal level. Additional insights into such barriers may be provided by complementary areas of study, including theory and research on: 1) secure versus insecure attachment styles (Gillath, Sesku, Shaver, & Chun, 2010; Hinojosa, McCauley, Randolph-Seng, & Gardner, 2014); and 2) Machiavellian personalities (Christie & Geis, 1970; Sendjaya, Pekerti, Härtel, Hirst, & Butarbutar, 2016). Common to these perspectives is the recognition that intrapersonal processes that inhibit self-awareness may make it impossible for leaders and followers to achieve the types of balanced processing, relational transparency, and internalized moral viewpoint requisite for authentic relationships.

Dyadic-Level Barriers

Beyond the intrapersonal barriers to authenticity that arise for narcissistic individuals, daunting challenges emerge for those who seek to form authentic relationships with such persons (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1985; Ouimet, 2010; Rosenthal, 2006). Indeed, because illusions of grandeur prevent narcissistic persons from developing a realistic assessment of their own strengths and limitations, those with whom they interact have difficulty giving them honest feedback about their capabilities and the merits of their ideas. Moreover, because narcissistic leaders are driven by a strong need for power and glory, and lack the ability

to empathize with others, they frequently use others as pawns for achieving personal goals. Under these circumstances, a subordinate or superior who seeks to interact with the self-deluded narcissist in an open and honest fashion runs the risk of being manipulated and mistreated.

In light of the documented interpersonal challenges that are associated with narcissistic leadership (Ouimet, 2010; Rosenthal, 2006), a number of questions arise. Can one lead or follow authentically when one's interaction partner is a narcissist who is incapable of achieving personal and relational authenticity? Indeed, is it wise for a leader or follower to engage in relational

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transparency with a partner who may use personal self-disclosures regarding one's goals, abilities, and limitations for personal gain? More specifically, is it naïve to assume that one can behave authentically when interacting with an inherently inauthentic, and potentially dangerous, dyadic partner? Or, is it possible to remain true to one's self and demonstrate character through open dialogue whereby the narcissistic partner is confronted about his or her hidden motives and self-delusions?

Preliminary answers to these questions may be provided by the rich literature devoted to narcissism and narcissistic leadership (Chatterjee & Hambrick, 2007; Horwitz, 2000; Kets de Vries & Miller, 1985; O'Reilly III, Doerr, & Chatman, 2018; Oesterle, Elosge, &

Elosge, 2016; Ouimet, 2010; Petrenko et al., 2016; Reina, Zhang, & Peterson, 2014; Rosenthal, 2006; Zhang, Ou, Tsui, & Wang, 2017). Unfortunately, this literature is not overly encouraging for proponents of authentic and character-based leadership. For instance, Petrenko, Aime, Ridge, and Hill (2016) explored the relationship between CEO narcissism and corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices, positing that more narcissists initiate CSR activities in response to a personal need for attention and image reinforcement, rather than an underlying commitment to CSR causes. As expected, CEO narcissism had positive effects on the levels and profile of CSR initiatives. However, the

> *More research is needed to explore these potential effects of narcissistic leadership on the authenticity of followers and colleagues.*

commitment of the CEO to particular CSR practices tended to be short-lived, as they moved from initiative to initiative for the apparent purpose of garnering attention, without sticking with any one initiative long enough to yield sustainable benefits for stakeholders.

This profile of CSR activity churning was also negatively related to firm performance, as the expenses for firms lead by narcissistic CEOs who pursued sequential and high-profile but short-lived CSR activities, were much higher than those of firm's with less narcissistic CEOs who demonstrated long-term commitments to a focused set of CSR practices. Moreover, these findings suggest that narcissistic CEOs impacted the ethical conduct of their associates, as the entire firm was swept up by the flurry of CSR activity to pursue high-profile but superficial and temporary CSR causes. Reading between the lines, we suspect that members of such firms who seek to achieve authenticity and act with character, may be challenged to do so when confronted with a narcissistic and impetuous CEO on a quest for personal glory. Dare

they show the moral courage to confront the CEO and ask who the latest high-profile CSR endeavor is intended to serve – the purported stakeholders or the CEO's ego? For many interested in self-preservation, the answer will be "no"; for others who do voice their values, their tenure with the firm may be short. More research is needed to explore these potential effects of narcissistic leadership on the authenticity of followers and colleagues.

Other relevant content areas that may provide insight into dyadic barriers to authentic leader-follower relationships include: 1) dysfunctional social exchange processes (Liden, Sparrowe, & Wayne, 1997); 2) abusive supervision (Tepper, 2007; Zhang & Bednall, 2016); 3) destructive leadership (Collins & Jackson, 2015; Einarsen, Aasland, & Skogstad, 2007; Eubanks & Mumford, 2010); 4) workplace bullying (Collins & Jackson, 2015; Eubanks & Mumford, 2010; Ferris, Zinko, Brouer, Buckley, & Harvey, 2007); and 5) incivility in the workplace (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Cortina, 2008).

Collective-Level Barriers

Beyond the potential intrapersonal and dyadic barriers to authentic leadership and followership described above, obstacles at the collective level warrant exploration. Primary among these is the ethical climate of the organization (Ambrose, Arnaud, & Schminke, 2008; Victor & Cullen, 1987, 1988), which constitutes a key collective level factor that can serve to either facilitate or inhibit authentic functioning by organizational members. Ethical climate has been defined as "the shared perceptions of what is regarded as ethically correct behaviors and how ethical situations should be handled in an organization" (Victor & Cullen, 1987, p. 51). To better delineate alternative manifestations of ethical climate, Victor and Cullen (1987) advanced a typology of ethical climate that differentiates shared

ethical perceptions along two dimensions. The first dimension encompasses three ethical criteria that are used for decision-making: egoism, benevolence, and principle. The second dimension involves three loci of analysis used as referents for ethical decision-making: individual, local and cosmopolitan. Victor and Cullen (1988) empirically validated five ethical climate types that have subsequently been similarly conceptualized in most other ethical climate studies (Martin & Cullen, 2006). These five climate types are: caring (emphasizes the welfare of organizational constituents), law and code (emphasizes legal compliance and professional standards), rules (emphasizes adherence to organizational policies and procedures), instrumental (emphasizes personal and organizational interests regardless of consequences), and independence (emphasizes the application personal morality and ethics in the conduct of organizational activities).

One implication of this stream of research suggested by Ambrose and colleagues (2008) pertains to the person-organizational (P-O) fit arising from the level of one's individual moral development and the ethical climate of the organization. Specifically, their notion of moral development-ethical climate fit suggests that some ethical climates will constitute a better fit for persons striving to be authentic and character driven than others. Theoretical support for this assertion is provided by Gardner and colleagues' (2005) contention that higher levels of authenticity are associated with higher levels of moral development (Kohlberg, 1984; Kohlberg & Diesnner, 1991). Moreover, they argue that persons who reach the post-conventional stage of moral development (where they use personal ethical standards when engaged in moral reasoning) exhibit high levels of self-awareness, perspective taking (balanced processing), and relational transparency. That is, because persons operating at the post-conventional levels are able to understand and consider lower levels of moral reasoning, while ultimately making ethical decisions based on their personal values and ethical standards, they are able to remain true to

the self. Consistent with this reasoning, Ambrose et al. (2008) postulated that the highest levels of P-O fit in terms of individual moral development and ethical climate would be achieved for the preconventional-instrumental, conventional-caring, and postconventional-independence combinations. From an authenticity perspective, this implies that the postconventional-independent climate combination would be most conducive to authenticity.

In assessing the degree of P-O fit between the various levels of moral development and types of ethical climates, Ambrose et al. (2008) found that the strongest effects of fit were achieved in the conventional-caring climate combination which was significantly related to higher levels of organizational commitment and job satisfaction, and lower levels of intent to leave. In contrast, the weakest effects of fit were achieved for the preconventional-instrumental combination, which was related only to higher levels of affective commitment. As predicted, congruence between the postconventional-independent combination was positively related to affective commitment and negatively related to turnover intentions.

The implications of these findings with respect to boundary conditions for authenticity are that persons who strive to achieve authenticity and act with character in organizations will find it difficult to do so when they operate in ethical climate types other than the independent climate. For example, an instrumental climate will apply pressure on individuals to engage in self-serving behaviors, since the norms and conduct of their peers reflect such behaviors. Similarly, a rules-based climate would encourage individuals to follow the company rules and procedures, even if they are in conflict with their personal values.

Other relevant streams of research that may provide insight into such collective level factors include theory and research into: 1) dysfunctional work teams (Cole, Walter, & Bruch, 2008); 2) toxic organizational

cultures (Padilla et al., 2007); and 3) psychological climate (Jones & James, 1979; Lee & Idris, 2017).

Contextual Barriers

At the contextual level, environmental factors that elicit incentives for impression management (i.e., efforts to promote desired impressions; Bolino, Long, & Turnley, 2016) and/or emotional labor (i.e., efforts to display emotions that match audience expectations and the context; Grandey, 2000) and serve as disincentives for authentic behavior (Carlson, Ferguson, Hunter, & Whitten, 2012; Gardner, Fischer, & Hunt, 2009), should be examined as possible barriers to authentic leadership and followership. Specifically, contextual dimensions of the environment should be considered,

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including the omnibus (national and organizational culture, industry and occupation, organizational structure, time) and discrete (situational) contexts (Johns, 2006), that invoke emotional display rules and cues for desired images that undermine authentic self-presentations at work. That is, how and when do contextual factors create expectations among leaders and followers to present images and emotions that are not genuine?

Service industries provided a context within which the original research on emotional labor was conducted, beginning with Hochschild's (1983)

qualitative study of flight attendants and followed by studies of nurses (Timmons & Tanner, 2005), supermarket and fast food clerks (Leidner, 1991; Leidner, 1993), food servers (Hall, 1993), amusement park employees (Van Maanen, 1991), and service "professionals" such as banking employees (Wharton, 1993) and insurance agents (Leidner, 1991). Indeed, there is ample evidence that emotional labor is high in professions and institutions that involve "people work" (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002).

The occupational health industry context is one that has been particularly fruitful with regard to the exploration of antecedents to and consequences of emotional labor and one that is likely to vary in the extent to which it encourages and supports authentic emotional expressions among organizational members (Grandey, 2000). Indeed, there can be a strong norm for compassionate detachment in a health care setting, such that "getting emotional" is viewed as unprofessional (Henderson, 2001; Lewis, 2005). Grandey et al. (2012) proposed and validated the construct of a climate for authenticity that can be driven by the shared norms about expressing emotions (verbally and nonverbally) or display rules (Ekman, 1993) within the industry itself (in their case, with health care providers).

Yet, as Humphrey, Pollack, and Hawver (2008) point out, the leader's role provides prescriptions regarding appropriate emotions that transcend employees within a service industry. For example, while leaders in the service as compared to manufacturing industries may be expected to exhibit empathy and caring emotions across a wider variety of settings and audiences, all leaders are typically expected to express sympathy when

they learn that a follower has lost a loved one. Thus, we expect the role of leader to interact with industry, occupational, organizational, and societal norms and expectations, among other factors, to determine the types of emotional displays that are expected and considered appropriate in a particular context (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987).

Beyond the considerations of display rules for emotional labor associated with certain professions, industries, and roles (Gardner et al., 2009; McCauley & Gardner, 2016; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987), future research should consider the contextual influences of national culture (e.g., individualistic versus collectivistic; Hofstede, 1980), environmental dynamism and munificence (Dess & Beard, 1984) and temporal factors (Ancona & Goodman, 2001; Bluedorn & Denhardt, 1988). Indeed, it is likely that the larger environmental context creates certain norms, expectations, and obstacles to authenticity that may foster or inhibit the ability of both individuals and collectives to achieve authentic leader-follower relationships.

Future Research Directions and Practical Recommendations

Authentic leadership theory shows much promise for enabling leaders and followers to foster genuine, trusting, and character-based relationships that bring out the best in both parties, while promoting high levels of sustainable and veritable performance (Gardner, et al., 2005). Nevertheless, many questions remain about the boundaries under which such leadership can flourish. The goal of this paper is to provide some initial questions and tentative directions for identifying the intrapersonal, dyadic, collective and contextual forces that serve as obstacles to the practice of authentic leadership. In addition, consideration should be given to potential strategies for overcoming the barriers to authentic leadership at each level, and thereby expanding the boundaries of the theory. At the individual and dyadic levels, promising tools for leadership development have been identified that may serve to heighten leader self-awareness while lessoning the biasing effects of ego defense mechanisms, and thereby promote higher levels of relational transparency and moral character (Avolio & Hannah, 2008; Hannah & Avolio, 2010, 2011; Hannah, Avolio, & May, 2011). At the collective and contextual levels, leadership and organizational level interventions

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should be explored whereby more positive ethical climates can be cultivated, and thereby foster a safe environment (e.g., a "climate of authenticity"; Grandey et al., 2012) within which authentic and character-based leadership and followership can develop and flourish.

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JCLD Submission Guidelines

The Journal of Character and Leadership Development (JCLD) examines the scholarly and applied understanding of character and leadership development. Its purpose is to illuminate these two critical fields--character development and leadership development--as interdependent areas of study, whose integrated understanding and coherent application is highly relevant to preparation for leadership in today's complex world. Consequently, the JCLD applies high standards to guide the publication of scholarly work, through a blind-peer review process by recognized experts across the character and leadership development spectrum, while also welcoming thoughtful and well-articulated practical perspectives relevant to that same discussion. To accomplish this, we focus on three primary areas:

- Integration: Knowledge for application. How does what we know/learn impact how we develop leaders of character across different domains? How do we use this knowledge to impact our education, training and development programs?

- Scholarship: Theoretical and/or empirical examination of a relevant construct, program, approach, etc., related to character and leadership development.

- Assessment: How do we know what we are doing with respect to character and leadership development is working? What evidence can we gather to assess the efficacy of the efforts? Ideal submissions will include discussions of both character and leadership development. Since the purpose of the journal is on examining the development (short and long term) of leaders of character, we are keenly interested at the intersection of these two domains. While we will consider manuscripts for publication that address each of these in isolation, clear linkages between the domains of interest will have more relevance to the JCLD.

Categories for Submission:

- Interview: This category is designed for interviews with senior leaders/practitioners/academics/etc. focused on a topic that is related to the purpose of the JCLD. If you are interested in conducting an interview for submission to the JCLD, please contact the Editor in Chief to make sure that it fits the scope of the Journal.

- Integration: This submission category focuses on how topics related to character and leadership are integrated within an organization, team, or other functional unit. The key factor for this category is that we are looking for how both character and leadership can be integrated and not simply studied in isolation.

- Scholarship: These submissions will focus on the theoretical and/or empirical analysis of a construct, program, approach, etc. related to leadership and/or character.

- Assessment: These submissions will focus on an assessment technique or assessment strategy related to character and/or leadership development.

- Reflections from the Field: This submission category will be for leaders who have a relevant perspective to share based on their experience in leadership positions. It is not intended to be used to simply advocate a certain approach, but designed to be a forum for reflections of leadership situations and a thoughtful analysis of what worked/didn't work. It can also be used to identify trends that a leader sees regarding different domains (e.g., what do future leaders need to be aware of in different domains like the profession of arms?).

Integration, Scholarship, and **Assessment** submissions should be submitted in accordance with the following guidelines:

- Manuscripts should be electronically submitted in standard American Psychological Association (APA, 6th Edition) to include proper headings, subtitles, and citations in 12 point Times New Roman font, double spaced, with page numbers and running headers.

- Manuscripts should not exceed 25 pages in length to include attachments, charts, and other supporting material.

- Author(s) guarantee that manuscripts submitted to the JCLD for consideration are exclusive to the submission and is not currently under review for another publication.

- All submissions should include an abstract of no more than 200 words.

- Submissions should be submitted in Blind Review Format. This means that no author, organizational affiliation, or other identifying information is included on the manuscript to be reviewed. A separate Title Page with identifying/contact information (name, organization, phone, and e-mail) for the corresponding author will be uploaded as a separate file.

Interview and **Reflections** submissions should be submitted in accordance with the following guidelines:

- Manuscripts should be electronically submitted in standard American Psychological Association (APA, 6th Edition) to include proper headings, subtitles, and citations in 12 point Times New Roman font, double spaced, with page numbers and running headers.

- Manuscripts should not exceed 15 pages in length.

- Author(s) guarantee that manuscripts submitted to the JCLD for consideration are exclusive to the submission and is not currently under review for another publication.

- Primary author(s) should include a short biography not to exceed 200 words for inclusion if the submission is selected for publication.

NATIONAL CHARACTER & LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM

To enable a diverse group of leaders, scholars, and practitioners to intentionally and powerfully engage in dialogue concerning character and leadership, and from that dialogue generate both reflection and action. NCLS seeks to challenge attendees for greater personal reflection and growth.

NCLS develops its participants through presentations and discussions featuring relevant, powerful, and thought-provoking speakers designed to enhance their understanding of the importance of moral character and effective leadership.

NCLS also provides a professional development opportunity beyond the Academy, offering unit leaders around the Air Force the ability to participate via live-streaming and video-on-demand archives, affording unit Commanders flexible access to topics.

Theme:
Leadership, Teamwork and Organizational Management

When:
21-22 February, 2019

Where:
United States Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, CO

Information/Registration:
https://www.usafa.edu/character/national-character-leadership-symposium-ncls/

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.

CENTER FOR CHARACTER & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

UNITED STATES
AIR FORCE ACADEMY

JCLD@usafa.edu