

WINTER 2021

VOLUME 8 | ISSUE 1

JCLD
JOURNAL OF CHARACTER & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Editor in Chief:
Dr. Douglas Lindsay, Lt Col (Ret), USAF

CENTER FOR CHARACTER & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

EDITORIAL STAFF:

Dr. Douglas Lindsay, Lt Col (Ret), USAF
Editor in Chief

Dr. John Abbatiello, Col (Ret), USAF
Book Review Editor

Dr. Stephen Randolph, Col (Ret), USAF
Profiles in Leadership Editor

Julie Imada
Associate Editor & CCLD Strategic
Communications Chief

JCLD is published at the United States Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colorado. Articles in JCLD may be reproduced in whole or in part without permission. A standard source credit line is required for each reprint or citation.

For information about the Journal of Character and Leadership Development or the U.S. Air Force Academy's Center for Character and Leadership Development or to be added to the Journal's electronic subscription list, contact us at: **JCLD@usafa.edu**
Phone: 719-333-4904

The Journal of Character & Leadership Development
The Center for Character & Leadership Development
U.S. Air Force Academy
2300 Cadet Drive, Suite 300
USAF Academy, CO 80840-62600

The Journal of Character & Leadership Development is generously supported by the Air Force Academy Foundation.



Manuscripts may be submitted via Scholastica at
<https://jcli.scholasticahq.com/for-authors>

EDITORIAL BOARD:

Dr. David Altman, Center for Creative Leadership

Dr. Marvin Berkowitz, University of Missouri-St. Louis

Dr. Dana Born, Harvard University (Brig Gen, USAF, Retired)

Dr. David Day, Claremont McKenna College

Dr. Shannon French, Case Western

Dr. William Gardner, Texas Tech University

Mr. Chad Hennings, Hennings Management Corp

Mr. Max James, American Kiosk Management

Dr. Barbara Kellerman, Harvard University

Dr. Robert Kelley, Carnegie Mellon University

Dr. Richard M. Lerner, Tufts University

Ms. Cathy McClain, Association of Graduates (Colonel, USAF, Retired)

Dr. Michael Mumford, University of Oklahoma

Dr. Gary Packard, University of Arizona (Brig Gen, USAF, Retired)

Dr. George Reed, University of Colorado at Colorado Springs (Colonel, USA, Retired)

Dr. Ervin Rokke, (Lt Gen, USAF, Retired)

Dr. Eduardo Salas, Rice University

Dr. Joseph Sanders, Colorado Uplift (Colonel, USAF, Retired)

Dr. Arthur Schwartz, Character.org

Dr. John J. Sosik, The Pennsylvania State University

Dr. Steve Trainor, The Google School for Leaders (Captain, USN, Retired)

Mr. Mark Welsh, Texas A&M University (General, USAF, Retired)

Dr. Steve Zaccaro, George Mason University

ISSN 2372-9465 (print)

ISSN 2372-9481 (online)

JCLD / TABLE OF CONTENTS

FROM THE EDITOR

Ethos	4
Douglas R. Lindsay, United States Air Force Academy	

FEATURE ARTICLES

True Warrior Ethos - The Creed of Today's American Warrior	11
Justin Stoddard, United States Air Force Academy	
Donnie Hodges, United States Air Force Academy	
David Huston, United States Air Force Academy	
Matthew Johnson, United States Air Force Academy	
Jarad Underwood, United States Air Force Academy	
David Durnil, United States Air Force Academy	
Harrel Morgan, United States Air Force Academy	
Warrior Ethos & Leadership Reflections	22
Senator Tammy Duckworth	
Developing the Warrior Ethos	24
Andrew Ledford, U.S. Naval Academy	
Celeste Raver Luning, U.S. Naval Academy	
The Courage Myth: Why You Don't have Courage, and Never Will (And That's Okay)	34
Kevin Basik, Basik Insight	
Lessons for Leadership Coaching in a Leader Development Intensive Environment	50
Todd Woodruff, U.S. Military Academy	
Russell Lemler, U.S. Military Academy	
Ryan Brown, Rice University	
Every Day is Game Day	66
Daniel Bolin, Air University	
Mark Verstegen, Founder of EXOS, Director of Performance for the NFL	
Reflections on the Intersection of Sports, Leadership, and the Warrior Ethos	75
Daniel Bolin, Air University	
The Importance of Human Capital Development	85
Brook Leonard, Chief of Staff, USSPACECOM, Brig Gen, USAF	

Inclusion: The Power in Diversity Christopher Miller, United States Air Force Academy	93
Rethinking Warrior Ethos: Developing (Not Selecting) Leaders Robert D. Reimer, United States Air Force Academy Maximillian Bremer, North American Aerospace Defense Command Hans Larsen, United States Air Force Academy Preparatory School	101
Thinking Like a Round Table Leader: How Mental Complexity Enables Leaders to Succeed in a Complex Environment Ryan Hill, U.S. Naval War College	116
Contextualizing Military Insight Within Higher Education: Mitigating Social Vulnerability & Maximizing Sustainability in the Time of COVID Anthony Andenoro, St. Thomas University	131
Public Leadership with a Moral Purpose: A Phenomenological View Chaveso L. Cook, Tufts University Melissa A. Shambach, University of Denver Greta Zukauskaitė, Institute for Nonprofit Practice Emily A. Pate, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Dana H. Born, Harvard University	144
The Essential Partnership: The Four Core Functions of Military Leadership and the Core Values Alan Briding, United States Air Force Academy & Air University	160
The Importance of Examining Our Perspective: Fostering Development & Enhancing Effectiveness Justin Pendry, University of San Diego James Dobbs, Center for Creative Leadership	173
Why Physical Training Must Hold a Prominent Place in the Future of Training at the Air Force Academy William DiRubbio, C2C, United States Air Force Academy	183
Talking and Listening to Build a Stronger Military: Cosmopolitan Communication as an Essential Skill of Military Leader Development Jacqueline Whitt, U.S. Army War College Susan Steen, Air University	190

BOOK REVIEWS

A Review of Selected Works of James MacGregor Burns 205
Stephen Randolph

A Review of "Mindset: the New Psychology of Success" 211
Steven Lipinski

A Review of "Loonshots: How to Nurture the Crazy Ideas That Win Wars,
Cure Diseases, and Transform Industries" 213
David Mays

PROFILE IN LEADERSHIP

Brigadier General David N.W. Grant and the Birth of the Flight Nurse 215
Amanda Hess

FROM THE EDITOR

Ethos

Douglas R. Lindsay, Editor in Chief, JCLD

What do you stand for? That is broad question that encompasses many thoughts and identities. It stems from notions such as who we are, who we chose to be, and what we value. While these can shift a bit as we learn, grow, and develop, it tends to be our center and our guide. From time to time, we encounter challenges to our stand or what we believe. Sometimes those challenges are foreseen, but often they are not. Our response to those challenges are influenced by many factors. I suggest that the greatest of these, however, is preparation. This involves choosing ahead of time how we will show up into a situation. While the circumstances, people, and challenges may be novel to the situation, we are not. What I mean by that is we choose how we show up into each and every situation. We control our emotions, actions, beliefs, and preparation. Depending on where you are at on your own developmental journey that can be great news as it implies control and focus. We are in control of our actions and even our reactions. If we look at every leadership situation, it at least consists of the leader, the follower, and the situation. Even in situations where we have no perceived control over the circumstances, and even though we may have not been able to influence those who are on the team, we still control 33% of the leadership dynamic directly—ourselves. That means that the worst influence we have on a situation, even complex ones, is 33%. That's great news when dealing with the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous situations of today. The even better news is that, generally, we will have some influence over the situation (at least an understanding of the dynamics) and over the individuals/teams that we lead. The point here is that no matter the situation we find ourselves in as a leader, we fully own ourselves, how we show up, and our subsequent reactions.

Effective leader developers know that this is important. It is the constant with which we have to work. When executive coaches work with leaders, the frame of reference that they use is the individual. When teachers work with students, effective teachers start with where the student is at. This individual focus is important because it

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

is the most important point of leverage for individual development. The starting point is who we are. Who are we as a person? This is often referred to as ethos. Put simply, ethos (Merriam-Webster, n.d.) is our distinguishing character, our moral nature, the guiding beliefs we have as a person. It isn't the skills that we have; it is the person that we are. If someone asked you about your ethos, what would come to mind? How would you describe yourself? What are those guiding beliefs? What do you stand for? Who are you? While those may seem like philosophical questions, they are really quite pragmatic and are at the heart of individual development. The reason is because that is our frame, or lens, by which we view everything. It is our connection point to one another in terms of what we value and find important. We must know this if we are to develop ourselves and develop as leaders. For those that have not considered this before, I would like to challenge you to contemplate ethos. It's not just the old idea of who you are when no one is looking. It is who you are, period. Who you choose to show up as. Who are you across situations? Does your center or values change from situation to situation? Are you fully present? Once you can answer those questions, then you are in a great place to consider meaningful development. For those that have already thoughtfully considered who you are, then you are in a great place regarding your development. This is our starting point. Our baseline or foundation, if you will. It is important to have this solid understanding as all other efforts are layered upon this. From here, the fun really begins.

Some leaders are challenged by this. They have never really taken the time to consider these questions. This is why we often have leaders that drift or even derail. It's not that they necessarily lose their center, it may be that they never really had to confront it before. They were able to get by on their skills and expertise. It was enough

to get them through and even succeed. However, for all individuals, and especially leaders, we come to a point where these things must be considered. We all get challenged, pushed, and stretched at some point. If we don't know who we are and what we stand for, our ethos if you will, then we are on a shaky foundation and are likely to be influenced by the situation or events. This lack of understanding and consideration can cede control to the situation. That is why preparation is so important. We need to understand what we can so that we can limit the chaos. If we cede this control, then we could see some predictable results that are likely contrary to what the individual, and the organization, desire.

Our development as leaders, with our ethos in mind, must be based on certain fundamental intentions to ensure purposeful development and growth (preparation). The first of these is that the developmental process must be intentional. In order for development to occur, in the manner in which it is needed, it must be intentionally applied. Development can occur even when it is not intentional, but it will be reactionary and not directly targeted where we want the development to occur. Back to the earlier statement, we are in control of ourselves and how we show up to the situation. That also includes our development. We need to ask ourselves, am I showing up ready to learn? Do I understand what is about to happen? Have I done the necessary preparatory work to ensure the developmental experience is effective? Am I willing to commit to the developmental process? These are questions that we should be able to answer heading into any developmental experience. It helps to ensure that we can maximize the benefit to be gained. Failure to understand this context, can lead to a misalignment between intent and learning leading to suboptimal performance and development.

Another intention to consider is that the developmental experience needs to be integrated. Integration applies to several dynamics. First, it should be integrated along with other developmental experiences. If you want to maximize the developmental process, all processes should align to not only support the developmental experience, they must also be aligned with other developmental or training events that are occurring. This allows for a synergy between events and the greatest possibility of maximizing the development for the individual. In addition, the experiences need to be integrated into what the individual will actually be doing. One of the areas where developmental experiences often fall short is that they are treated as distinct events and occur separate from the actual experiences the individual faces on a daily basis. This is often seen when an individual goes to a different location for the experience and then returns (often unsupported) into their work environment. Short of structures and systems to support the individual, it is likely that they will regress to the behaviors that they had prior to the developmental experience. One way that this has been mitigated is through coaching so that the individual has someone to help process their growth, development, and future goal setting. In either case, intentionality in developmental experiences is vital.

A third intention is that in order to maximize the development, it needs to be targeted to the individual. While one size fits all approaches seem practical when dealing with large amounts of individuals, the reality is that the experience is often wasted when the individual going through the experience is not considered. The good news is that even small tailoring to the experience can have a large impact on the individual as they go through the developmental experience.

The final intention to consider with developmental experiences is that they need to be investigated. We need assessment to ensure that the intended outcomes are achieved. While the individual may have enjoyed the experience, we need evidence to make sure that it “moved the needle” in their development in the areas needed. With large amounts of money and time being spent on developmental experiences, we need to make sure that we understand the return on investment on the development. While not every experience will have a tangible and measureable outcome, we ought to at least be able to understand the impact that is happening on the individual, team, and organizational levels.

From a developmental perspective, if we understand how we are showing up, and we can approach developmental experiences with the right approach (intentional, integrated, individualized, and investigated) we are in the greatest position to maximize the developmental experience and see actual development occur and be sustained over time allowing the individual the ability to understand how they are showing up in their leadership.

In This Issue

This issue of the Journal of Character & Leadership Development (JCLD) continues our annual linkage with the National Character & Leadership Symposium (NCLS) that is held every February at the United States Air Force Academy. NCLS is a multi-day, intentional focus on character and leadership. It brings together a wide range of local, national, and international leaders around a particular theme. The theme lines up with one of USAFA’s organizational outcomes. This year’s theme is warrior ethos¹. In order to support that endeavor, we have intentionally aligned the JCLD with NCLS so that the Journal can serve as a read ahead

1 <https://www.usafa.edu/app/uploads/Warrior-Ethos-White-Paper-approved.pdf>



on the theme of NCLS to give attendees a chance to starting thinking about and processing the theme. We find this to be an intentional and important step in leader development.

The first article is by Dr. Justin Stoddard and colleagues who serve on the Warrior Ethos Outcome Team for USAFA. In their article, they examine what USAFA means by warrior ethos and how it relates to the profession of arms. They also describe the four main attributes of the outcome: 1) analyze and value the profession of arms, 2) demonstrate integrity as related to moral courage, 3) demonstrate service before self as related to moral courage, and 4) demonstrate excellence in all we do as related to discipline. They conclude this deep dive on the warrior ethos by describing how USAFA integrates these attributes throughout the 47-month curriculum.

This first article sets the foundation to what USAFA means by warrior ethos. Following this, the rest of the articles focus on different aspects of the four attributes, in addition to the proficiencies that fall under them. The authors, and the organizations that they represent, show the scope and diversity of thought on this topic. While impossible to do a complete examination of warrior ethos, the included articles can help set the stage and to expand one's thinking of this important topic.

We begin with a brief conversation with Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) and her thoughts on warrior ethos. She shares her perspective on her own leader development, advice for young leaders, and the importance of service. She has an extensive background in the military and public service and uses this to serve her constituents. As an advocate for military service members (as well as many other important causes) she uses her platform as a U.S. Senator to inspire change.

The next article is by Commander Andrew Ledford (USN) and Dr. Celeste Raver Luning of the United States Naval Academy. They start by discussing how the SEAL Ethos was created. They outline the events that precipitated the development of the ethos, the process used, and its important attributes. Following this, they discuss how the U.S. Naval Academy approaches the development of warrior ethos through various aspects of the curriculum.

The issue continues with a challenging article by Dr. Kevin Basik (USAFA 1993) where he brings up the idea of the courage myth. In the article, he walks the reader through several examples examining the construct of courage. Through this process, he discusses the gap between deciding and doing and several ways to address this gap. By understanding the gap, and the pressures that precede it, we are in a better position to move past the gap and embrace three catalysts for courage—competence, confidence, and commitment. He finishes the article by talking about the leader's role in creating a courageous culture.

Next, we have Colonel Todd Woodruff (USA), Dr. Russ Lemler of the U.S. Military Academy, and Dr. Ryan Brown of the Doerr Institute for New Leaders at Rice University presenting a project they have been working on related to coaching in a leader development intensive environment. They describe a study analyzing the efficacy of coaching and how it fits into the West Point Leader Growth Model. Results showed numerous benefits of coaching above and beyond the traditional developmental approaches of mentorship and reflection. Based on the results, they recommend an expanded leadership model. They finish up the article by linking coaching to a warrior ethos.

Lt Col Daniel Bolin (USAF; USAFA 2005) Air University Liaison to USAFA and Mark Verstegen

of EXOS, continue the conversation of warrior ethos. Through their dialogue, Mark discusses his journey and how he utilizes his framework to encourage and improve performance. He describes how the four elements of mindset, nutrition, movement, and recovery can be utilized to develop sustainable high performance regardless of domain. He shares his experiences and ties in leadership and its critical role to performance.

The next article is framed around how athletics plays an important role in the development of the warrior ethos. Through examining his own journey, Lt Col Daniel Bolin (USAF; USAFA 2005), describes the impact that athletics has had on his personal and professional development through sharing several critical events in his life. He wraps up the article by sharing several perspectives from a world-class athlete, a former NFL player, a division one wrestling coach, and a former military commander. He weaves these perspectives into a narrative of how athletics helps shape an individual's physical courage and warrior ethos.

The starting point to developing warrior ethos are the individuals that will accomplish the mission. In a conversation with Brigadier General Brook Leonard (USAF; Chief of Staff, USSPACECOM; USAFA 1992), he discusses the importance of human capital development. Through reflecting on his time in the Air Force, and his multiple times as a commander, he highlights several of the steps he took to ensure human capital development within his organizations. He also highlights his own leader development and how he continues to grow as a leader.

In continuing the conversation around the importance of human capital, Lieutenant General Chris Miller (Ret, USAF; USAFA 1980) offers an

important look at inclusion and the power of diversity. By introducing the critical aspect of inclusion, he examines the role that leaders have in fostering inclusion within their organizations. He ties in this approach to the Leader of Character Framework at USAFA that focuses on living honorably, lifting others, and elevating performance. The thought piece is an important reminder to leaders on the importance of the role they serve in taking care of their people and ensuring their development and inclusion.

In continuing our theme of Warrior Ethos, Lieutenant Colonels Robert Reimer (USAFA 1997) and Hans Larson (USAFA 1999) of USAFA, and Colonel Maximilian Bremer (USAFA 1997) of United States Northern Command suggest a rethinking of warrior ethos and how we develop leaders. Through reconceptualizing warrior ethos, they offer several leadership considerations to help leaders reimagine what is meant by warrior ethos. They finish up their article by offering practical recommendations as to how military members can lead for warrior ethos.

Col Ryan Hill (USAF; USAFA 1999) of the U.S. Naval War College examines how mental complexity can be used by leaders to help them succeed. He walks the reader through mental complexity as well as environmental complexity and how that fits into leadership by offering several types of leaders and how they can approach this complexity. Through these leadership types, he examines the subsequent communication, expectations, supervision, evaluation, and organizational outputs.

In a different approach to the concept of warrior ethos, Dr. Tony Andenoro of St. Thomas University examines how to mitigate social vulnerability and maximize sustainability. He describes the work that was done by the United States Coast Guard 7th

District with respect to the three phase process of issue identification, internal capacity building, and external partnerships. He takes this successful approach and makes connections to higher education with recommendations how it can be used to address some of the challenges faced in the COVID-19 environment.

The next article is by Major Chaveso Cook (USA) of Tufts University and colleagues take a phenomenological view of public leadership. Through description of a qualitative analysis of a program set up at Harvard University, they examine the ability to develop moral leadership and moral purpose among military fellowship participants. Through the phenomenological approach, they were able to discover themes that are significant to the understanding of public leadership.

Dr. Alan Briding (USAFA 1973), adjunct professor at the United States Air Force Academy and Air University, introduces the idea of the essential partnership which is a combination of core functions of military leadership and how they relate to the USAF Core Values. He shares his personal experiences gained while on active duty to examine some of the critical functions of military leadership. He follows this with a description of the 'grey zone' of leadership which involves making decisions when the conditions do not lead to obvious decisions. He follows this by tying in the USAF Core Values and how they align with warrior ethos.

Leaders must often rely on their perceptions. These perceptions are important because they can influence our development, achieving goals, enrich connections with others, and make more informed decisions. Lieutenant Colonel Justin Pendry (USAF; USAFA 2002) of the University of San Diego and Dr. James Dobbs of the Center for Creative Leadership discuss

research conducted at the Air Force Academy focused on cadet commitment regarding development. They found that seeing the big picture, seeing opportunities rather than just challenges, embracing a growth mindset, and focusing on the collective team rather than solely self-interest, were important parts of cadet perceptions. They finish the article by offering several applications for enhancing leadership effectiveness.

In order to get a different perspective on development, the next article is by USAFA Cadet Second Class William DiRubbio. He offers his perspective on physical training during the cadet experience. Drawing on his own personal experiences with the Cadet Wing, he discusses the importance of training, how the warrior ethos fits in training, and suggests a way forward. His insights give a different perspective as one who is subject to, as well as shaping, the training environment at USAFA.

The final article is by Dr. Jacqueline Whitt of the U.S. Army War College and Dr. Susan Steen of Air University. In their article, they discuss why cosmopolitan communication is an essential skill for military leader development. They focus on skills that leaders need to develop in order to cultivate and manage diverse perspectives in their organizations. They close the article by discussing the importance of conversations and how communication, specifically cosmopolitan communication, is a 21st Century leadership imperative.

Book Reviews

In addition to the feature articles and conversations that are in the JCLD, we want to introduce readers to other works related to character and leadership development. While there are numerous books that are published yearly on these topics, we try to highlight several works that are especially applicable to character

and leader development. In that light, we have three reviews in this Issue of the JCLD. The first is a review on a series of books by James MacGregor Burns. These books discuss the development of modern leadership theory. The second review is on the book, *Mindset: the New Psychology of Success* by Dr. Carol Dweck. The final review is on *Loonshots: How to Nurture the Crazy Ideas that Win Wars, Cure Diseases, and Transform Industries* by Safi Bahcall. While you may already have your own reading list, we encourage you to consider these.

Profile in Leadership

One effective way to understand leadership is to read about and study current and previous leaders. Through this examination, we are able to pull from their experiences to help inform our own development. To support that approach, we have a Profile in Leadership section where we are able to take a bit of a deep dive into a particular leader. For this issue, Amanda Hess of the Center for Character and Leadership Development explores the career of Brigadier General David Grant and his role in helping to establish the flight nurse occupation. Hess does an excellent and detailed job of walking the reader through historical examples and sets the stage which highlights the need for this critical occupation. She then reviews Brig Gen Grant's role in helping to set up the conditions necessary to develop the medical air evacuation capability.

Looking Ahead

The next issue of the JCLD (June 2021) will focus on the broad theme of the future of leadership. As leader and character developers, we are constantly working on developing leaders for what they need right now in their current situation. However, we are also concerned about the skills that they will need in the future. To capture some of the great work that is being done, we

will focus our June issue on that topic. Contributions could be thought pieces, empirical articles, or descriptive pieces covering best practices. The idea of the theme is to get the conversation going about what we need to be thinking about as we examine leadership in the future.

If you have an interest in submitting work on the above topics or know of someone who would be interesting to have a conversation with, please contact me at douglas.lindsay@afacademy.af.edu or jclcd@usafa.edu with your ideas.

♦ ♦ ♦

Reference

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.) Ethos. In *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*. Retrieved February 1, 2021, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ethos>

FEATURE

True Warrior Ethos - The Creed of Today's American Warrior

Justin Stoddard, United States Air Force Academy

Donnie Hodges, United States Air Force Academy

David Huston, United States Air Force Academy

Matthew Johnson, United States Air Force Academy

Jarad Underwood, United States Air Force Academy

David Durnil, United States Air Force Academy

Harrel Morgan, United States Air Force Academy

Dr. Justin Stoddard serves as Assistant Professor and Chief of Prototyping at the United States Air Force Academy's (USAFA) Center for Character and Leadership Development (CCLD), where he leads innovation efforts in character and leadership development. Dr. Stoddard, a former enlisted Army medic, graduated from the University of Colorado Boulder in 2001 with dual majors in Philosophy and Russian studies, and commissioned into the infantry. Dr. Stoddard served in several positions from 2001-2017 including rifle platoon leader in Afghanistan and Senior Intelligence Division Chief. Dr. Stoddard earned his master's degree from the University of Texas - El Paso in 2011, and his PhD from the University of Colorado - Colorado Springs in 2019. Dr. Stoddard's research and expertise in resiliency and grit supports CCLD's mission to advance the understanding, scholarship, practice, and integration of character and leadership development. Dr. Stoddard lives in Monument, Colorado with his wife Miriam, their daughters Zoe and Samantha, and their three dogs.

Donnie Hodges, MA Military Studies from American Military University, MA International Affairs from Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M, Lieutenant Colonel U.S. Air Force is currently serving as an Instructor in the Military & Strategic Studies (MSS) Department at the United States Air Force Academy. A 22 year Air Battle Manager, Donnie teaches core curriculum classes on Airpower & Joint Operations Strategy and International Security. Additionally, Donnie teaches MSS major's classes in Military Innovation & Future Concepts and Air Warfare Operations & Planning. He serves as the MSS Department's Character & Honor Liaison Officer and is the department's representative on the Warrior Ethos as Airman and Citizens Outcome Team.

In recent articles published on the topic, the term warrior, and the idea of warrior ethos, have drawn much undeserved criticism. In the April 2020 piece, *On the Toxicity of the Warrior Ethos*, Ryan Noordally uses an inaccurate and prejudicial 37-year-old definition of warrior from John Keegan when stating that a warrior is, “a professional fighter trained since childhood whose class or caste holds power. Warriors feel they own the exclusive right to apply violence or bear arms.” (Noordally, 2020). Noordally justifies his position by taking a swipe at Zach Snyder’s 2006 film *300*. After defining warriors as amoral rapists, murders, slave holders, and oppressors, he explains why the modern military should not aspire to be warriors at all. His argument is fundamentally flawed, and this article will examine the reasons why.

First of all, alarmists can settle down. The U.S. military is not seeking to reinstate 5th Century B.C. cultural practices of ancient Greece. We are not looking to start throwing ugly babies off cliffs for the good of society and, in fact, the Air Force has one of the most active anti-sexual assault education and training campaigns in the country. Secondly, the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary defines ‘warrior’ as *a person who fights in a battle or war* (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionaries, n.d.) and Merriam-Webster defines ‘warrior’ as *a person engaged or experienced in warfare* (Merriam-Webster, n.d.-b). The portion of *300* we would focus on is the scene where Leonidas asks the Athenian ‘soldiers’ their professions. They answer potter, sculptor, and blacksmith. All 300 of the Spartans are professional soldiers. Going back to Merriam-Webster, the definition of soldier is *one engaged in military service; a skilled warrior* (Merriam-Webster, n.d.-a).

The U. S. Air Force Academy (USAFA) defines warrior ethos as “the embodiment of the warrior spirit; tough mindedness, tireless motivation, an unceasing vigilance, a willingness to sacrifice one’s life for the country, if necessary, and a commitment to be the world’s premier air, space and cyberspace force.” (U.S. Dept of the Air Force, 2019, p. 3). The proficiencies we focus on as a warrior in the USAF negate all the deficiencies that Noordally and his contemporaries espouse on warrior culture in the modern day. Like Keegan, we want our Airmen and cadets to be highly trained professional fighters. In sharp contrast to Keegan and Sparta, the term warrior does

Dave Huston is an active duty Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Air Force currently assigned as the Chief, Integration Division at the United States Air Force Academy’s (USAFA) Center for Character and Leadership Development (CCLD). Dave graduated from USAFA in 2001 and served as a meteorology officer until 2011 when he joined CCLD to work with the cadets who run USAFA’s Honor Code System. In 2014 CCLD sponsored Dave for a PhD at the University of Missouri–St. Louis. In 2017 upon earning his degree in Educational Psychology, he returned to CCLD to facilitate the integration of leader development across all aspects of USAFA. His current research focuses on leader development in the context of Air Force doctrine to include mentoring, moral reasoning development, and experiential/adventure based learning.

Matthew T. Johnson, Ph.D., Major, U.S. Air Force is the Deputy Associate Dean for Educational Innovation at the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) where he supports faculty development through the science of teaching and learning. He received his MS in electro-optics from the Air Force Institute of Technology and his PhD in Electrical Engineering from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. He has course-directed and instructed differential, integral, and multivariate calculus courses as well as physics and commissioning education courses at USAFA. He is the author or co-author of over 30 technical journal articles and conference manuscripts which have been cited over 290 times. He has also published over 60 instructional mathematics videos in support of his research interests in flipped learning.

not solely define American military members. USAFA incorporates warrior ethos as part of a four-pillared approach to officer development and demonstrating warrior ethos as Airmen and Citizens (WEAC) is one of the institutional outcomes (The United States Air Force Academy, 2014). Warrior Ethos is a co-equal with being professional/disciplined military members, leaders of character, and servants of the nation sworn to defend the constitution (The United States Air Force Academy, 2013, p. 5) and is broken down into four major areas that USAFA graduates are expected to master:

- Analyze and value the profession of arms,
- Demonstrate integrity as related to moral courage,
- Demonstrate service before self as related to physical courage, and
- Demonstrate excellence in all we do as related to discipline.

A closer look into each of these areas reveals some of the specific characteristics that fortify a robust sense of warrior ethos and personify true warriors throughout the Air Force, the U.S. military, and beyond.

Analyze and Value the Profession of Arms

The WEAC Outcome states that “USAFA Graduates Will be Able to: Analyze and Value the Profession of Arms” and be proficient in the ability to “Analyze the military profession of arms by a critical examination of the nature of war through multiple perspectives” (WEAC Outcome Team, 2020, p. 1). According to Bloom’s cognitive taxonomy, “Analyze involves breaking material into its constituent parts and determining how the parts are related to each another and to an overall structure.” (Anderson et al., 2001, p. 79). According to Krathwohl’s affective taxonomy, to value something means to “accept, prefer, or commit one’s self to an object or behavior because of its

Technical Sergeant Jarad A Underwood is currently assigned to the United States Air Force Academy Athletic Department, Colorado Springs, Colorado, where he serves as the Noncommissioned Officer in Charge (NCOIC) of the Air Force Combatives Center of Excellence (AFCCoE). He assists in overseeing combatives training, standardization, implementation, and development. Before joining the Air Force, Jarad was an Infantry Marine with four combat deployments. As an Air Force Survival Evasion Resistance and Escape (SERE) Specialist, he led the development of the SERE Specialist Mission Ready and Upgrade Training program that produces all the 5-Level Mission Ready SERE Specialists for the Air Force. He is also the first DoD member to have Master-level certifications in all services, Army, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Special Operations, Combatives Programs. As the NCOIC of AFCCoE he works to integrate character and leadership development into combatives training across the force.

David W. Durnil, MA, National Security Studies, started his career training military members in 2005, establishing the 1st Infantry Division’s Combatives Program at Fort Riley, Kansas. In 2007 he moved to Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas. The program taught active-duty Soldiers, Army and Air Force ROTC cadets, and the general student population. In 2009, Dave accepted a position at the United States Air Force Academy’s Athletic Department. Initially, he oversaw Cadet programs as the Area Coordinator. In 2019 Dave became the Chief of Training and Education Air Force Combatives Center of Excellence (AFCCoE.) The AFCCoE’s staff is responsible for developing the Air Force Combative Program (AFCP) implementation, which trains 52,000 Airman annually at accession level, tech school, and pre-deployment training. He is second Degree Blackbelt in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu and a Special Operations Combatives Program Instructor (John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School) since 2010.

perceived worth or value. To appreciate.” (AFMAN 36-2236, 2003, p. 134).

So really what we are saying, is that by the time a cadet graduates and is commissioned as an officer, they can deconstruct the nature of war from multiple perspectives, determine how those parts relate to one another, and appreciate how doing so informs acting in the context of an officer of character. With this in mind, USAFA engages cadets through multiple education, training, and other experiences (ETEs) to develop this competence by assessing, challenging, and supporting them on achieving this goal. For example, all cadets attend History 100, Military and Strategic Studies 251, and Commissioning Education 200 educational courses, a Basic Training course, and participate in the Academy’s annual National Character and Leadership Symposium (NCLS) experience which is themed around the WEAC Outcome every four years.

By engaging cadets with these ETEs, USAFA lays a foundation and grounds them with an orientation about how to think in the context of the profession of arms. Doing so prepares them to have the necessary cognitive and motivational capacity which enables them to then demonstrate and employ behavior aligned with being a warrior in the United States Air or Space forces. This ability aligns with the institutional definition of a leader of character, in that to live honorably, lift others, and elevate performance (CCLD, 2011), one must embody the ethos of a warrior. For instance, an Airman/Guardian who is responsible for

the employment of weapons of mass destruction must fundamentally understand and appreciate not only how to effectively employ these weapons, but also be cognizant of the impact and cascading effect doing so will have on the world. This is the essence of elevating performance. In addition, this same person must have the ability to behave and interact in such a manner with their fellow Airmen/Guardians so as engender trust with them by living honorably, and as teammates supporting them so as to lift them to their best possible self. This cannot happen without first, being grounded in the concepts of the profession of arms, and second, without being motivated toward valuing their role in this context.

This year’s NCLS which is designed around the WEAC theme, serves to develop cadets, faculty/staff, and others in a manner that exposes and engages them with speakers who have been intentionally selected because of their expertise related to this theme. These speakers will present their perspective in the context of the profession of arms to enlighten our understanding of it. However, this alone is not sufficient, so we challenge those who participate in NCLS to take your experience to the next level. As you hear these perspectives, we encourage you to reflect on the extent to which you are committed to the Profession of Arms. Do you appreciate the value and worth of developing habits of thought and action consistent with the warrior ethos? In what aspect of this leader of character competence can you improve? As you lead in the future, how will you act to develop those

Harrel Morgan is an active-duty Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Air Force and currently serves as the U.S. Air Force Academy Department of Physical Education Chief of Instructor Development and a Physical Education instructor where he advances the Department of Athletics’ mission to develop leaders of character through athletic experiences. He is a 2005 USAFA graduate and is USAFA’s Warrior Ethos as Airmen and Citizen’s Institutional Outcome Team Lead. Lt Col Morgan has 11 years of operational flying experience with over 2000 combat hours from four deployment flying the Air Force’s premier strategic bomber, the B-1B. In 2018 the Athletic Department sponsored Lt Col Morgan for a MS in Applied Physiology and Kinesiology, Human Performance Concentration, from the University of Florida – Gainesville.

around you to improve their competence? For those not participating in NCLS, these are still great questions to ponder for your development. True warriors develop their knowledge and understanding in the art AND science of the Profession of Arms.

Demonstrate Integrity as Related to Moral Courage

The term warrior can be defined in a variety of ways and it evokes a wide range of character traits and images, some of which may be less than admirable. It is therefore imperative we differentiate Noordally's depiction of warriors as "murderers, rapists, and slave owners" (Noordally, 2020) from the warrior ethos cultivated at USAFA, and infused with the characteristic of moral courage. Moral courage is the ability to act and do the right thing even in the face of adversity. The moral courage of the true warrior is best illustrated within the context of historical episodes. For example, the characters within the infamous Sand Creek Massacre provide a clear contrast between the 'toxic' warrior mentality of a United States Colonel and a morally courageous Captain. Though not contemporary, the story hits geographically close to home for USAFA. As indicated by its name, the massacre took place near Big Sandy Creek, which originates in USAFA's home county, El Paso.

The massacre took place at a time of great tension between the settlers and indigenous people in Colorado. In the year of 1864 alone, 32 Indian attacks resulted in the death of 96 settlers. The sentiment of many settlers was captured in the Colorado governor authorizing "all citizens of Colorado... to go in pursuit of all hostile Indians ... to kill and destroy, as enemies of the country." (S. Rep. 2, 38th Cong., 1865, p. 47). The Cheyenne and Arapahoe people, led by chief Black Kettle, sought a peace treaty with the Governor who delegated negotiations to Col Chivington, and who is infamously quoted as saying, "Damn any man who sympathizes with Indians! ... Kill and scalp all, big and little; nits make lice." (Brown, 2001, p. 86-87). In the

midst of these negotiations, the Cheyenne and Arapahoe people willingly disarmed. Col Chivington and his 1st Colorado Cavalry then made an unannounced visit to Black Kettle's relocated encampment at Sand Creek. His men proceeded to surround the village, populated primarily by the elderly, women, and children. Col Chivington ordered an attack in spite of Black Kettle's attempt to forestall it by flying a U.S. flag with a white flag under it. Chivington's men proceeded to slaughter between 100-250 villagers, including infants. An officer friendly to Chivington later recounted:

"There was one little child, probably three years old, just big enough to walk through the sand. The Indians had gone ahead, and this little child was behind following after them. The little fellow was perfectly naked, traveling on the sand. I saw one man get off his horse, a distance of about seventy-five yards, and draw his rifle and fire—he missed the child, another man came up and said, "Let me try the son of a bitch; I can hit him." He got down off his horse, kneeled down and fired at the little child, but missed him. A third man came up and made a similar remark, and fired, and the little fellow dropped." (Jackson, 1994, p. 345).

However, not all of Chivington's men were complicit in the atrocity. Capt Silas Soule refused to obey and told his men to hold fire. Lt Cramer and his men followed suit. Capt Silas Soule defined the distinction between moral courage and cowardice when he later stated, "I refused to fire, and swore that none but a coward would." (Frazier, 2000). Avoiding the wrath of Col Chivington for their disobedience, Capt Soule, Lt Cramer and their men departed back to Denver separately. Col Chivington and his followers returned later, parading through Denver with the 'trophy' of mutilated body parts of the slain. Chivington boasted of killing 500 Indian warriors and was initially heralded as a hero in the Rocky Mountain News. His 'great victory' would seemingly further his ambitions

for military promotion and public office. The Colonel's crimes and lies, however would soon catch up to him. Witnesses soon came forward, including Capt Soule, who formally testified in court against Chivington in spite of death threats. Tragically, the threats materialized in several attempts at his life until, 80 days after his testimony, one was successful. But his sacrifice was not in vain. Based largely on Silas' testimony, the investigation panel ultimately made the following declaration concerning Chivington:

“Wearing the uniform of the United States... he deliberately planned and executed a foul and dastardly massacre which would have disgraced the veriest savage among those who were the victims of his cruelty. Having full knowledge of their friendly character, having himself been instrumental to some extent in placing them in their position of fancied security, he took advantage of their in-apprehension and defenseless condition to gratify the worst passions that ever cursed the heart of man. Whatever influence this may have had upon Colonel Chivington, the truth is that he surprised and murdered, in cold blood, the unsuspecting men, women, and children on Sand creek, who had every reason to believe they were under the protection of the United States authorities, and then returned to Denver and boasted of the brave deed he and the men under his command had performed.” (S. Rep. 2, 38th Cong., 1865, p. 47).

Chivington and Soule's names are both inextricably connected to this infamous event, but their legacies could not be more different. Chivington escaped from Colorado but could not escape from his past as he moved from one failed business or political office attempt to another. On the contrary, Soule (who was rightly regarded as a hero in his own time and buried with full military honors) is still widely admired and celebrated to this day. Native Americans pay tribute to him on an annual basis and decorate his grave during

anniversary events connected to the massacre. Soule's actions both during and after the tragedy epitomize moral courage as distinguished from the complacency that so frequently defines moral cowardice.

Though Soule and Chivington were both warriors, Chivington embodied all of the most destructive and horrifying characteristics that we associate with the term. Conversely, Soule possessed the warrior ethos that we strive to cultivate in cadets: an ethos defined by the courage to do what is morally right, regardless of the consequences. Notably, Soule's untimely and unjust death reinforce the notion that moral courage is not always rewarded, and that doing the right thing is no guarantee of a long, happy, and fulfilling life. That is precisely the point, however: moral courage is based around the notion of doing the right thing because it is right, not because of any reward.

Throughout history, there have been many examples of military leaders like Col Chivington who embraced a 'toxic' warrior mentality, a mentality based around the concept of destroying one's enemies without any concern for human dignity. Capt Soule, in contrast, refused to 'tolerate among us anyone who does' this. This is precisely why the USAFA mission is not simply to train great military leaders, but to inspire officers of character. Leaders of character, like Capt Soule, acknowledge the intrinsic human dignity of others and work to uphold that dignity, even at great personal cost.

El Paso County is the origin point of Big Sandy Creek; it is likewise the origin point for the military careers of USAFA's cadets. As their careers progress downstream toward officership in military campaigns, their path must divert from that of Col Chivington's, and toward that of Capt Soule's. The soul, and indeed, the very fate of our nation and world depends upon it. This is why moral courage is fundamentally distinctive to the warrior ethos we cultivate and is embodied by every true warrior.

Demonstrate Service Before Self as Related to Physical Courage

Physical courage often conjures up thoughts of Hollywood depictions of battlefield heroics or the protagonist struggling to win the final fight scene in the latest action film. The hero is never conflicted, never afraid, and is always confident of victory. While these familiar images are lucrative for the entertainment industry, they do not fully capture the tenor of physical courage within the context of the Academy's Warrior Ethos as Airmen and Citizens Outcome. "The ability to put the mission and others above one's self, even at an increased personal risk or risk of failure" (USAFA Outcomes, 2020) does not have the catchy ring of a blockbuster movie quote. Still, it does frame the way physical courage is needed to meet the Air and Space Force missions. Chief Master Sergeant Thomas Chase, a recipient of two Silver Stars for his heroism while serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, explains it by saying,

"Physical Courage in its simplest form is bravery in the face of anything physical you do. It can be a hardship or a threat. You can tie that directly to moral courage as well. It is the ability to act in the face of opposition correctly. But it still takes physical attributes to meet that demand. There are many examples of physical courage out there. But I think that the risk of discomfort, injury, pain, or even death is part of any of these actions. It can come in many forms, a firefighter running in a burning building or facing your adversary on the battlefield." (T. Case, personal communication, December 11, 2020)

There is also a real-world cost for its lack of development in those who volunteer to serve. According to Case:

"My second Silver Star was awarded on an objective with significant contact with the enemy who held the high ground. The primary air-to-ground

player was an AC-130 Gunship, and I was not the most forward controller on the mountainside. He was unresponsive, so I ran up the hill and found him curled up in a ball. His lack of courage severely disrupted our kill chain. He was not cut out for our mission because he lacked physical courage." (T. Case, personal communication, December 11, 2020)

According to the 2018 National Defense Strategy, "The Department of Defense is tasked to train and equip to meet emerging threats of peer and near-peer adversaries" (National Defense Strategy, 2018). A specific line of effort within this is improving lethality. These goals are reached by developing individual combatants who are able and willing to exercise physical courage while executing their mission against similarly trained and equipped adversaries.

While all three mission elements at USAFA (Cadet Wing, Dean of Faculty, and Athletic Department) contribute to physical courage, we will focus on two of the Athletic Department's contributions. Within the Athletic Department, two core courses required for all cadets cultivate a mindset and involve demonstrations of physical courage. The Athletic Department is uniquely able to foster this development because learning motor skills and movement patterns are necessary for physical education classes and the ability to use those skills during stressful, physically challenging times is essential for Air Force mission accomplishment. USAFA helps lay the foundation for physical courage development through the combative and aquatics curriculum by teaching skills and then requiring cadets to demonstrate them in a stressful situation.

Combatives – The Combatives courses at USAFA teach cadets how to engage an opponent in hand-to-hand combat situations. In addition to developing the motor skills necessary, cadets learn the combatives mindset which cultivates a willingness to act, refusal to

fail, and unrelenting aggressiveness which are essential in achieving the desired mission end state. As the course progresses, cadets develop a physically courageous mindset when placed in physically and psychologically challenging situations. These courses place cadets in a controlled environment where physical courage is needed to fight their opponent. This experience helps develop grit and a willingness to close with the enemy, preparing them to meet possible future operational needs. Instructors assess a cadet's willingness to engage, follow the Rules of Engagement (ROEs) while correctly using the course's techniques. Ultimately, Combatives develops an individual's ability to problem solve under stress, forging a warrior that is equipped to thrive under adverse conditions.

Aquatics – The water survival course teaches personal water survival skills while providing an experience to help develop leadership attributes, including self-confidence, emotional control, persistence, courage, and discipline. The course's two capstone events are a 5-meter egress scenario and a survival scenario initiated with a tower jump. The course curriculum is intentionally designed to foster USAFA cadet's ability to navigate heights safely, manage fear, and follow lawful orders in a controlled yet stressful training environment. Cadets who complete the core combatives and aquatics curriculum have demonstrated the necessary skills and desired outcome of physical courage for future AF officers, many of which are being prepared to serve in operational, combat aviation, or related roles.

The attributes of physical courage are not something that are issued upon graduation from a military academy or suddenly appear after technical training for operational jobs. They are developed and fostered throughout an individual's life. Building on what is already in place, and sometimes laying the initial foundation, USAFA has programs that intentionally develop physical courage. It begins with basic training and development continues through the four-year

immersive commissioning education program at USAFA and develops the necessary tenant of true Warrior Ethos for all Air and Space Force officers.

Demonstrate Excellence in All We Do as Related to Discipline

This final area addresses how Airmen and the Air Force will engage the inevitable challenges posed by competitors and adversaries striving to achieve military dominance and control. The Oxford English Dictionary defines 'excellence' as "the state or fact of excelling; the possession chiefly of good qualities in an eminent or unusual degree; surpassing merit, skill, virtue, worth, etc.; dignity, eminence." (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.). Excellence in all we do mandates that Airmen "strive for continual improvement in self and service in order to propel the Air Force further and to achieve greater accomplishment and performance for themselves and their community." (United States Air Force, 2021).

This principle of continual improvement lies at the heart of being excellent in all we do and is reminiscent of the Aristotelian belief that excellent virtues are formed as one habitually demonstrates excellent actions (Durant, 1961). Every true warrior has the discipline to achieve and maintain excellence whether on the front lines, in garrison, or in their personal lives. The embodied warrior ethos driving them to achieve this excellence consists of several principles including an intrinsic desire to improve performance, exhibit grit and resilience in the face of adversity, and maintain effectiveness despite continual change. A deeper dive into each of these concepts illuminates the motivation and discipline underlying a true warrior's drive toward continual improvement and achievement of success.

Improving Performance. Mission accomplishment is always a top priority and with ever-changing conditions globally, the way in which missions are accomplished must adapt and change. To lead effectively in these dynamic settings, individuals

must also adapt and change, constantly improving their abilities both physically and mentally to meet the demands of continually shifting operational environments. Improvement can take many forms but involves analyzing what is necessary to complete the mission, determining what new knowledge, skills, and abilities are needed, and taking action to adapt.

On a personal level, this may involve changing a fitness regimen to better meet the physical demands of a specific position, adapting a habit of professional reading to improve key skills necessary to become a better leader, or engaging in deliberate reflection to gain new perspectives of the value of diversity and inclusion. On a professional level, improvement may include conducting critical conversations to address team dynamics and performance and then testing and adopting new tactics, techniques, and procedures to adapt to constantly changing demands. USAF doctrine states that Airmen must “continuously search for new and innovative ways to successfully accomplish the mission.” (United States Air Force, 2015, p. 3).

A deliberate and disciplined application of lessons learned through the process of personal and professional improvement provides the basis upon which to build innovative mindsets, practices, and operational procedures. While this serves to improve both the individual and organizational ability to support and conduct military operations, it also serves to strengthen the force as individuals and their families become better able to weather the inevitable storms. True warriors seek continual improvement and adapt to changing conditions.

Exhibiting Grit, Resilience, and Hardiness. At times, the journey and process of improvement is neither simple nor easy. Change can be hard, and as the number of people involved in the change increases, the harder it can become to affect the change. Dynamic operational environments now and into the future, are and will be replete with obstacles and

challenges that constantly test our ability to achieve mission objectives. Conditions can shift so fast that individuals and organizations cannot wait for official doctrine or guidance to be developed and must rely instead upon their individual and collective ability to adapt, overcome, and achieve victory. Our ability to withstand, recover, adapt, and grow despite the adversities and obstacles we face is a measure of our resiliency (U.S. Department of the Air Force, 2014) and grit determines our passion and perseverance to achieve long-term goals (Duckworth, 2016). In this sense, our grit helps us retain sight of our goals and resiliency gives us the power and ability to cope with, manage, and turn obstacles into steppingstones.

Understanding that adversity and change is inherent to the profession of arms lends credence to the idea that resiliency and grit should be constantly be developed and ideally habitualized through constant repetition. The time-tested results of military drills, rehearsals, and practice exercises demonstrates the value of repeated exposure to challenges. Moreover, ongoing research demonstrates the value of military service members, especially leaders, developing a hardiness of spirit during this process (Bartone, 2006). Grit and resiliency add strength to one’s own hardiness and together this can foster a resistance to accept failure despite the continually changing physical and mental hardships inherent to the contemporary military operational tempo. These warriors personify a gritty and resilient ethos as they refuse to accept failure despite the onslaught of hardships and discipline themselves to keep moving forward despite the challenges and obstacles in their path.

Maintaining Effectiveness Despite Change. While it is evident that warriors strive to improve performance and demonstrate grit and resilience, it is also clear that they must excel despite the challenges posed by ever-changing circumstances. It is often quipped that the only constant in the military is change, and this highlights an inherent element of life

in general, but especially for war fighters dedicated to the profession of arms. The operational environment whether in garrison, in the field, or deployed constantly transforms and shifts as the underlying conditions and circumstances continually change.

At the individual level, this may occur as people are called to serve in a variety of different positions requiring diverse skill sets and abilities. As conditions, processes, and requirements shift, individuals must manage this change and adjust to maintain operational effectiveness. Organizationally, teams must have the agility and flexibility to alter missions, 'effective immediately' if necessary, and remain dominant on the battlefield and in other military spaces. Changes at all levels of leadership are perpetually imminent and shifting work structures reflect a military able to withstand, adapt, and grow despite ongoing global adversities. Individually and organizationally, military culture also experiences ongoing shifts and adaptations.

In part, culture changes to include expanding diversity capitalizes on the full strength of its force and reflects an environment inclusive of various viewpoints, attributes, and strengths. Demonstrating warrior ethos as both an Airmen and a citizen includes challenging previously assumed norms and opening the mind, the team, and the organization to adopt diverse and innovative ways to address new challenges. This is essential to ensure the force remains effective, efficient, and dominant on the global front.

Today's warriors not only adapt to the rules of engagement but do so while remaining effective at eliminating the enemy within the confines of the laws of war. Demonstrating excellence in all we do means that as experts in the Profession of Arms, every warrior demonstrates the discipline to remain committed to constant improvement, developing and exhibiting grit and resilience, and learning to manage and thrive despite change. This vigilant dedication and discipline

to become exemplary leaders of character lies at the heart of every true warrior.

Conclusion

War has evolved significantly from the days of soldiers marching against each other during the Peloponnesian Wars. Physical stature, skill in hand-to-hand combat, and even sheer brute strength may have characterized the most superior of warriors then, but those times are far past, and the warriors of today are characterized by a much deeper level of knowledge, courage, and excellence. True warriors are academicians' adept in deconstructing and analyzing conflicts of the past to develop innovative techniques to maximize valuable resources while preserving life. They regard the profession of arms with honor and dignity, placing a high value on human life and giving the best of themselves to pursue peace and security rather than perpetual war.

True warriors demonstrate moral courage as they discern the fog and friction of war, respecting human life and limiting combat power to what is absolutely necessary within the confines of the laws of war. Similar to the warriors of the past, the warriors of the present demonstrate unmatched physical courage as they face adversity head on, risking their lives for others, and stubbornly surviving austere conditions while pushing their capabilities to achieve the mission. But these warriors also strive for continual improvement, exhibit dauntless grit and resiliency, and aptly adapt to change in their constant pursuit of excellence.

To the novice, the warriors of the past and the present may seem to have more in common than not. However, a closer look reveals what the trained eye and a scholar of the profession of arms already knows—that the warriors of today represent the best of all of us. These warriors have the compassion to care for and protect those in need, and the skill and undaunted resolve to close with and destroy the enemy when called

upon to do so. As our commitment to develop officers continues with events such as the National Character and Leadership Symposium, the warriors of the future will continue to adapt, grow, and learn continually answering the call to serve and protect their nation. These are the true warriors we have today and the ones we will rely upon tomorrow as we look to the future, and into space, to bring stability and peace to our nation and to the people of the world.

◆◆◆

References

- Anderson, L., Krathwohl, D., Airasian, P., Cruikshank, K., Mayer, R., Pintrich, P., Raths, J., & Wittrock, M. (2001). *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* (abridged ed.). Longman Inc.
- Bartone, P. T. (2006). Resilience under military operational stress: *Can leaders influence hardiness? Military Psychology*, 18(S), S131.
- Brown, D. (2001). *Bury my heart at Wounded Knee*. Macmillan.
- CCLD (2011). Developing Leaders of Character at the United States Air Force Academy: A Conceptual Framework. Retrieved from <https://caccapl.blob.core.usgovcloudapi.net/web/character-development-project/repository/developing-leaders-of-character-conceptual-framework.pdf>
- Duckworth, A. L. (2016). *Grit: The power of passion and perseverance*. Simon and Schuster.
- Durant, W. (1961). *The Story of Philosophy: The Lives and Opinions of the Great Philosophers of the Western World*. Simon and Schuster.
- Frazier, D. (2000, September 15). The Sand Creek Massacre Letters. Denver Rocky Mountain News, 7A, 30A-31A
- Jackson, H. H. (1994). *A Century of Dishonor*. Indian Head Books.
- Mattis, J., & United States. (2018). *The national defense strategy of the United States of America, 2018: Sharpening the American military's competitive edge*. Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff.
- Noordally, R. (2020, April 28). *On the Toxicity of the 'Warrior' Ethos*. Wavell Room: Contemporary British Military Thought. <https://wavellroom.com/2020/04/28/on-the-toxicity-of-the-warrior-ethos/>
- Merriam-Webster. (n.d.-a). Soldier. In *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*. Retrieved December 8, 2020 from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/soldier>
- Merriam-Webster. (n.d.-b). Warrior. In *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*. Retrieved December 8, 2020, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/warrior>
- Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionaries (n.d.). Warrior. In *Oxford Learner's Dictionaries.com dictionary*. Retrieved December 8, 2020, from <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/definition/english/warrior>
- Oxford English Dictionary (n.d.). Excellence. In *Oxford English Dictionary*. Retrieved December 8, 2020, from <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/65701?redirectedFrom=excellence#eid>
- S. Rep. 2, 38th Cong., (1865). Report of the Joint committee on the conduct of the war. <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/moa/ABY3709.0003.001?rgn=main>
- The United States Air Force Academy. (2013). *USAF A pamphlet 36-3527—The Officer Development System: Developing officers of character*. Colorado Springs, CO: Headquarters United States Air Force Academy.
- The United States Air Force Academy. (2014). *The USAFA institutional outcomes*. Colorado Springs, CO: Headquarters United States Air Force Academy. <https://www.usafa.edu/academics/outcomes/>
- United States Air Force. (2003). *AFMAN36-2236 – Guidebook for Air Force Instructors*. <https://www.angtec.af.mil/Portals/10/Courses%20resources/afman36-2236.pdf?ver=2018-10-02-084122-173>
- United States Air Force, (2015). *The Air Force Core Values*. https://www.doctrine.af.mil/Portals/61/documents/Volume_2/V2-D05-Core-Values.pdf
- United States Air Force, (2021). *U.S. Air Force - Vision*. <https://www.airforce.com/mission/vision>
- U.S. Department of the Air Force. (2014). *AFI 90-506: Comprehensive airman fitness*. Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of the Air Force
- U.S. Department of the Air Force. (2019). *AFI 36-2014: Commissioning education program*. Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of the Air Force
- USAF A Outcomes (2020). *Warrior Ethos as Airmen and Citizens*. Retrieved from <https://www.usafa.edu/app/uploads/Warrior-Ethos-White-Paper-approved.pdf>

FEATURE ARTICLES

Warrior Ethos & Leadership Reflections

Senator Tammy Duckworth

Question: Can you share a little bit about what effective leadership looks like to you (your approach to leadership)?

Duckworth: Leading by example. It's never asking your troops to do something that you wouldn't be willing to do yourself.

Question: What role does character have in effective leadership (why is it important)?

Duckworth: If you want to be effective long-term, you can certainly instill fear in your subordinates, but that's not sustainable since you're not going to keep those subordinates around or they're going to tire of the environment. It might be useful in the short-term, but it's not a form of leadership that works in the long-term. Character is. If the people that work for you and with you see you as a person of good character, then they're more willing to work with you in the long-term and that makes you more effective.

Question: You served in the military for many years, and now you are serving as a Senator. Why the drive to serve? Why is it important for all of us to serve our communities/nation in some way?

Duckworth: I grew up overseas as a child during the period immediately after the Vietnam War. I grew up in Southeast Asia and I understood very early on how lucky I was to be an American. How lucky I was to have all the liberties and privileges that come simply with being an American. We were not a wealthy family by any means, but just by being an American I was immediately in a place of privilege compared to everyone else in the entire world. I grew up knowing that privilege is only sustained by service. Most Americans don't serve, which is why it's so

Senator Tammy Duckworth is an Iraq War Veteran, Purple Heart recipient and former Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs who was among the first handful of Army women to fly combat missions during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Duckworth served in the Reserve Forces for 23 years before retiring at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in 2014. She was elected to the U.S. Senate in 2016 after representing Illinois's Eighth Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives for two terms. <https://www.duckworth.senate.gov/about-tammy/biography>

important for those who do to continue to serve. It's important for every one of us to give something back. People don't realize how lucky we have it here.

Question: You have previously spoken on Warrior Ethos. Can you share a little bit about what that means to you? Why it is important.

Duckworth: The Warrior Ethos for me is a grounding place. It's a solid, firm footing from which I can go off and do other things. Keeping the warrior ethos at the center of who I am helps me in whatever role I choose to play, whether as a Company Commander or as a US Senator. If I always remember the Warrior Ethos, it grounds me and centers me and it allows me to put things in perspective when there might be morally ambiguous questions that come before me. It allows me to say, "You know what, I can't do that" as long as I hold to the Warrior Ethos.

Question: We stress the ideas of grit and resilience in the military. Can you talk a little bit about the role of grit and resilience in your journey?

Duckworth: I think people think of grit and resilience as being tough. Sometimes they're equated with one another, but they're not the same. For me, resilience means you just keep trying. Sometimes to keep trying you have to be curled up in a fetal position. I think about those early days after I was wounded and I woke up at Walter Reed. By no means was I running marathons, but what I did immediately after I was wounded was the ultimate test of grit and resilience. It was the best I could do in the situation that I was in. That doesn't mean you're going to be out there fighting fires with a hero cape on. It just means that you've faced a challenge and you continue to face a challenge that presents itself in front of you and you don't give up. Sometimes grit and resilience manifest themselves in ways that you don't traditionally think of. Sometimes

it's just someone determined to stick it out, even if that means they're crawling and not running.

Question: We know that effective leaders continue to develop themselves. Can you share a little bit about what your leader development looks like (reading, etc.)?

Duckworth: It's both personal and interpersonal. The personal is that I continually want to improve myself. So, for example, I'm constantly practicing my language skills that I've allowed to atrophy. I have Rosetta Stone and I'm trying to learn new languages. Spanish is an important language to have now so I'm trying to learn it. There's also the interpersonal side of development. I actually have all my staff do extensive evaluations every year where they write up their personal evaluations but also how they feel about the "command climate." From these evaluations, I learn what my staff needs and I learn what I'm not providing to them. It's a learning experience, and it teaches me how I can be a better boss. I try to mentor my team to be better managers and to help my staff develop and have successful in their careers. These evaluations are not just an exercise in filling out forms, they're something I go through with top staff to learn how my Senate office can improve.

Question: What advice do you have for young leaders?

Duckworth: Trust your instincts and don't give in to peer pressure and some idea of what you think you're supposed to be. You bring your own unique skills and talents to the table and if you try to fit into some imagined model of who you're supposed to be, then you might push away the parts of you that don't fit into that model. But those are the parts that actually make you a better leader.

♦ ♦ ♦

FEATURE ARTICLES

Developing the Warrior Ethos

Andrew Ledford, U.S. Naval Academy

Celeste Raver Luning, U.S. Naval Academy

ABSTRACT

An ethos is an essential element of the warrior culture that distinguishes the warrior from a murderer, killer, or vigilante. The ethos requires trusted members of the group to codify what are the standards of behavior for the group to live and, if necessary, die by. The first part of this article examines the process the U.S. Navy SEAL Teams took in 2005 to develop the SEAL Ethos for those already within the warrior culture. The second part of the article explores the development of a warrior ethos at the U.S. Naval Academy for those at the very beginning of their journey to join a warrior culture. While the first part provides the process for developing the code, the second part delivers an example of how that ethos is instilled.

Andrew Ledford, Ph.D., is the Chair of the Leadership, Ethics, and Law Department and a permanent military professor at the United States Naval Academy. He teaches the core class of leadership and the Code of the Warrior elective. His past research has been on social movement in Iran as well as the nexus of religion and politics in the Middle East. He currently leads a research group on mindfulness, grit, hardiness, and resilience. Dr. Ledford has a master's degree in International Relations with a focus on Irregular Warfare from the Naval War College, where he was the honor graduate. He spent over twenty years in the SEAL Teams as a Naval Special Warfare officer, which included several tours to both Iraq and Afghanistan in addition to other regions before receiving a master's degree in sociology and his Ph.D. from Princeton University where he studied sociology and social network analysis.

Celeste Raver Luning, Ph.D., is the Class of 1967 Leadership Research Fellow in the Department of Leadership, Ethics, and Law at the United States Naval Academy. Her research focuses on understanding the dynamic nature of organizations, as well as resilience and grit at the individual, team, and organizational levels of analysis. She also teaches one of the core leadership courses at the United States Naval Academy. Prior to her academic career, she was part of a team that built and ran a successful multi-location service business in Southern California, in which she served as the Chief Operating Officer. Dr. Raver Luning obtained her Ph.D. in Organizational Leadership from the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, holds a Masters of Business Administration with an emphasis in Entrepreneurship from Pepperdine University, and a Bachelors of Arts in Philosophy from the University of Maryland Baltimore County.

In late 2004, as combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan were continuing to ramp up, eight members of a SEAL platoon conducting an exercise in Thailand tested positive for cocaine in a urinalysis drug test. Two SEAL platoons were subsequently sent home and 12 Naval Special Warfare (NSW) personnel faced charges ranging from distributing illegal drugs, conduct unbecoming, and impeding an investigation (Klay, 2018). What was even more astonishing about the incident is that only two members of the task unit of over 30 SEALs stepped forward before the urinalysis to say that the drug use was wrong and should not be tolerated. Their actions triggered the drug test for the rest of the task unit and the uncovering of a drug ring; it was clear that there was a sense of loyalty to individuals in the SEAL platoon that overshadowed loyalty to the organization. There was considerable shock within the leadership of the SEAL community that the mental toughness required and developed in Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL Training (BUD/S), the grueling six-month SEAL selection and assessment course, was lacking in holding other SEALs accountable for clear wrong-doing (B. Wilson, personal communication, December, 2020). This incident along with a number of other incidents such as drug and alcohol abuse, sexual misconduct, domestic violence, and physical altercations caused the removal of 33 SEALs from service in the community over a 15-month period. It was recognized by many in the community that these losses exceeded those lost in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan and something needed to be done.

In early 2005, the commanding officers of SEAL Team TWO, CDR Tim Szymanski, and SEAL Team ONE, CDR Bill Wilson, discussed with their Commodore, CAPT Jim O'Connell, the need for a code of conduct for the SEAL Teams to embrace (B. Wilson, personal communication, December, 2020). The perception was that doing nothing would be

considerably more harmful to the community than doing something. In March of 2005, the Naval Special Warfare Command directed a combat-experienced junior officer and enlisted member from each SEAL Team to travel to a SEAL Training Compound on San Clemente Island, off the coast of California, for several days to draft the [SEAL Ethos](#) (NSWC, 2005). Members were chosen based on their experience in the teams as well as their ability to bring the ethos back to their commands with credibility and respect.

A warrior ethos is often a way to codify desired traits in a warrior culture such as those that will be described with the creation of the SEAL ethos. At a recent commencement ceremony for newly minted SEALs, Rear Admiral Wyman Howard described these attributes among others: integrity and grit, problem-solving and creativity, sacrifice and commitment (RADM W. Howard, personal communication, January, 2021). Desired traits codified in an ethos require reinforcement over time in training as well. The first part of this paper will describe the SEAL Ethos, how it was developed, its main components, and how it's used in the SEAL Teams. With a deeper understanding of a specific warrior ethos, the paper will go on to explore how the U.S. Naval Academy intentionally instills a warrior ethos within future Naval and Marine officers in the Brigade of Midshipmen both through required combatives training as well as with several pedagogical approaches in the classroom.

Developing the SEAL Ethos

At the small SEAL compound on San Clemente Island, approximately 50 SEALs from the SEAL Teams on both coasts of the United States were broken into small groups with dry erase boards to capture the community's beliefs and institutional values; the behavioral essence of "being a SEAL" (M. Martin, personal communication, December, 2020). Not only were current SEAL leaders

there, but retired SEALs from the Vietnam era were also included to bring a multi-generational perspective to the discussions. Together, the group had roughly 745 years of operational experience to draw from for the development of the ethos (B. Wilson, personal communication, December, 2020). Based on the experience of the drug problem with the SEAL platoon in Thailand, in addition to several other conduct offences and DUIs, the intent was to draft an ethos that would guide SEALs' behavior not only when no one was looking, but also, and some would say more importantly, when everyone was looking (B. Wilson, personal communication, December, 2020).

The importance of integrity often stressed is relative to personal decisions one makes when they are alone. However, in the SEAL Teams, operators are almost always with at least a swim buddy, if not an entire squad or platoon, and the bonds of members, of a SEAL platoon are known to be some of the strongest (Couch, 2003). This creates for some, difficulty in voicing dissent in ways that might contradict the group. Although there is a high level of trust, the more distinctive the group is, studies have shown that there exists a greater level of in-group favoritism (Voci, 2006). The SEAL Ethos was created to arm operators with behavioral expectations within their in-group and guide actions especially if that in-group goes astray.

The group at San Clemente Island developing the SEAL ethos were divided into six groups of officers and enlisted members from opposite coasts to mitigate pre-existing group-think. At the end of each day, the groups were reshuffled so that groups would not become wedded to certain concepts and ideas. Initially, the groups examined other ethos to get a sense of what a warrior ethos could embody. In this session, the groups studied the Ranger Creed of the U.S. Army Rangers, Allen Dulles's seven qualities of

an Intelligence Officer for the CIA, Viking Laws, and the U.S. Special Operations Command vision. The groups described what they believe America expected from its special operations force in terms of operational attributes such as assured success, agility and flexibility, surgical precision, special skills, and capabilities. They also described character attributes such as maturity and reliability, cultural and language expertise, innovation and problem solving, and most importantly, leadership. Groups then defined the community principles that all SEAL Team members would universally believe in, detailed in Table 1 (B. Wilson, personal communication, December, 2020).

Table 1
Community Principles Discussed in 2005

Leadership	Fortitude
Integrity	Honor
Courage	Commitment
Innovation	Service
Loyalty	Excellence
Teamwork	Legacy
Humility	Professionalism

The groups followed this session by deliberating on the strengths and weaknesses of the community at the time in 2005, which would be easily recognized throughout the Teams, detailed in Table 2. It was recognized in this session's discussions that the first four weaknesses, specifically: leadership failures, integrity, accountability, and misplaced loyalty, along with alcohol and drug abuse were the root causes of almost all of the 33 SEALs removed from service due to mishaps and misconduct (B. Wilson, personal communication, December, 2020).

Table 2
Strengths and Weaknesses Discussed in 2005

Strengths	Weaknesses
Warrior Reputation	Leadership Failures
Innovative	Integrity
Adaptable	Accountability
Strong Work Ethic	Misplaced Loyalty
Success in Combat	Ego / Arrogance
Team Attitude	Communication
Aggressiveness	Lack of Mentoring
	Professional
	Development
	Drug and Alcohol
	Abuse

Of particular concern in the discussions were charismatic narcissists within the ranks that could use the strengths of the SEAL Teams toward behaviors that did not align with the Nation's objectives. Thus, the SEAL ethos would need to resonate at all levels of the community, address these key concerns, capture the heritage of the SEAL Teams, and be applicable in all occasions. It would most importantly be the standard in which SEALs would be internally judged and held accountable amongst each other (B. Wilson, personal communication, December, 2020).

From the elements in Table 1 and Table 2, the groups were each assigned a segment to work on. At the end of the day, each group would describe and edit their segment with the help of all of the groups (M. Martin, personal communication, December, 2020). The segments were then ordered appropriately for flow (NSWC, 2005). The initial segment defined who SEALs

are, "a special breed of warrior, forged by adversity" (NSWC, 2005). The second segment incorporates the symbol of the community, the SEAL pin known as the trident, with what it symbolizes: honor, heritage, trust, and responsibility. It takes almost a year of intense training, where there is an attrition rate of 65-80%, before earning one's SEAL pin. The long pathway to becoming a SEAL could be thwarted by immaturity and poor decisions. The ethos was expected to be used in misconduct proceedings as a standard in clear terms and displayed at the quarterdeck (entrance) of each SEAL command (M. Martin, personal communication, December, 2020).

The trident is a symbol of the next segment of the ethos, what it means to be a member of the community, a guardian "defending those who are unable to defend themselves," who does not seek recognition for one's actions, and voluntarily placing the security of others before oneself (NSWC, 2005). In drafting the ethos, it was recognized that it would be important at funerals in honoring the principles to which fallen warriors lived their lives.

The next several segments of the ethos entailed the most important attributes agreed upon by the groups. The first, professionalism, could be summed up as honor on and off the battlefield, stoic control of emotions and actions, and integrity with one's word as their bond. Leadership was recognized as an essential warrior attribute in every SEAL, officer and enlisted, to lead and expect to be led. Resilience in the next segment is reinforced through every step of SEAL training, to never quit. "If knocked down, I get back up, every time." Resilience also requires the next attribute, adaptability, expecting innovation and a growth mindset. Finally, the ethos describes the warrior mindset on the battlefield, "fight to win," "swift and violent," and how the SEAL

is guided by these principles. The ethos describes all of these segments as a legacy passed along over generations of SEAL warriors that must be upheld each day.

These attributes were something that needed to be revisited and communicated often. The groups felt that it was important for all members of the Teams

The immense trust by the American people in SEALs and other warriors to apply deadly force in chaotic situations requires an overarching ethos due to the unpredictable nature of combat. The erosion of this special trust because of the poor judgement and actions of a small number of SEALs was a catalyst to creating the SEAL Ethos.

to carry a daily reminder and therefore, developed a laminated card to be carried in every member's wallet that captured the main concepts of the ethos. The main concepts of the SEAL ethos that each SEAL now carries are:

- Loyalty to Country, Team, and Teammate
- Serve with Honor and Integrity On and Off the Battlefield
- Ready to Lead, Ready to Follow, Never Quit
- Take Responsibility for Your Actions and the Actions of Your Teammates
- Excel as Warriors through Discipline and Innovation
- Train for War, Fight to Win, Defeat our Nation's Enemies
- Earn Your Trident Every Day

The SEAL Teams, as with many warrior cultures, are given a tremendous responsibility of taking other's lives in the course of one's official duties. The immense trust by the American people in SEALs and other warriors to apply deadly force in chaotic situations requires an overarching ethos due to the unpredictable nature of combat. The erosion of this special trust because of the poor judgement and actions of a small number of SEALs was a catalyst to creating the SEAL Ethos. The ethos was created to provide a standard for SEALs to measure their daily activities on and off the battlefield. It also was recognized that it was necessary within the SEAL ranks to guard against charismatic narcissists that could take the camaraderie and loyalty within the Teams in negative directions. The SEAL ethos is often referenced in funerals, misconduct proceedings, and in counseling. It continues to be a standard within the SEAL warrior culture of what is expected. The ethos card continues to be carried by many SEALs as a daily reminder of this code.

The U.S. Naval Academy's Approach to Warrior Ethos Development

The SEAL ethos is a code that was articulated for a warrior culture that has passed through the crucible fire. It was primarily to codify a standard for SEALs to live by. In addition to this example, it is helpful to also look at how the warrior ethos is instilled at the individual level at the beginning of the warrior's journey. At the U.S. Naval Academy, the warrior ethos comes in several forms over the course of four years. Physically, it is instilled in midshipmen through a myriad of combatives classes that contextualize the words of boxer Mike Tyson, "Everybody has a plan until they get punched in the mouth" (Beradino, 2012). Warrior ethos is also extended into the classroom with the Code of the Warrior elective and Ethics class that all sophomore

midshipmen must take. Finally, it is also present in the Warrior Toughness modules that have been recently injected into the four core leadership classes all midshipmen take.

The physical education department of the Naval Academy is charged with physically preparing midshipmen to become professional Naval and Marine Corps officers. This is accomplished through mandatory “instruction in the fundamentals of swimming, personal defense, wellness, recreational sports, as well as through the regular administration of the Physical Readiness Test” (Physical Education Department, 2020, para 1). An integral part of this instruction is combatives education in the form of eight weeks of boxing class, eight weeks of wrestling, 16 weeks of the Marine Corps mixed martial arts, and the option to continue with additional classes in advanced boxing and martial arts I and II.

These classes are physically demanding and teach proper form and techniques for the skills required but most importantly, they teach the warrior mindset of offensive and defensive postures, resilience in getting back up after being physically taken down, and fortitude. A warrior ethos is more than just ethics for the warrior. It also includes the warrior mindset, specifically how one appropriately delivers violence to achieve an objective. During the freshman (plebe) year boxing class, students are taught the boundaries of what is acceptable in the boxing ring. Although midshipmen are given multiple two-minute rounds to punch their opponents and avoid getting punched, there are certain restrictions that students must fight under. The practice of measured violence with restraint, especially when it coincides with the physical pain of getting punched in the face, is an important lesson learned by all freshmen at the Naval Academy their first year. With each of these classes of boxing, wrestling, and mixed martial arts, violence is

encouraged in a controlled manner. Aggression and a fight to win attitude, but in a controlled, deliberate manner is the focus of the curriculum. Although these classes are not poised as ethics classes, the lessons of when and how to use violence appropriately are certainly part of the warrior ethos curriculum.

These lessons are reinforced in the classroom as well with a mandatory class for all sophomores at the Naval Academy: NE203, Ethics and Moral Reasoning for the Naval Leader. The objective of the class is to encourage students to determine social and situational pressures that influence their moral perceptions and consider several moral considerations that can guide their actions when violence is justified, *jus ad bellum*, as well as the conduct of warfare, *jus in bello*. Over the course of 16 weeks, students are exposed to moral perspectives that include virtue ethics in the Aristotle tradition as well as the stoic tradition, pride and humility, and moral courage. Particular attention is focused throughout the semester on moral injury, the consequences of when a warrior *actually does wrong* as well as where the warrior *falsely believes they have done wrong*. This is a key concept in developing a warrior ethos. Just as in the boxing class, when one is punched in the face, there is pain, a temporary loss of function, and if hit hard enough, disfigurement (Luben, 2005). Warriors are exposed to the extreme events in combat in which decisions have life and death consequences. Each of these experiences to some degree cause pain and temporary loss of function. If the experience is truly devastating, it causes disfigurement of one’s own moral compass permanently (Luben, 2005). In Shay’s *Achilles in Vietnam* (1995), soldiers in the Vietnam conflict would deal with truly horrible experiences and its associated pain with exasperation; “Don’t mean nothing” and “F--- it!” were terms that would eventually signal a disfigurement of ethos for soldiers. Contemplation of moral injury and its consequences require a solid foundation of the moral

perspectives taught in the NE203 class. It is in this class that students are given some foundation in moral thinking to help prepare themselves for the uncertainty and moral fog of war.

Students also have the option to continue their preparation with a military ethics elective open to all classes entitled, *The Code of the Warrior*. The course delivers lessons in warrior ethos through the historical examination of seven warrior cultures: the Sioux, the Zulu, the Samurai, the Chinese Shaolin Warrior Monks, the Templar Knights, the Roman Legion, and the women of the OSS - Special Executive France Detachment in World War II. Within each of these warrior cultures, students explore the historical context of the culture, how warriors were formed, the code the warriors lived and died by, and the consequences of breaking the code. The instructors of the course are either SEAL officers or enlisted, Explosive Ordnance Disposal officers, or US Marine Corps Infantry officers, all combat veterans who connect the material to their own recent experiences in Afghanistan and/ or Iraq. After the students have covered the material over the first 14 weeks of the 16 week course, the final two weeks are used to determine common attributes that connect these warrior codes across centuries of time and thousands of miles. The commonality of certain aspects of these warrior cultures and the connection to modern day warfare provide students examples of individual warrior codes to live by as well as organizational standards that have been the warrior's rubric for millennia. It is this warrior ethos that provides the important distinction between the labels of murderer, killer, fighter, and warrior (French, 2016).

Finally, one other way in which a warrior ethos is developed is through the warrior toughness curriculum within the four core leadership courses at the Naval Academy. Warrior toughness is taught or being

developed throughout all accession pipelines of the U.S. Navy. It was established as a program to develop a warrior mindset in sailors as they face challenges throughout all aspects of their career - in training, combat, and on the home front (Bernacchi et al., 2019). To develop the warrior mindset, the focus is on developing toughness at the intersection between the one's physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of self. The foundational idea of the warrior mindset that is developed in the warrior toughness curriculum was borrowed from the SEAL community (Department of the Navy, n.d.). At the core of this warrior mindset is a focus on training sailors, in this case future Navy and Marine Corp Officers, to be fully committed, prepared, execution ready, and have the ability to reflect upon their activities.

At the Naval Academy, the development of the warrior mindset with the warrior toughness curriculum embodies this holistic approach. Midshipmen during their first year leadership course are introduced to the ideas of warrior toughness. The image of a stool (see Figure 1), is presented to represent the warrior mindset that the Naval Academy fosters. The three stool legs represent one's body, mind, and soul to capture the physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of toughness that are representative of one's warrior mindset (Department of the Navy, n.d.). It is reinforced with students that just as it is true with a stool, if any aspect is underdeveloped (any leg of the stool shorter) then warrior toughness will be out of balance. The focus in this initial course is about developing the future leader's individual warrior mindset. As part of this curriculum, students are introduced to and taught in depth the concepts of resilience, grit, hardiness, and mindfulness. There is emphasis placed on how to develop those characteristics and abilities in oneself during this initial course and a focus on how each can be tied to the legs of the stool, one's warrior mindset.

Figure 1*Warrior Mindset Taught at U.S. Naval Academy**

*Image adapted from Warrior Toughness materials from Naval Service Training Command, Great Lakes.

In Midshipmen's second year leadership course, the focus is on how warrior toughness and ethical decision making can and should be developed simultaneously. The focus is primarily on the soul aspects of the warrior mindset and its foundation in moral reasoning. In the students' third year junior leadership course, the focus turns to how these future leaders will need to lead with a warrior mindset and build this mindset in the individuals, teams, and organizations which they will lead throughout their careers. Emphasis once again is placed on resilience, grit, hardiness, mindfulness, and their connection to the stool image of the warrior mindset. The primary difference between this and the first year course is the focus is on how future leaders build these characteristics and abilities of a warrior into others and the teams they will lead. During the fourth year at the Naval Academy, the leadership objective is on the connection between one's warrior mindset and the law, specifically a deeper dive into *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*. The emphasis

becomes how to engage a warrior mindset when faced with challenging combat situations relative to the Uniformed Code of Military Justice. In teaching this material, there is a continual focus on how each aspect of the material being covered connects to various aspects of the triad (mind, body, and soul) and the development of the individual's warrior mindset.

Conclusion

Developing and instilling a warrior ethos is one of the most important responsibilities of each military community. The creation of a warrior ethos is not an easy task. Careful consideration of the cultural dynamics of the community, the nature of the individuals, and most importantly, the core purpose of the group must be made by respected members of the organization to ensure the ethos has depth and buy-in from all it hopes to affect. This approach was used by the SEALs in the development of their ethos. The members of the community to create the SEAL ethos were specifically chosen because of their experience and respect within the community. A measured approach was used to include many voices in the creation and the framing of the ethos. Fifteen years later, the SEAL Ethos is still

Fifteen years later, the SEAL Ethos is still used as it was originally intended. It is used as a standard within the community to articulate the ultimate sacrifice SEALs have made as well as cited when SEALs are not upholding the standard.

used as it was originally intended. It is used as a standard within the community to articulate the ultimate sacrifice SEALs have made as well as cited when SEALs are not upholding the standard. Not only is it front-loaded in the selection and assessment of SEAL candidates, but

also in identification of the suitability of potential candidates before they arrive at the initial SEAL selection course. The SEAL community now hosts a continuum of recruiting, assessment, selection, and training (RAST) that assesses the character, cognitive, and leadership attributes supporting the SEAL ethos prior to entering the training pipeline (RADM W. Howard, personal communication, January, 2021). Ultimately, the creation of the SEAL ethos shows a systematic approach to developing a code as a standard of behavior for warriors.

The approach at the U.S. Naval Academy provides an overview of how to embed a warrior ethos into those that will eventually serve as warriors and leaders of warriors. The Naval Academy's approach to building an ethos highlights the importance of instilling the warrior mindset over time through both pedagogical approaches in the classroom and physical combatives training that builds stamina, restraint, and ethical decision in high stress activities. There is evidence that this approach is working. Feedback from a similar program at the Navy's Boot Camp in Great Lakes, Illinois, shows promising results from this approach. Ultimately, the Naval Academy's method to building the warrior mindset provides a multifaceted methodology, reinforced over time through mental and physical developmental techniques. Holistically, creating a warrior ethos requires a deliberate process that imbues ideals that each warrior can aspire to and live by, noting as many warrior cultures do, *memento mori* (a stoic reminder of remembering one's own mortality).

♦ ♦ ♦

References

- Berardino, M. (2012, November 9). *Mike Tyson explains one of his most famous quotes*. Sun-Sentinel.Com. <https://www.sun-sentinel.com/sports/fl-xpm-2012-11-09-fl-mike-tyson-explains-one-of-his-most-famous-quotes-20121109-story.html>
- Bernacchi, M., Drum, S., Anderson, J., & Sau, K. (2019). Warrior toughness: Making the mind, body, soul connection. *Proceedings, U.S. Naval Institute*, 145(7), 1,397.
- Couch, D. (2003). *The Warrior Elite: The Forging of SEAL Class 228* (Illustrated edition). Crown.
- Department of the Navy. (n.d.). *Warrior toughness program*. United States Department of the Navy.
- French, S. E. (2016). *The Code of the Warrior: Exploring Warrior Values Past and Present* (2nd ed.). Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Klay, P. (2018, May 17) *The Lesson of Eric Greitens, and the Navy SEALs Who Tried to Warn Us*.The New Yorker. <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-lesson-of-eric-greitens-and-the-navy-seals-who-tried-to-warn-us>
- Luben, D. (2005). Moral Injury and Atonement. In Frey, R. G., & Wellman, C. H. (Eds.). *A Companion to Applied Ethics* (1st edition). Wiley-Blackwell
- Naval Special Warfare Command (NSWC). (2005). *SEAL Ethos*. <https://www.nsw.navy.mil/NSW/SEAL-Ethos/>
- Physical Education Department. (2020, December 31). United States Naval Academy. <https://www.usna.edu/PEDept/index.php>
- Shay, J. (1995). *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character* (1st ed.). Simon & Schuster.
- Voci, A. (2006). The link between identification and in-group favoritism: Effects of threat to social identity and trust-related emotions. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 45(2), 265–284. <https://doi.org/10.1348/014466605X52245>

Appendix

SEAL ETHOS

In times of war or uncertainty there is a special breed of warrior ready to answer our Nation's call. Common citizens with uncommon desire to succeed. Forged by adversity, they stand alongside America's finest special operations forces to serve their country, the American people, and protect their way of life. I am that warrior.

My Trident is a symbol of honor and heritage. Bestowed upon me by the heroes that have gone before, it embodies the trust of those I have sworn to protect. By wearing the Trident I accept the responsibility of my chosen profession and way of life. It is a privilege that I must earn every day.

My loyalty to Country and Team is beyond reproach. I humbly serve as a guardian to my fellow Americans always ready to defend those who are unable to defend themselves. I do not advertise the nature of my work, nor seek recognition for my actions. I voluntarily accept the inherent hazards of my profession, placing the welfare and security of others before my own.

I serve with honor on and off the battlefield. The ability to control my emotions and my actions, regardless of circumstance, sets me apart from others. Uncompromising integrity is my standard. My character and honor are steadfast. My word is my bond.

We expect to lead and be led. In the absence of orders I will take charge, lead my teammates and accomplish the mission. I lead by example in all situations.

I will never quit. I persevere and thrive on adversity. My Nation expects me to be physically harder and mentally stronger than my enemies. If knocked down, I will get back up, every time. I will draw on every remaining ounce of strength to protect my teammates and to accomplish our mission. I am never out of the fight.

We demand discipline. We expect innovation. The lives of my teammates and the success of our mission depend on me - my technical skill, tactical proficiency, and attention to detail. My training is never complete.

We train for war and fight to win. I stand ready to bring the full spectrum of combat power to bear in order to achieve my mission and the goals established by my country. The execution of my duties will be swift and violent when required yet guided by the very principles that I serve to defend.

Brave SEALs have fought and died building the proud tradition and feared reputation that I am bound to uphold. In the worst of conditions, the legacy of my teammates steadies my resolve and silently guides my every deed. I will not fail.

FEATURE ARTICLES

The Courage Myth: Why You Don't Have Courage, and Never Will (And That's Okay)

Kevin Basik, Basik Insight

The title of this article bothers me too. It's even worse than that. I'm not just saying you don't have courage, I'm saying no one has it (or ever had it). How do you like me now?

Like you, I'm bothered by this because I can think of countless people in my life and throughout history who had courage – both physical and moral. Military warriors, civil rights leaders, trauma survivors, intervening bystanders, people who spoke truth to power, the first person to eat an oyster, and on and on. It's hard to accept these people didn't have courage.

But that is what I'm saying. Here's why. We typically frame courage as this magical resource we tap into when the moment requires us to do “the hard, right thing.” These moments can range from modest (e.g., the courage to listen, forgive, apologize, persist, admit) to the more epic (e.g., the courage to charge the enemy, accept another chemo treatment, confront a bully, sacrifice yourself for another). The harder the moment, the more courage

Lt Col (retired) Kevin Basik has spent over 26 years studying and applying values-based leadership development. A 1993 graduate of the United States Air Force Academy, Kevin earned his Master's in Industrial and Organizational Psychology from Virginia Tech, and his PhD in Organizational Behavior from Florida State University's College of Business, studying the concept of “behavioral integrity” as a driver of trust, accountability and performance. He is a 23-year veteran of the US Air Force, where he taught and led leadership development efforts at the Air Force Academy, the Citadel, Air University and beyond. In his final assignment, Dr. Basik served as one of the top advisors to the Secretary of Defense on issues of Professionalism and values-based leadership, impacting over 3.2 million service members. Dr. Basik is the President of Basik Insight, LLC, a company dedicated to energizing, enlightening and equipping organizations to lead with character.

we better have in the tank. If we passed the test, we obviously had enough. If we failed, we needed more of it. Therefore, the argument goes: the thing we need to act courageously is courage. This circular description is where the problem lies, and why this argument is a myth.

Here’s the real deal: People don’t have courage, because it’s not something to have. It’s something to produce. Courage is not an input, it’s the outcome. It’s not a resource to reach for, any more than “delicious” is a spice on the shelf. Delicious is the word we use to describe what just happened on our pallet. Some other spices actually created that experience. It’s the same with courage. We only ascribe the virtue of courage to people after they have demonstrated it. Therefore, Courage is not what helps us take positive action. Courage is just what we call it when it happens.

When we ask the Medal of Honor recipient or intervening bystander, “But what gave you the courage to do it?” we are highlighting the fact that something different facilitated the courageous act. That’s the real target. What, then, is actual real ingredient emboldening us to do the hard, right thing? To answer that, we must start with what makes the right thing right.

The Identity Testing Point

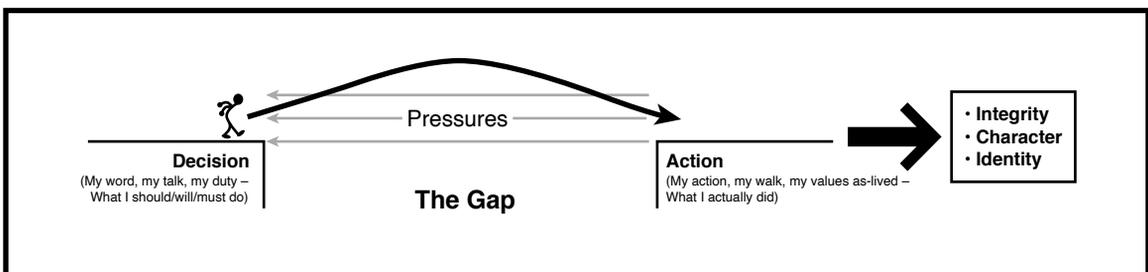
As individuals and organizations, we put the flag on the horizon for who we are trying to be. When we sincerely pursue this identity, we also commit to the values aligned with it. These values help us determine what is right and wrong, and define how we should act, regardless of the obstacles. For example, if you commit to the identity of “military professional,” there are certain values, virtues and standards of behavior for which you are now on the hook. Similarly, if you want to truly be a “leader of character,” “elite athlete,” “loving parent,” or “person of faith,” each identity reflects values and corresponding virtuous behaviors that must be executed. Otherwise, the identity doesn’t come to life – it’s just talk.

Well that’s easy enough, right? Just do the things necessary to demonstrate you truly value what you say, and your identity is brought to life. Not so fast. In the words of a CEO in an executive workshop I conducted, “Values don’t mean anything, until they’re tested.” It’s at the testing point we prove we’re serious about our talk, and where courage is born. So what is this testing point?

Welcome to the Gap

The testing point for our identity and character is the “Decision-Action Gap”, with the left side representing the point where we’ve decided what should be done

Figure 1
The Decision-Action Gap



(Figure 1; Basik et al., 2012). By this point, we've already wrestled with critical thinking, moral reasoning, emotions, biases and philosophical lenses, and have concluded, in order to be who I'm committed to being, I should/ought to do this. This side of the gap represents the word we give to ourselves or someone else, the promise made, the standard our duty requires, and the voice of our conscience or our internal compass about what is the right thing to do in this moment.

The "Action" side of the gap is the successful execution of this intent. On this right side, double entendre intended, our identity is being lived out – at least in this moment. It's the "talk" being "walked", the promise kept, the goal achieved, the standard upheld, the values and virtues delivered. We either did the thing or we didn't. Having successfully reached this side, we are one iteration closer to our identity coming to life and showcasing our true character. Rushworth Kidder emphasized this identity-focus when he described moral courage literally as "the courage to be (emphasis added) honest, fair, compassionate, respectful and responsible" (2005, p. 70). The virtues "as-lived" is the ultimate target, whether they are moral virtues or "performance virtues" (e.g., grit, work ethic, self-discipline). As Dr. Peter Rea and colleagues argue, "It is not a virtue until we act" (2018; p. 2).

But this is called the gap for a reason. In perhaps the biggest understatement in history: people don't always do what they say. As a Behavioral Science instructor at the Air Force Academy, I was asked to help cadets who couldn't jump off a 10-meter platform into the pool 33 feet below—a requirement to pass their required Water Survival class. Each year, multiple students would peer over the edge of the platform and repeatedly yell, "Okay, here I go. I'm going to jump now. Ready...3, 2, 1..." They decided it, proclaimed it, and meant it, but after their countdown, they remained on the platform.

They're good cadets, but were out of integrity in that moment. They buckled at the literal 33-foot gap.

This gap exists in all parts of our lives. As Matt Davidson, Director of the Excellence with Integrity Institute points out, sometimes the gap has moral components (i.e., I am not being as honest, compassionate, fair, patient, honorable as I should be), and sometimes it is more performance-based (i.e., I procrastinate, avoid an important conversation, give up too soon, or bring it weak in my professionalism). People definitely notice when the decision and action don't line up, and perceptions about integrity and character are at stake.

At its heart, integrity is simply about alignment, wholeness, oneness with our word or what we know to be right. It's consistently showing up on the "action" platform. But the gap is not always crossed, and that matters. We should absolutely question the integrity of the hypocritical politician, sloppy drill instructor, selfish self-proclaimed servant leader, the lazy athlete. Integrity with ourselves is at stake as well. If we violate the very values, commitments and standards we know in our gut we should uphold, the "out of integrity" dashboard light should be flashing. But getting to the right side of the Gap not so easy. Something is in the way, which makes doing "the hard, right thing," hard.

The Pressures at the Gap

Our ability to cross the gap is impacted by pressures acting as headwinds, pushing us away from our intended actions and identity. I should speak up, but I don't want to be labeled disloyal. I want leave this abusive relationship, but I don't know where to go. I should get up and work out, but the bed is so warm. I want to be a compassionate person, but this guy is obnoxious. Each pressure represents a type of excuse – legitimate or not – which has the potential to

overwhelm our willingness or ability to demonstrate self-discipline, will-power, honesty or grit or any virtue or promise we espouse.

The struggle is real, compelling and very human. On occasion, the reason we buckle at the gap may be due to time pressures, administrative pressures (e.g., policy constraints, resource shortfalls), ability pressures (I want to do this but literally don't know how), or physical pressures (e.g., distance, fatigue, physical ability, pain). But more often than not, the pressures keeping us from living out our values are more psychological. Specifically, social pressures (How will this impact my standing with this group?), emotional pressures (e.g., insecurity, impact to ego, interpersonal loss) or professional pressures (e.g., concerns about status, opportunity, reputation, perceived lost opportunities) prevent us from acting in alignment with our intent.

If you consider any context where courage is showcased, it is easy to identify the pressures which made courageous action hard. Examples include, the Iraqi citizen boldly standing in line to vote. The sexual assault victim taking the stand. The pilot continuing to circle a downed wingman despite low fuel. The entrepreneur deciding to quit her day job. The student confronting his peer about cheating. The spouse apologizing for the damage caused in the relationship. You can continue this list for pages. In every case, there are very real reasons why the person could have chosen not to take the action. But they found a way to conquer those pressures and did it anyway.

Unfortunately, you can also list countless examples of people succumbing to these pressures, doing or tolerating things inconsistent with what they value or

know to be right. The pressures proved too powerful, and they stayed on the wrong side of the gap. Even you and I have likely had moments where we were out of integrity with our word (even to ourselves), so there's value in recognizing what kept us back. The prime culprit is a master pressure cutting across all the examples above, and it's the reason we do or don't display courage.

Unfortunately, you can also list countless examples of people succumbing to these pressures, doing or tolerating things inconsistent with what they value or know to be right.

The Criteria for Courage: Fear

When we think of anyone in history who demonstrated physical or moral courage, we can easily identify the fear they had to push through (to include the first oyster eater). Without fear, there is no courage. John Wayne plainly described courage as, "Being scared to death, and saddling up anyway" (Kidder, 9). There is no courage associated with getting the mail. But place a bear in front of the mailbox, and that word "anyway" becomes pretty significant.

At its heart, courage is taking intended positive action in spite of perceived fear. This definition has a few important nuances. The word intended highlights the importance of deliberate choice or volition (Treasurer, 2008). Accidental courage is not courage. Positive ensures that the choice is aligned with what one has determined to be the right thing. When I ask people to define the *opposite* of courage, they often respond with: cowardice, inaction, selfishness, laziness, and conformity. The courage we're exploring

here is never directed at those outcomes, but instead targets some noble purpose or goal (Schwartz, 2017). The word action simply confirms courage has not taken place unless there is an actual attempt to cross the gap. Success is not a requirement for courage, just action. Intentions are great, but it is not until the terrified cadet's feet leave the 10-meter platform that they get courage credit. *In spite of fear* rounds out the mandate for courage. The reason we exalt Medal of Honor recipients is because they exhibited virtues in alignment with our espoused values, in spite of a level of fear and danger so significant, we would understand if they hadn't done it. But they did it...anyway.

Then there is the distinction of perceived fear. Interestingly, fear's strength as pressure is in the eye of the beholder. In his seminal book, *Moral Courage*, Kidder suggested that moral courage is demonstrated where principles, endurance and danger intersect. He later clarifies that the last element is not danger but rather perceived danger, and thus fear. If you don't perceive there is danger, then the action is not courageous, it's obliviousness (What do you mean the building I just went into was on fire?!). Conversely, if someone perceives danger, even if it's not present, then acting in the face of that misperception is still courageous (e.g., the terrified 5 year old checks under his little brother's bed for monsters or a student admits to cheating, thinking incorrectly it will result in expulsion). Fear can be experienced or anticipated, and often shows up in one of the following, interrelated ways:

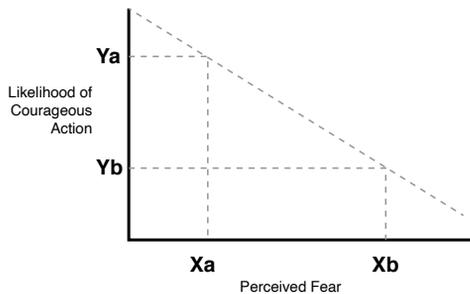
- **Fear of Pain, Discomfort or Death:** It is always more attractive to accept comfort and safety. But those who choose to accept the opposite and press on, earn the badge of courage. When we tell ourselves, "I don't feel like it," "This is going

to suck," or "I'm scared to death to do this," we're giving voice to this pressure. In his book, *Leading with Honor*, Colonel (USAF retired) Lee Ellis, a former Prisoner of War (POW) in North Vietnam's "Hanoi Hilton" for 5 ½ years, defines courage as, "Doing what is right or called for in the situation, even when it does not feel safe or natural" (Ellis, 52). If anyone knows what it's like to feel the pressure of this kind of fear, yet do what is right anyway, it is Lee Ellis.

- **Fear of Consequence (to Include Fear of the Unknown):** Physical, social, emotional, professional consequences can run the gamut, and explain why so many people buckle at the Gap. On occasion, we may be able to anticipate the impact of taking action. In other times, especially in times of ambiguity or uncertainty, the fear of the unknown can keep even the best of us on the sidelines. By taking action, we accept what results follow (e.g., retribution, isolation, unwanted drama, pain, unexpected workload, etc.), which are often frightening enough to paralyze us.
- **Fear of Loss:** In his book, *Exception to the Rule: The Surprising Science of Character-based Culture, Engagement and Performance*, Dr. Peter Rea suggests "The strongest courage enabler is to acknowledge what's at stake" (p. 87). Scientists have consistently demonstrated that people fear loss about twice as much as they value gain (loss aversion; Kahneman, 2011). This can be a loss of status with a valued group (e.g., the cool kids, church group, work/sports team, etc.), loss of income, respect, friendships, employment status, property, and the list goes on and on.

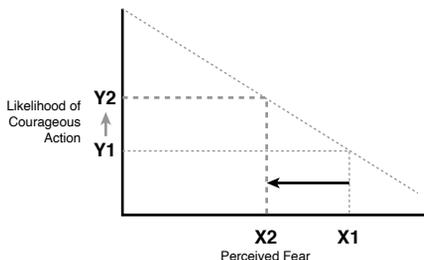
The master pressure of fear is what defines whether courage has been displayed. C.S. Lewis famously stated, “Courage is not simply one of the virtues, it is the form of every virtue at its testing point”. His words reinforce that courage is what it looks like when, in spite of fear, the virtues are lived out anyway.

Figure 2
The Fear-Courage Relationship



In Figure 2, we see the inverse relationship between perceived fear and our likelihood for courageous action (i.e., crossing the Gap). When fear is minimal (point Xa; e.g., speaking your mind when you’re the boss; climbing a small rock wall at FunZone), courageous action is a breeze (point Ya). But as fear increases (point Xb; e.g., speaking your mind against the boss; climbing El Capitan the first time), so too does the pressure, which decreases courageous behaviors (point Yb). The

Figure 3a
The Consequence of Reducing Perceived Fear



reason we celebrate courageous action is because we know what fear can do to prevent it.

Busting the Myth: How to Actually Strengthen Courageous Action

If our goal is to increase the likelihood of courageous action (slide up the Y axis), then we have 2 options:

Reduce the Perceived Fear. (Figures 3a and b below): Reducing the perception of fear (X1 to X2) makes it easier for us to cross the Gap (Figure 3a – Y1 to Y2). Imagine what would happen if the 10-meter platform was lowered to 3 feet, or the terrified public speaker discovered that the audience was made of family and close friends. If a soldier knows in advance that the room they are entering is already cleared, then the room is much easier to enter. This, in essence, lessens the headwinds, and brings the sides of the Gap closer together (Figure 3b). Easier jump.

We Change the Slope of the Relationship. (Figures 4a and b): Even if fear remains constant and strong (Figure 4a, point X1), having additional strength to push through that pressure (from a to b) makes it easier to take courageous action (Y1 to Y2). Someone asked to run into a burning building may be overwhelmed by the fear, but when they realize their child is inside, the danger (which hasn’t changed) is no longer enough

Figure 3b
The Consequence of Reducing Perceived Fear

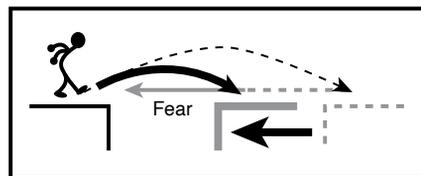


Figure 4a

The Consequence of Elevating the Slope

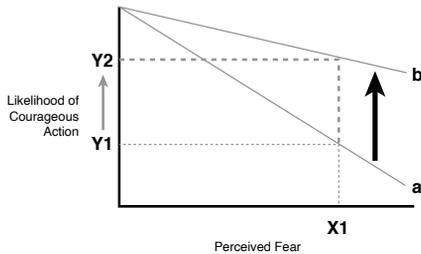
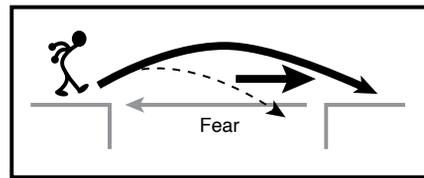


Figure 4b

The Consequence of Elevating the Slope



to keep them from running in. This equates to giving the person crossing the Gap better jumping horsepower (Figure 4b), even for a large Gap.

Obviously, any combination of these two factors compounds the goodness. If perceived fear is reduced, *and* the Gap-jumping horsepower is increased, the likelihood of courageous action is even more significant.

The Three Courage Catalysts

We now arrive at the secret sauce that allows people to push through the physical and moral pressures to act courageously. These “catalysts” are the answer to the question, “But what actually *gave you* the courage to do it?” Each of these factors increases the likelihood for even normal people like us to confront fear in whatever form it takes, and more consistently bring our identity to life. Of course, if we combine them, the effect is even greater (as discussed above).

Catalyst 1: Competence

Ask any Medal of Honor recipient how they were able to do what they did in the face of Herculean pressures (pain, fatigue, uncertainty, loss, resource constraints, etc.), and they will very likely say with the utmost humility, “I was just doing what I was trained to do. It was almost second nature.” Believing you

have no ability, plan or tools to succeed leaves fear to dominate the Gap. Conversely, even if it is inaccurate, the perception, “I can do this. I know how. I have a path through this that I can execute” explains why people take action, in spite of fear. Note: actual ability may determine the success of the attempt, but the *perception* of competence explains why they took courageous action. Here are just a few important ways we can strengthen confidence and reduce the force of fear.

Go Get the Tools. If you’re buckled at the gap because you don’t know how to do what is needed, this is where training, mentoring, interviewing, reading, observing and coaching can deliver tools to boost confidence. Talking to someone who has successfully done what you’re struggling with can offer mindsets, methodologies, tips, action steps or even affirmations to dial down fear. Find those who have succeeded bringing to life the identity you pursue, and they’ll probably have some ‘life hacks’ to help you through the internal and external pressures you both face. Imagine how useful it would be for a committed young athlete to hear what football legend Jerry Rice (known for his amazing work ethic) would tell himself when he didn’t feel like pushing himself through his painful workouts. Dr Carol Dweck’s (2006) work on Growth mindset

encourages us to shift our approach from “Can I do this?” to “How can I do this?” and hunt for the fear dampening tools you lack.

Anticipate and Pre-Empt. We can often anticipate the types of challenging courage moments we will face, and what form the fear will take. Deciding in advance how you should and will respond can short-circuit the internal wrestling match and rationalizations that cause us to buckle. For those of you striving to be leaders of character, the Gap will challenge you with adhering to standards, holding yourself/peers/others accountable, honesty, loyalty, selflessness and so on. If the identity you pursue is ‘elite athlete’, you’re going to battle (among other things) fatigue, pain, discipline and self-doubt. If ‘loving spouse’ is who you’re trying to be, you’ll battle in moments when you need to listen, be patient, admit mistakes, and acknowledge you chew too loudly when you eat chips.

Whatever your identity, you can pre-emptively decide how you would like to respond when faced with these tests. Think of it as an “If-Then” checklist aligned with your identity context. “If someone says something inappropriate in a staff meeting, then I’ll talk to them before the end of the day.” Done. “If I test positive for COVID, then I will notify everyone I’m supposed to, regardless of what they might think of me.” Done. “If I think I may have overcharged a client, then I’ll bring it to their attention, even if they agreed to the price.” Done. Even if it’s not that specific, deciding how to confront the likely rationalizations and excuses will steal their power.

Create & Collect Scripts. So often people don’t take action because they don’t know how to have the uncomfortable discussions effectively. In her remarkable *Giving Voice to Values* book and approach,

Dr. Mary Gentile demonstrates the power of crafting and rehearsing the language useful for navigating tough values-based conversation (2012). If someone has realistic language they can deliver (e.g., “I can actually say, ‘Hey boss, I’m concerned about something and could use your help..’ or ‘Jenna, I want to make sure you realize how this might look to others’”), they feel armed for success when it’s time for the actual dialog. The beauty of scripts is they can be shared and borrowed. Mentors, peers, authors, etc., can easily share their approach to similar pressures (e.g., “Here’s what I say to myself...” or “When firing someone, begin the conversation this way...”). Trusted peers and colleagues may even be able to offer recommendations from the perspective of the other party (“Here’s what I’d want to hear you say...”). Knowing and practicing what to say reduces fear and makes identity-aligned action more doable.

Build Courage Endurance. There’s no better competence builder than experience. We also build courage competence by seeing how we act in testable moments, and fortifying our weak spots while noting our strengths. But if we don’t reflect on the lessons learned after the episode, we miss opportunity to get stronger. For example, the first time I had to hold a student accountable for cheating on a test, I was shocked at how quickly I started trying to rationalize my way out of it. I had to reflect on how my loyalty to the person almost superceded my loyalty to my (and the institution’s) values, and created a plan to be stronger next time.

The pressures at the gap can be exhausting, especially if the identity test is significant. Legendary football coach Vince Lombardi said, “Fatigue makes cowards of us all,” so we must have stamina against fear. But you don’t get fit all at once. To build courageous endurance,

we need “reps” that add up over time. Even small moments of truth-telling, self-discipline, humility, resistance to peer pressure, and appropriate risk-taking can create competence to strengthen us in the future. But we know, repetition can create good and bad

With confidence, the battleground is the mind. Many of the ways to build confidence are about challenging the assumptions which cause us to buckle.

habits. Individuals and organizations through repeated rationalization, excuse-making, lack of accountability and conformity can experience moral drift (Labuz et al., 2020) and habits that pull them away from their identity. If we fail the little tests of courage, we’re building the habits to fail the big ones. One important criteria for successfully building moral fitness is the awareness that “this moment counts” toward bringing our identity to life. Strengthening competence has the undeniable effect of reducing fear and pulling the sides of the Gap closer together. Less fear...more courageous action. But there’s another way to do the same.

Catalyst 2: Confidence

“I felt like I could pull it off. Anyone in my seat with my background would have at least tried” (Stone, personal communication, 26 February 2016). That’s what (then) SSgt Spencer Stone said gave him the courage to charge a heavily armed terrorist on a French train in 2015. Spencer was a big guy, had military training, was seated on the aisle next to his two buddies and had a background in jujitsu. But one bullet from the terrorist could nullify all that. Twenty five passengers on the train didn’t move, but Spencer did. Why? He felt he could “pull it off.”

Obviously, confidence and competence are closely tethered. “Been there, done that” brings confidence that slides fear downward. But confidence also has some unique features that, if addressed, go beyond just knowing how to take action. Just as increasing competence helps strengthen, “I know how to do the right thing I want to do,” then elevated confidence promotes, “I can do it.” As any kid with a bike and a ramp can attest, when you think you can make the jump, you’re more likely to take flight (despite what your mom and the laws of physics might be screaming at you).

With confidence, the battleground is the mind. Many of the ways to build confidence are about challenging the assumptions which cause us to buckle. Imagine any moment where courage is needed, and you can probably hear the internal voice whispering these fear-inducing classics:

- This is unlike anything I’ve dealt with before.
- Someone like me can’t do this (I have to be something I’m not).
- I’m wrong for struggling with this the way I am.
- What is required is too hard for me to pull off.
- The stakes/consequences are too high.
- I’ve got to do this alone.

So often, these assumptions are inaccurate, but since perception is reality, we need to do things to challenge these assumptions. Here are some ways to strengthen confidence for courageous action.

Reframe the Moment. Maybe the fear isn’t as bad as we initially perceive. We often convince ourselves that the moment at hand is unique and dramatic, when in fact, it may be pretty common, especially for the context we’re in. If we normalize the fact that holding people accountable, bringing up ethical concerns, facing dishonesty temptations, and struggling with

fears are part of life and leadership, it may feel less daunting. Knowing people commonly struggle with these tensions, we can feel encouraged that there is a way through this. I spoke to one entrepreneur who said, “It was so reassuring when I found out how many other business owners struggled with letting go of a toxic high performer.” I’m not sure why it resonated so much with me, but an advisor in my PhD program reminded me, “When you think you can’t do this, remember – dumber people than you have figured it out.” I was encouraged to think (a) someone might be dumber than me, and (b) this was doable.

Connect the Dots. Confidence comes from realizing how the current situation compares to ones in which we’ve previously succeeded. We can remind ourselves and others about the strength we/they have when we point out, “If you made it through that, you can surely make it through this.” Fear in combat is not exactly like fear in high school football, but something may transfer. An abused spouse who thinks she can’t leave the relationship may find confidence in remembering she started a new life after college. Our experiences, abilities and strengths may translate well to this new test.

Build Momentum. The big courage test is not so frightening if it’s just a little bigger than the last successful one. When I worked with the cadets on the 10-meter platform, we did 15 jumps exactly the same way off the 1-meter, then 3-meter, then 5-meter platforms. They walked with the same cadence, stepped off with the same foot, entered the water in the same position, and even did it to the same music. By the time the 10-meter showed up, they had muscle memory, habits, and experience, so the extra 5-meters didn’t seem too frightening. Momentum builds confidence and self-efficacy, especially when we focus

on and acknowledge what went well. Take inventory of your victories, even small, quick ones, since they serve as evidence you can successfully battle fears.

See Yourself in Others. It’s easier to see the Gap is crossable if someone like you has done it. Just as exemplars and role models can offer tips and tools to elevate competence, seeing their example of success can build confidence as we confront similar fears. Jackie Robinson gave young black athletes an undeniable example of what was possible, in spite of bigotry and racism. As the only math-loving girl entering her first high school engineering class, my daughter’s fears about competing with the boys were squashed when the teacher – a woman engineer – entered the room. “She’s me, just older. I can do this.” The reason we are inspired by others is because they remind us of what is possible.

Notice Alternative Paths. The courageous act may feel overwhelming if you buy into the assumption there is only one, epic way to through this ordeal. Instead, it may be possible to break up what needs to be done into smaller, less daunting steps. Also, realizing there may be alternative paths can highlight paths with lower fear pressures. For example, if you feel the only way to address a toxic boss’s behavior toward a co-worker is to have a 1-on-1 confrontation, the fear can be paralyzing. But if you realize you can achieve the same outcome by conveying your concerns through a mutual mentor or an anonymous notification process, these paths may feel much more achievable. Challenge the assumption that you must face your courage moment in some epic fall-on-your-sword, Mel Gibson “Braveheart” fashion, if that’s not you. Not every machine gun nest needs to be charged. You may have air support. Identify the things you can and cannot control, and take confidence from controlling what is in your wheelhouse.

Find Wingmen. One of the most flawed assumptions in courage moments is the belief we have to do this alone. Typically, people around us also want to do the right thing, and may even share our values, commitments and identity goals. Having someone helping pull us across the Gap can be a huge confidence builder. Their encouraging presence, perspective, tough love (“come on, you’re better than that”), or even shared struggles can strengthen our resolve. There is a reason accountability partners, teammates and coaches are so effective. When the physical, social, emotional or professional pressures cause us to drift from who we’re trying to be, it’s empowering to have other people invested in helping us face the fears.

Have Faith. This may be religious faith, optimism, a just-world hypothesis, or some other belief that still uncertain factors will work out, but our willingness to leap when we still aren’t sure explains many courageous acts. There are always going to be things we can’t control, so having some semblance of faith that those will work out gives us confidence to take action.

Both competence and confidence help reduce the strength of fear, and move the sides of the Gap closer together. If the leap is not so far, we’re more likely to attempt and succeed in going from decision to action. The third courage catalyst increases our leaping ability, and gives us the force to push through even the most significant fears.

Catalyst 3: Commitment

The whistleblower speaks up, despite having little competence in doing so and not knowing if this will end well. Why? “Because it was the right thing to do, and I couldn’t look at myself in the mirror any more if I didn’t act.” An executive accepts financial catastrophe by pulling dangerous products from inventory. Why?

“Our values are clear – we put the safety and needs of our customers over financial gain” (see Johnson & Johnson’s “Credo”). The alcoholic finally puts down the bottle and joins a support group. Why? “Because I’m better than this, and I want my family back.” The warrior goes back into the firefight despite the danger and fatigue. Why? “Because we never leave a soldier behind.” The amputee does one more rep despite the crushing pain. Why? “Because I’m going to dance at my daughter’s wedding.” Think of any act of courage, and one thing shines through – they felt it was worth it.

The most powerful courage catalyst lies in how we connect this moment to what we believe matters. Even in moments of low competence and confidence, the fuel of commitment to our values, virtues and identity can be enough to drive action in the face of almost any fear. So how do we strengthen this critical resource?

Clarify. Unless there is clarity on what identity we pursue – what values and virtues we commit to – we are adrift, and can’t stand up to the pressures. It is important to make the implicit, explicit, and unpack in detail what we mean by “what we stand for.” Broadly stated core values are merely bumper stickers unless they’re translated into what those values look like in the real world. As leadership and coaching expert Kari Granger says, the question is not, “Are you a warrior?” but rather, “What are you a warrior for?” (need citation) This is not some academic exercise, but instead is an emotional, heart-on-the-line reflection and declaration about “Who I am/we are,” and “What do I/we want to fight to bring to life.” It’s got to be emotionally salient, because the testable moments will challenge us to prove we’re serious. One way to elevate this connection is to identify what’s at stake if you do not live out this identity. For example, would it bother you if you are seen as someone who is not honest? Not

professional? Not willing to defend someone else? If this is unacceptable, own it and fight for the identity.

That's why fear of regret can be a powerful motivator. It is fundamentally human for us to avoid being less than we could have been. Similarly, people are often strengthened in their resolve through the commitment to proving others wrong ("I'm not the loser they said!"). Think of how many people accomplished heroic things and endured amazing pressures, just to show the naysayers that they were not who they said.

Define the No-Go's. It is important for people and organizations to not only define in detail what they stand "for," but also what they stand "from". What values, habits, attitudes, language, and actions are considered inconsistent with who I am/we are trying to be? Part of this process should also include identifying the rationalizations and excuses inconsistent with the identity we pursue. For example, when we entertain logic like, "That's good enough," "They didn't say we couldn't do that," or "No one's ever going to find out," we accept the very mindsets that cause us to buckle at the Gap. Defining the non-negotiables creates red-line thresholds about what is out of integrity.

Get to the Core. Sometimes the moments for courageous action are filled with noise obscuring what's really at stake. When we remove those distractions, we more clearly see that the moment at hand is more strongly tied to our values than we realized. A student who is considering cheating on a seemingly inconsequential quiz may approach it differently if he sees this as a test of his character. I know as a parent, I've been distracted in moments where I modeled

lazy or low-character behavior when, if I saw the instance as a chance to be an example to my kids for virtues of work ethic or honesty, I would have acted differently. If we realize how others will be impacted by our action or inaction, it can further remind us of what is really at stake. This is one of the reasons the protesters for social justice resonate with the chant, "Say their name!" It is an attempt to remind all of us of the human consequences to the actions we take (or tolerate).

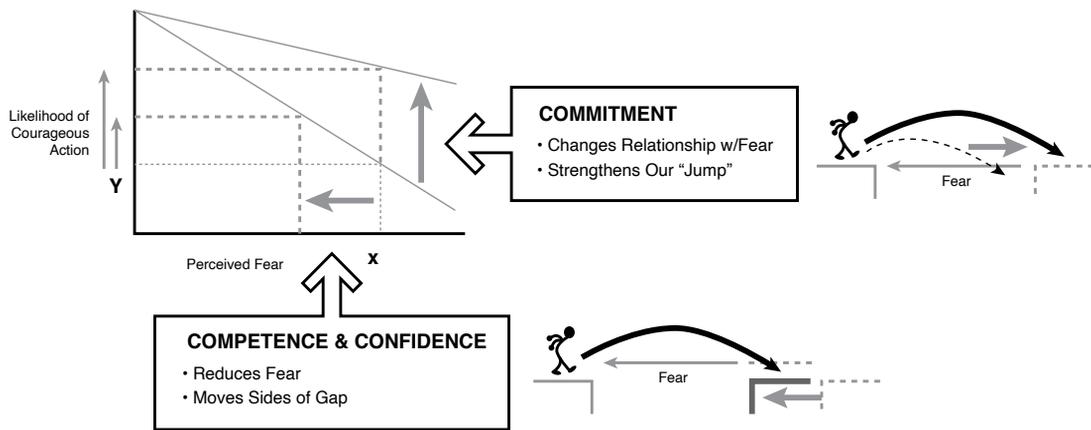
Sometimes the moments for courageous action are filled with noise obscuring what's really at stake. When we remove those distractions, we more clearly see that the moment at hand is more strongly tied to our values than we realized.

Define Your Tribe. Who we are is largely defined by who we stand with. Having wingmen who also commit to the values and identity you pursue can create a courage-strengthening cohort. Renown psychologist Angela Duckworth points out in her research on grit, if you want someone to be "gritty," put them on a gritty team (2016). People will modify their behaviors to maintain membership in a group they value, so we might as well immerse ourselves in formal and informal groups where members reinforce how important it is to cross the Gap.

Share Your Commitments. When we articulate to others what values and virtues we're trying to bring to life, three things happen. First, we create an accountability mechanism that encourages us to lean across the Gap. There's positive peer pressure to make

Figure 5

The Impact of Confidence, Competence and Commitment on Courageous Action



good on your word to avoid being a hypocrite. Second, we invite others to help us be who we’re trying to be. In turn, when we hear others’ commitments, we may see opportunities to help them confront and overcome pressures they’re facing. Finally, sharing commitments reminds us of what matters to us, and deepens our commitment even further in a self-reinforcing way.

But what gave you the courage to actually do the hard, right thing? These three catalysts are the real ingredients for courageous action (Figure 5). Increasing competence and confidence reduces the fear factor, and pulls the sides of the gaps closer together. Easier jump. Strengthening commitment changes the nature of the relationship between fear and action, giving us more strength to act courageously. Stronger jumping.

When put into practice, these three factors explain why someone took action, in spite of fear, to cross the Gap. If we want more courage, we’ll need to dial up one or more of them. If we see someone, including ourselves, not demonstrating courage, we can connect

the dots back to one or more of these three elements being weak.

Creating a Courageous Culture

Leaders absolutely have a role in increasing the potential for courage. As individuals on their own character journeys, they need to tend to their own competence, confidence and commitment. But because they are leaders, they also have the responsibility to develop the three catalysts in others, and foster a culture where doing the hard, right thing is ‘the way we roll.’ Leaders working on their own courage actually pays off in two additional ways. First, they are modeling the type of self-development others should follow. Secondly, their influence as leaders in a team or organization signals the importance of the values and virtues the organization professes. Courageous mindsets and actions are contagious, especially when the one infecting others is the leader. It’s no surprise that the 2020 Global Business Ethics survey finds that in organizations where leaders are perceived as committed to organizational values and ethics, followers feel compelled to align their

actions as well (2020, p. 8). But never forget, one of the strongest drivers of negative moral and ethical drift in organizations is also leadership. If the boss buckles to pressure when it's time to do the right thing, don't be surprised if the rest of the tribe follows suit. Here are some other specific actions leaders can take, beyond just their own role-modeling, to create a courage-strong culture.

Creating a Courageous Culture -- Competence

Show Them What Right Sounds Like. Leaders can make the implicit explicit by sharing out loud how they properly think through moral decisions, how they have tough conversations, and how they talk to themselves when they're buckling at the Gap. In addition, it can also be helpful for leaders to offer some guidance on how people can best raise concerns and offer criticisms in ways the leaders will most positively receive.

Define the Criteria. If risk-taking is an expectation in your organization, people may be afraid of the consequences, should the outcome not go well. Help add to their competence by sharing the criteria for a "good fail" – where you'd still give them a high-5 for even a faulty attempt.

Push People to the Gap. Since experience is the big teacher, empower and delegate decisions which cause employees to struggle with the pressures of fear. You can still support and coach them, but only through the struggle do people see how they really respond. Then, harvest the insights to add to their toolkit.

Creating a Courageous Culture -- Confidence

Lock in the Right Behaviors. Leaders can build courage confidence if the thinking and behavior associated with it is reinforced. Hunt for and celebrate when people

do the hard, right thing when no one is watching, when everyone is watching, or if just the customer is watching. Any opportunity to signal, 'That's what we're talking about!' is golden. Recognizing even the small victories signals this matters, and increases the likelihood the behavior endures.

Lock Out the Wrong Behaviors. While it should be safe to make mistakes and bring up bad news, when people willfully violate the organizational identity, the response should be clear and swift. What leaders tolerate will endure, and what they model will thrive – especially the bad examples. Hold accountable unhealthy Gap language, rationalizations, and excuses. When leaders demonstrate they are serious about confronting violations, those trying to do the right thing will feel confident they'll have support if they act courageously.

Name the Pressures. Organizations that talk openly and consistently about the pressures persistent in *what we do* not only normalizes them, but create a safe way for the community to create and share solutions. For example, if my team acknowledges temptations to cut corners exist, we can help pull each other across the Gap to uphold the standards.

Get Trust Right. There is a reason low trust organizations have higher levels of misconduct and lower performance (Mo & Shi, 2015). People are less willing to be vulnerable if they feel their risk will not be honored by teammates or leaders. Conversely, fear is lower in a culture where people know it is safe to lean on others, feel empowered by leaders, and can depend on others to do what they should. To strengthen trust, leaders and teammates must be seen as competent, caring, and of highly consistent character (Davis, Mayer & Schoorman, 2007).

Creating a Courageous Culture -- Commitment

Define the Stand. Organizational members must be clear on “who we are and what we stand for” beyond just the bumper sticker core values. Leaders should invite employees to discuss what the right and wrong behaviors looks and sounds like in their context. Part of that discussion should also involve who is impacted and what’s at stake when they don’t deliver on their identity promise.

Beat the Drum...Constantly. Discussions about identity, values, virtues, ethical standards, how to push through the pressures at the Gap—all of these should be constant and organically infused in the culture. The Special Operations Forces community identified as one of it’s “Ethical Truths” the fact that, in order to minimize moral drift, the culture must be “an environment where conversations about ethical decisions, good and bad, are a natural occurrence”(Labuz et al, 2020). Much like Harvard University is with intellectual curiosity, organizations should strive to make values and character courage “the air we breath.”

Make it Personal. The key to commitment is that it is personal. I can’t want it for you – you have to want it yourself. Perhaps the best way to strengthen commitment is to have people interpret how and why they care about the organization’s values. Go heavy with stories. Bring in customers to share why what you do matters. Have people share their commitments, and ensure leaders join in. When people truly commit to the culture, they will do the hard work to honor that commitment.

Revisit and Reflect. There will be hits and misses in living out the organizational values. Just as it is important at the individual level, organizations must

take the time to reflect on how they’re doing living their values. Discussions about why things went well and poorly can reinforce the importance of the topic, and signal it is safe and expected to keep improving in the ability to cross the Gap.

Conclusion

Medal of Honor recipients, astronauts, civil rights leaders, elite athletes, trauma survivors – you name it – every single one of them acted courageously. But none of them did what they did because they had courage. They had competence, confidence and commitment to battle through the fear and stand in integrity with the values we applaud. Because of that, we all have hope. When faced with the testable moments of life, we too can look across the Gap and either use or strengthen the actual things that allow us to be labeled as “courageous.” In the words of the renown ethics scholar, Arthur Schwartz, when our actions produce moral courage, “we become our best possible selves” (Schwartz, 2017, p. 88).

Today, more than ever, we need people to actually live the values they so casually espouse. When we see alignment between values and actions, we are inspired by the integrity and character it represents. Life will present each of us moments where we stand at the Gap and face the pressures that challenge us to be who we aspire to be. When those moments challenge us with fear, we need to tap into something in order to exhibit courageous behavior. And we can get better and better at it, building courageous muscle memory and habits of excellence within ourselves and those we lead. We don’t have courage, and that’s okay, as long as we display it when the moment comes. If the oyster guy can do it, so can we.

♦ ♦ ♦

References

- Basik, K.J., Schwartz, A.J., Hughes, R.C., Jackson, J., Warner, B., Shambach, S., & Witzel, J. (2012). Developing leaders of character at the United States Air Force Academy: A conceptual framework. Center for Character and Leadership Development.
- Duckworth, A. (2016). *Grit: The power of passion and perseverance*. Scribner/Simon & Schuster.
- Dweck, C. S. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. Random House.
- Ellis, L. (2014). *Leading with honor: Leadership lessons from the Hanoi Hilton*. Freedom Star Media.
- Ethics Resource Center (2015). 2015 report on business ethics in the U.S. workplace. https://lowellmilkeninstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Thomas-Jordan_Ethics-Resource-Center-National-Business-Ethics-of-the-U.S.-Workplace.pdf
- Ethics.org (2020). Global Business Ethics Survey report -- Pressure in the workplace: Possible risk factors and those at risk. <https://www.ethics.org/global-business-ethics-survey/>
- Gentile, M. C. (2012). *Giving voice to values*. Yale University Press.
- Ellis, Lee. 2012. *Leading with Honor*. Freedomstar Media
- Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Kidder, R. M. (2005). *Moral courage*. W. Morrow.
- Labuz, W., Thyne, K. A., Long, J.E., & Hughes, C.D. (2020). Ethics in special operations and the Joint Special Operations Forces Senior Enlisted Academy. *Small Wars Journal*. <https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/ethics-special-operations-and-joint-special-operations-forces-senior-enlisted-academy>
- Mayer R. C., Davis J. H., & Schoorman F. D. (2007). An integrative model of organizational trust: Past, present and future. *Academy of Management Review*, 32 (2), 344-354. <https://journals.aom.org/doi/abs/10.5465/AMR.2007.24348410>
- Mo, S., Shi, J. (2017). Linking Ethical Leadership to Employee Burnout, Workplace Deviance and Performance: Testing the Mediating Roles of Trust in Leader and Surface Acting. *J Bus Ethics* 144, 293–303.
- Rea P., Stoller J.K., & Kolp A. (2018). *Exception to the Rule: The surprising science of character-based culture, engagement, and performance*. McGraw-Hill Education.
- Schwartz, A. (2017). Courage. In Rob Koonce, Paula Robinson, and Bernd Vogel (Eds.), *Developing Leaders for Positive Organizing: A 21st Century Repertoire for Leading in Extraordinary Times* (pp. 83-94). Emerald Publishing.
- Stone, S. (Feb 2016). Interview during 2015 National Character and Leadership Symposium, US Air Force Academy, CO, (personal interview, 26 February, 2015).
- Treasurer, B. (2008). *Courage goes to work*. Berrett-Koehler.

FEATURE ARTICLES

Lessons for Leadership Coaching in a Leader Development Intensive Environment

Todd Woodruff, U.S. Military Academy

Russell Lemler¹, U.S. Military Academy

Ryan Brown, Rice University

ABSTRACT

Organizations are increasingly using leadership coaching as part of a broader approach to promote leader growth and improve individual and organizational performance. This broader approach can include challenging experiences, new knowledge, reflection, mentoring, and assessment, among other activities and support. There is compelling evidence that most of these components contribute to leader growth, but there is almost no research that explores how these activities interact and should be integrated for maximum effect. This study uses quantitative and qualitative research to assess the effects of leadership coaching within a systematic and intensive approach to leader development, where coaching participants also received science-based leadership instruction, mentoring, reflective exercises, assessment, and evaluated leadership experiences. We apply our insights on leadership coaching to the development of courage, grit, and warrior ethos within the military context. The findings suggest that leadership coaching was preferred to mentoring and structured reflection, creating significant benefits that were different from those created by other developmental activities. Leadership coaching also increased leader identity and intellectual humility relative to the control group, while also enhancing the value of experience and reflection in promoting leader growth. These findings suggest leadership coaching should play a key role within a rigorous, activity intensive leader development system.

¹ The opinions expressed in this article are the authors' own and do not reflect the view of the United States Military Academy, the United States Army, or the Department of Defense.

Organizations pursue numerous methods to develop leaders. The United States Military Academy at West Point uses a model that focuses on the use of challenging experiences, new knowledge (e.g., approaches to cultural change and motivational theories), reflection, mentoring, and assessment; integrated in a way intended to maximize leader growth. While there is compelling evidence that each of these components individually contributes to leader growth and that their integration can accelerate that growth (United States Military Academy, 2018), the current approach does not include leadership coaching, a well-established and effective leader development activity commonly used for business and education leader development.

This seems to be changing, and increasingly the U.S. Army is utilizing leadership coaching as a developmental tool across the institution. For example, the Army's new Talent Management program offers leadership coaching at its Battalion Command Assessment Program (BCAP) and Colonels Command Assessment Program (CCAP) for field grade leaders competing for selective leadership opportunities (Spain, 2020). The Army is also assessing the use of coaching within its education and professional development system, with the Army War College, the Army Command and General Staff College, the Maneuver Center Captains Career Course, and the United States Military Academy implementing coaching programs or pilot studies.

Despite its common use as a leader development tool in business and education, and its introduction within the Army, there is little discussion or study regarding how leadership coaching should be integrated within a leader growth model or comprehensive leader development system. Despite recent progress, there is limited research on leadership coaching in general (Grant, 2012) and an inadequate understanding of how leadership coaching interacts within a multi-dimensional leader development system (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018). This is also reflected in the absence of leadership coaching from the West Point Leader Development System and Leader Growth Model, despite the likelihood that military leader development outcomes such as physical courage, sacrificing, and warrior ethos, may benefit from its use.

This paper discusses research assessing the effects of using leadership coaching within a developmentally intensive environment at the United States Military Academy, where the coaching participants were also receiving leadership science instruction, mentoring, structured reflection, assessment, and evaluated leadership experiences. This is the first study that we know of to examine the value of leadership coaching in a leader development intensive

Colonel Todd Woodruff is the Director of the West Point Leadership Center and the Eisenhower and Benavidez Leader Development Programs (cooperative graduate and executive programs with Columbia University). He previously directed the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership's Leadership and Management majors, chaired the West Point Leader Development System Integration Committee, and served as a career infantry soldier. His previous assignments include four combat deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan and six tours with operational warfighting regiments. Colonel Woodruff completed a PhD in Business Administration from the Kenan-Flagler Business School at the University of North Carolina and holds a Master's degree in Strategic Studies from the Army War College, among other graduate degrees. He has numerous leadership publications in top journals and strives to integrate his diverse leadership experiences and multidisciplinary education in the classroom and the development of leaders at West Point and around the globe.

environment, while controlling for participants receiving multiple integrated developmental activities and resources. ²Given this unique context, we were able to use both quantitative and qualitative data to discern changes in leadership attributes and capabilities attributable to leadership coaching and identify where participants perceived value from this activity. Moreover, the rich qualitative data enabled us to develop insights into the differences between the effects of leadership curriculum, mentoring, reflection, leadership experience, and leadership coaching.

Our findings, discussed later in this paper, suggest that leadership coaching creates substantial value for the development of military leaders. Based on these findings, we argue that leadership coaching can play an important role in leader development and should be included in integrated leader development approaches and systems. We are similarly confident that integrated leadership coaching can be particularly effective in the development of warrior ethos, personal courage, and the related leader attributes needed to address some of the military's most challenging issues, including the willingness to act against violations of human dignity and respect and make sacrifices for the country and teammates.

2 Our special thanks to the Rice University, Doerr Institute for New Leaders for providing the coaching resources required for this study.

Russell Lemler is an assistant professor and the military leadership program director in the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership at West Point. He has held a variety of field artillery positions in the U.S. Army. He completed a B.S. in economics from West Point and a Ph.D. in management from Columbia Business School. His research interests include leader identity development and leadership education.

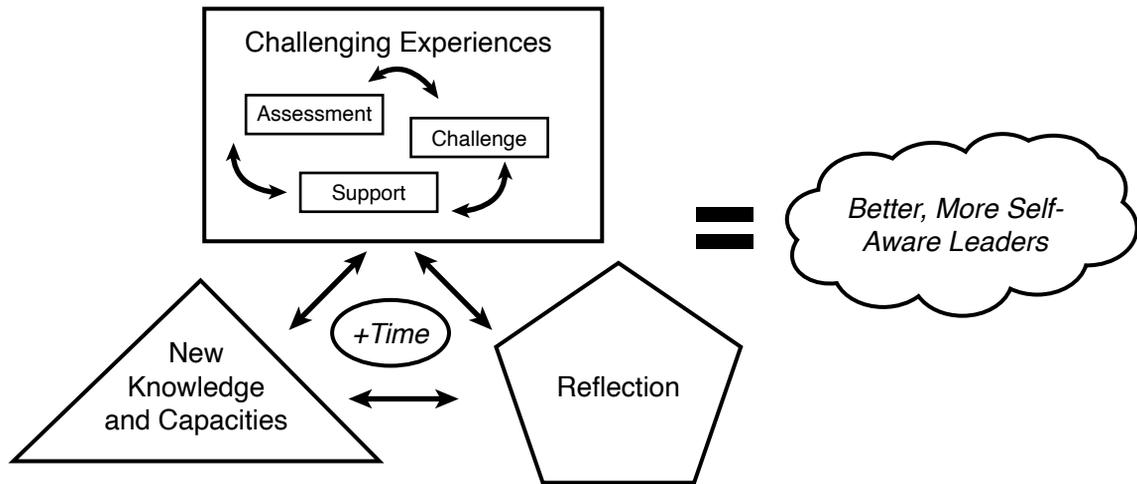
Ryan Brown is the managing director for measurement at the Doerr Institute for New Leaders, Rice University, where he is responsible for assessing the impact of the Institute's leader development initiatives for students. Prior to this role, he was the L. J. Semrod Presidential Professor of Psychology at the University of Oklahoma, where he taught and conducted research on a wide range of topics and helped establish the Institute for the Study of Human Flourishing. Ryan received his BA in psychology from Rice University and his MA and PhD in social psychology from the University of Texas at Austin. He has published over 50 peer reviewed articles and chapters and has authored or co-authored two books—most recently (with T. Kolditz and L. Gill), *Leadership Reckoning: Can Higher Education Develop the Leaders We Need?*

The Role of Leadership Coaching in a Leader Development Intensive Environment

The West Point Leader Development System (WPLDS) is the 47-month integrated approach of individual leader development and leadership development experiences within a culture of character growth. WPLDS produces leaders of character that meet specific developmental outcomes and is based on interrelated theories of adult development, adult learning, leader/leadership development, and relational developmental systems theory (RDST). WPLDS is enacted through core leader development experiences that are integrated, sequential, progressively complex, and provide cadets a common leader development foundation, while also providing individualization (United States Military Academy, 2018). Its key elements include:

- leadership development through progressive leadership roles and enrichment,
- individual development in academic, military, physical, and character competencies,
- an environment of character growth - honor code, values system, and character program,
- a robust leader-developer network with mentors, role models, assessment, and feedback, and
- individualized challenges and/or additional support as needed by the cadet.

Figure 1

Leader Growth Model

The Leader Growth Model (LGM) (see Figure 1) operates within the WPLDS and is used to foster leader and character growth through a cycle of challenging experiences, appropriate feedback and support, exposure to new knowledge, and reflection across these elements (United States Military Academy, 2018). Noticeably absent from this model is mentorship and leadership coaching. While not depicted in the model, mentorship is functionally part of the Leader Growth Model and explicitly included within the leader development system. Leadership coaching, on the other hand, is not routinely used or integrated within the model or system. We argue that its inclusion would create a more effective model and improved leader development outcomes.

Accordingly, this article draws upon new research to understand the role and effect of coaching within an intensive leader development environment; where individuals are receiving all elements of the leader growth model, to include mentorship. We argue that leadership coaching will complement reflection and mentorship and that these three elements will work together in unique ways to accelerate growth by promoting self-awareness, helping individuals

make sense of experiences and new knowledge, and facilitating goal oriented developmental plans. This article will also develop an understanding of leadership coaching's role relative to mentoring, reflection, and the LGM, and discuss its application in developing warrior ethos.

Leadership Coaching Research. Leadership coaching is a targeted, purposeful intervention that helps leaders develop and maintain positive cognitive, emotional, and behavioral change in their personal development and leadership behavior (Grant, 2012; Douglas & McCauley, 1999) and, involves the partnership of the coach and the coachee (i.e., the developing leader; Ennis, Goodman, Otto, & Stern, 2008). Coaching is an open-ended process that analyses the individual's present situation, develops performance goals, applies resources, and then implements a developmental plan (King & Eaton, 1999). A typical coaching session includes dedicated time for reflection, planning, and goal setting (Wise & Hammack, 2011), while the broader coaching experience addresses skill development, performance improvement, and development for future assignments (Ennis et al., 2008). For new or developing leaders (e.g., cadets), coaching has a greater focus on gaining

self-understanding, changing or enacting specific leader behaviors, addressing challenges in the current role, and creating and enacting a developmental plan to address the aforementioned (Marson, 2019). In the context of West Point, this means a cadet-coach partnership that uses extensive feedback, assessment, and self-reflection to understand strengths, weaknesses, and developmental needs, addresses current leadership challenges, creates developmental goals, integrates the development plan using the LGM, and leverages the resources available within the leader development system (WPLDS).

Leadership coaching has become a well-established approach used to enhance leader performance and organizational productivity (Boyatzis, Smith, & Blaize, 2006; Coutu & Kauffman, 2009; Wise & Jacobo, 2010). Its other positive effects include improved well-being, coping, work attitudes, talent retention, leader efficacy, trust in subordinates, job satisfaction for the participant, subordinate empowerment, and attainment of organizational objectives (Jones, Woods, & Guillaume, 2016; Ladegard & Gjerde, 2014; Wise, 2010). While the positive effects of leadership coaching are promising, we currently lack knowledge of its effect within a robust and intensive leader development environment that includes multiple leader development activities. There is also a dearth of research on how leadership coaching creates these benefits (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018; Grant, 2012). Despite these limitations, we know leadership coaching is context sensitive (Martineau & Patterson, 2010) and interacts within the multi-dimensional systems of the organization (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018). Additionally, the evidence indicates that leadership coaching is more effective when the broader leadership development program is tied to important and challenging organizational issues, and has integration between performance assessment, feedback, and coaching (Fulmer, Gibbs, & Goldsmith, 2000). This suggests that leadership coaching

interacts with other leader development activities and could have significant positive effects within a leader growth model.

Leadership Coaching versus Mentoring and Reflection. Leadership coaching is most closely aligned with mentoring and reflection within the West Point LGM. In fact, leadership coaching and mentoring are often incorrectly used interchangeably. One prominent distinction is the role of experience and expertise and how they are shared or developed, as illustrated by the quote, “*A coach has some great questions for your answers; a mentor has some great answers for your questions, [emphasis added]*” (Amsterdam, 2019). Mentoring is typically defined as a relationship where an experienced leader engages in the professional development of a less experienced colleague (Dziczkowski, 2013). A coach guides individuals to develop competence, achieve goals, and solve challenges, whereas a mentor typically shares knowledge, experience, and recommendations with the mentored individual. The benefits of mentoring are extensive, including increased self-esteem, insights, professional skills, and reduced leader stress (Bush & Coleman, 1995; Dziczkowski, 2013; Hobson & Sharp, 2005; Holloway, 2001; Hopkins-Thompson, 2000). Studies indicate that over 95% of participants (mentors and mentees) felt that they benefited from the mentoring relationship (Holloway, 2001). While the benefits of mentoring are significant, they can be constrained by available time, mentor-mentee incompatibility, inadequate mentor training, and insufficient commitment to obtain desired results (Dziczkowski, 2013; United States Army, 2019).

Reflection is an essential part of transformative learning and personal development that involves the purposeful “mental processing of information, ideas, beliefs, and experiences” intended to enable self-learning, sense-making, and increased understanding (Johnson, 2020). It helps individuals “see” themselves

and identify developmental gaps (Branson, 2007), make sense of past experiences, new knowledge, and feedback, (DeRue, Nahrgang, Hollenbeck, & Workman, 2012; Marshall, 2019), facilitate goal setting and action plans, and promote ownership of personal development. Both coaching and reflection produce increased self-awareness, knowledge of personal strengths and limitations, and increased understanding of experiences (Johnson, 2020; Jones, Woods, and Guillaume, 2016), but where coaching requires a partnership and involves goal setting and action plans (Grant and Stober, 2006), reflection can be a solitary activity involving self-learning and may not include goal setting or developmental planning.

Each of these three approaches (leadership coaching, mentorship, and reflection) enable individuals to accelerate leader growth and promote the achievement of developmental outcomes. There is also reason to expect that when combined they will create greater growth. Lawrence, Dunn and Weisfeld-Spolter (2018) found that an integrative approach to leader development that included intentional development, leadership assessment, coach-supported reflection, and the creation and pursuit of goal-directed developmental opportunities (a common coaching activity), resulted in greater achievement of leadership potential in young adults.

Mentoring and leadership coaching take different approaches. Their combination likely provides complementary value by bringing together the deep professional experience and expertise of a mentor with coaching's more collaborative and egalitarian approach to helping the individual develop insights from their own experiences and self-assessment, leading to collaborative goal setting (Grant and Stober, 2006). One study that looked at the use of coaching and mentoring within organizations found that coaching and mentoring both have positive effects on employee performance (Neupane, 2015), but the study

did not examine the effects of individuals receiving both interventions. This reflects the broader issue that coaching and mentoring research has not examined the simultaneous or integrated use of both methods within individuals. One of the few studies that integrates mentoring and coaching found they interact to create positive effects on organizational commitment (Woo, 2017), providing some evidence of a complementary and interactive relationship.

The relationship between reflection and leadership coaching is arguably more closely linked and integral, so much so that reflection is viewed as an established and necessary part of coaching (Cushion, 2018). In fact, most coaching sessions include time for reflection (Wise & Hammack, 2011) and coach-supported reflection tends to produce improved leader development outcomes (Lawrence, Dunn, & Weisfeld-Spolter, 2018). In general, coaching assists and focuses reflection by asking probing questions that push the individual to deeper reflection, leading to greater insight and understanding (Wise, 2010), and enabling these insights to be developed into action plans to address leadership challenges and produce leader growth.

Despite these findings, our understanding of how to best integrate leadership coaching, mentoring, and reflection is limited. Our knowledge of how to optimally incorporate leadership coaching within the LGM is even less clear, and the ideal application of leadership coaching to develop warrior ethos among emerging military leaders (the focus of this journal edition) is almost completely lacking. This article seeks to shed light on these areas with a new study.

Leadership Coaching Study

Methods and Sample. This study assessed the impact of leadership coaching within a leader development system and an intensive leader development environment, in

which the participants were concurrently receiving leadership knowledge, mentoring, and reflective exercises as part of the behavioral and social science based *Military Leadership* course. Cadets enrolled in this semester-long leadership course received mentorship in understanding, explaining, predicting, and influencing human behavior in organizations and met for at least three sessions to discuss and receive feedback on three written reflective assignments. These assignments were the Journey Line (reflection on life experiences, core values, and purpose in life), the Leader Self-Assessment (integrated peer and leader feedback and self-assessment), and the Leader Philosophy Paper (reflection on the leader they aspire to be and their leadership tenets). Cadets were tested on their ability to apply leadership theories and concepts to in-depth case studies. Participants also engaged in leadership roles within the current academic year, held a team leader position in the previous year, and will have a leadership position the following year.

Participating cadets were 20-24 years of age, primarily in their third year at West Point, and were representative of the diversity present at the Academy in terms of race, gender, home state, and academic major. The study used 100 cadets, from over 500 cadets enrolled in the course, who volunteered to receive free leadership coaching sessions during the semester. Cadet volunteers were then randomly assigned into a coaching group and a control group (50 each). This allowed us to control for motivation and better isolate the effects of leadership coaching. Prior to receiving their assignment into the coached and control groups, cadets completed a survey to measure *Authentic Leader Identity, Sense of Purpose/Meaning, Self-Regulation, Intellectual Humility, and Self-Concept Clarity*. Those selected to receive leadership coaching also completed the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i 2.0) to assess constructs related to emotional intelligence. Five professional certified coaches provided EQ-i feedback and five coaching sessions throughout the semester in a live video format.

We identified change in psychological and character assessments from Time-1 at the beginning of the semester (before any coaching sessions) to Time-2 at the end of the semester (after all coaching sessions were complete). We measured these changes through pre- and post-coaching surveys assessing leadership and character factors. The post-coaching survey also assessed cadets' perceptions of the value and satisfaction associated with the coaching program. At the end of the semester, and after all coaching sessions were complete, the two groups received the same survey plus five new items related to their coaching experience. The coaches received questions via a Qualtrics survey where they provided open-ended responses regarding the areas the cadets wanted to improve and general feedback on the cadets as coachees. These 46 responses included 105 areas of desired improvement or developmental focus and were coded into categories based on areas assessed within the EQ-i. Lastly, the coached group was asked to participate in a focus group to gain an understanding of their coaching experience and their perception of its value on their own leader growth. 40 of the 50 cadets receiving leadership coaching participated in these interviews in groups with five or fewer cadets.³

Results. The study produced rich and substantive insights from both the quantitative and qualitative data, demonstrating that leadership coaching created unique and additive value within an intensive leader development environment that included challenging leadership experiences, new knowledge, reflection, mentoring, and assessment. Cadets reported receiving unique value from coaching, mentorship, and reflection, such that each provided different benefits. Generally, cadets indicated that coaching provided support with goal-setting, developmental planning, and iterative leadership interventions to address recent/current leadership challenges, improve leadership, and

3 Additional information on methods, analysis, and findings are available from the corresponding author at todd.woodruff@westpoint.edu

develop leadership attributes as selected by the cadet or based on EQ-i results.

Specifically, cadets receiving coaching (plus mentoring, reflection, assessment, and the new knowledge of leadership science) increased their levels of Authentic Leader Identity and Intellectual Humility relative to the control group that received the same leader development activities and support but without leadership coaching. In the case of Leader Identity, significant change occurred in both groups, but was higher among the coached group. Intellectual Humility, on the other hand, only changed (increasing) among the coached group.

There was no change among either the coached or control group for Sense of Purpose/Meaning, Self-Regulation, and Self-Concept Clarity. While the lack of change in these three constructs is unusual for college students (e.g., Rice University students receiving leadership coaching experience significant improvement in all five areas), it is less surprising among cadets, who have been engaged in over 24-months of leader and leadership development that included significant reflection and study of their purpose, self-concept, and self-regulation. In fact, Time-1 (pre-test) West Point cadets were very similar to Time- 2 (post-test) Rice University students, suggesting that these factors were already salient and developed among the cadets. Given the value expressed by cadets in survey and focus group comments, it is also likely that the value of coaching was not adequately captured by Likert scale measures of factor levels.

Moreover, the data revealed a strong majority of cadets that received coaching had a high degree of satisfaction and perceived the coaching experience as valuable to their leadership development, with 89% of cadets

receiving coaching saying they would recommend it to others and over 85% saying the experience was ‘highly valuable’ or ‘valuable’ and they would do it again. This finding is not unique to cadets at West Point, as similar levels of satisfaction were reported among field grade officers receiving coaching as part of the previously cited BCAP. Less than 10% of cadets did not find coaching valuable, citing that coaches did not understand the specific challenges of being a cadet, or that they expected their coaching experience to more closely resemble professional mentorship.

The mentoring-leadership coaching distinction is important. Most coached cadets preferred leadership coaching to the mentorship experience or written self-reflection, with a 3 to 1 preference for leadership coaching over mentoring and a 6 to 1 preference for coaching over written reflection. The minority that preferred military mentors felt strongly about this

...the data revealed a strong majority of cadets that received coaching had a high degree of satisfaction and perceived the coaching experience as valuable to their leadership development, with 89% of cadets receiving coaching saying they would recommend it to others and over 85% saying the experience was ‘highly valuable’ or ‘valuable’ and they would do it again.

preference, citing a desire for more profession-based discussion and in-person interaction provided by the military mentoring experience. The preference for leadership coaching does not mean there was less value in mentoring. In fact, the common preference for a coach that understands the life of cadets and the challenges of leading in the military suggests there is still significant value in military mentoring and

the potential for combining coaching insights with military leadership expertise and experience available from mentors.

The value of reflection and coach facilitated reflection is well established (Wise, 2010). Cadets in this study recognized the value of coaching focused on their self-selected challenges/leadership attributes and the importance of structured reflection tied to course outcomes. Unsurprisingly, they preferred coaching and coach facilitated reflection focused on self-selected areas that were less constrained by course objectives and not subject to evaluation.

Cadets cited increased self-awareness as a valuable benefit of leadership coaching. The EQ-i survey was cited by most cadets as a valuable aspect of the coaching experience and an assessment that increased their self-awareness and ability to identify areas for growth. The EQ-i results were key to enabling a cadet and coach to

Lastly, cadets were in general agreement that the optimal time for receiving leadership coaching was while in a leadership position, but after their initial leadership experience, and with at least one future leadership role remaining prior to graduation.

jointly identify and focus on areas for improvement, shape coaching discussions, and target cadet goal-setting. There was overwhelming support among cadets for using this instrument in their future development and for other cadets at the Academy. Cadets also expressed that it would be easy to integrate the EQ-i with other reflective exercises in the course and the broader developmental system (WPLDS).

Leadership coaching proved particularly important to cadets because of its ability to focus on areas where the coach and cadet perceived the greatest need, enabling the concentration of effort on character issues and current leadership challenges through iterative engagements during the semester. Specifically, cadets indicated that coaching provided valuable assistance with ongoing leadership challenges, and they appreciated the ability to work on character and leadership strengths and weaknesses identified by self-assessments and the EQ-i. This process included working with the coach to develop specific leader actions to try prior to the next session, discussing and assessing these actions during the subsequent coaching session, and adjusting the plan and subsequent actions based on those insights. Related to this, cadets frequently expressed the value of having the coach challenge their thinking, push their consideration of options and actions outside of their comfort zone, and provide specific recommendations to try before the next meeting. Importantly, cadets indicated the leadership coach enabled them to work on aspects of their character and leadership they would not have otherwise addressed or would have tackled independently.

Cadets frequently cited the importance of working with a coach outside of West Point to provide new perspectives and discuss character and leadership issues safely and without concerns for career or confidentiality. The importance of this should not be discounted. Cadets appreciated the difference in perspective that leadership coaches provided, with one cadet statement reflecting a common sentiment, “Here you’re just surrounded by cadets and officers. It’s nice to have it from the other side looking in.” Additionally, unlike a mentor from within the cadet’s organization or a reflective writing that is reviewed by an instructor, the leadership coach provided someone they trusted based on their capabilities and the psychological safety of not being evaluated or having to interact outside

of the coaching experience. Based on cadet feedback, having a leadership coach away from West Point and not associated with their leaders, instructors, or social network freed some cadets to share personal struggles and goals they would not have disclosed to a mentor or through graded reflections. For a significant proportion of cadets, they needed to feel free from grade-based evaluation and the likelihood of running into their coach to feel safe discussing their weaknesses, challenges, and failures.

When exploring the use of in-person coaching versus synchronous, virtual coaching sessions, most cadets favored the synchronous, virtual coaching modality, but also preferred coaches familiar with issues that cadets face at the academy and within the military, which was also one of the reasons some cadets preferred working with their mentor over their coach. Cadets also indicated that volunteering for coaching was an important aspect of the experience. Cadets expressed consensus that making coaching a required element of the course or a graduation requirement would have reduced their motivation and engagement with the activity.

Lastly, cadets were in general agreement that the optimal time for receiving leadership coaching was while in a leadership position, but after their initial leadership experience, and with at least one future leadership role remaining prior to graduation. Additionally, five sessions spaced across the semester (which is often the duration of a leadership position) was viewed as sufficient for development and avoided diminishing returns. For most cadets this means receiving leadership coaching during their third year leadership position, after serving as a team leader the prior year, and with the expectation of having a subsequent leadership experience in their fourth and final year before graduation. This ensures the coached cadet:

- has the leadership experience, assessments, and reflections necessary to see themselves and know their strengths and weaknesses,
- has the opportunity to work on previously identified leadership issues and ongoing challenges in their current leadership role, and
- has the opportunity to develop goals and a developmental plan to be implemented during their next leadership role in their final year as a cadet.

Feedback from the coaches also proved insightful. Coaches were surveyed about where their cadet wanted to focus their development. The 46 cadet responses (as reported by the coaches) included 105 areas, typically 1 to 3 focus areas per cadet. A number of these focus areas occurred with greater frequency. Over 40% of cadets asked to work on confidence or assertiveness, nearly 20% on empathy, 15% on emotional expression, over 10% on decision-making, and over 10% on stress tolerance and resiliency within a leadership role. Coaches were almost universally “very satisfied” with cadet goal progress, with some saying they had observed transformational change.

Leadership Coaching Findings Summary

- There was unique value in coaching, mentorship, and reflection, such that each provided a different type of developmental engagement or insights.
- Leadership coaching improved leader identity and humility beyond any increase created by other leader development activities.
- 85% of cadets receiving coaching found it to be valuable and would do it again.
- Self-awareness and assistance with ongoing leadership challenges were cited as the most valuable benefits.
- Cadets preferred coaching to mentoring 3 to 1 and coaching over structured written reflection 6 to 1.
- Those who preferred mentoring said their coaching was too meditative or the coach did not appreciate the challenges of being a cadet.

- Most cadets preferred focusing their coaching sessions on their goals and challenges rather than course-framed reflection topics.
- Cadets preferred to work on specific recommendations they could implement and then discuss the next coaching session versus general reflections or generalized feedback.
- Cadets liked coaches that challenged their thinking and pushed their comfort zone.
- Cadets preferred coaches outside the Army for gaining new perspectives on leadership.
- The psychological safety provided by an external coach enabled cadets to share their struggles with character and leadership without concerns for career or confidentiality.
- Cadets also wanted coaches that had some knowledge of the lives of cadets/soldiers.
- The EQI survey was incredibly valuable in focusing coaching engagements and there was overwhelming support for using this instrument.
- Timing and duration: five sessions spaced across a semester, while in a leadership role.
- Volunteering proved to be very important; cadets agreed they would have been less engaged and received less value if they had not volunteered.
- Cadets most frequently asked to work on developing confidence/assertiveness, empathy, emotional expression, decision-making skill, and stress tolerance and resiliency.

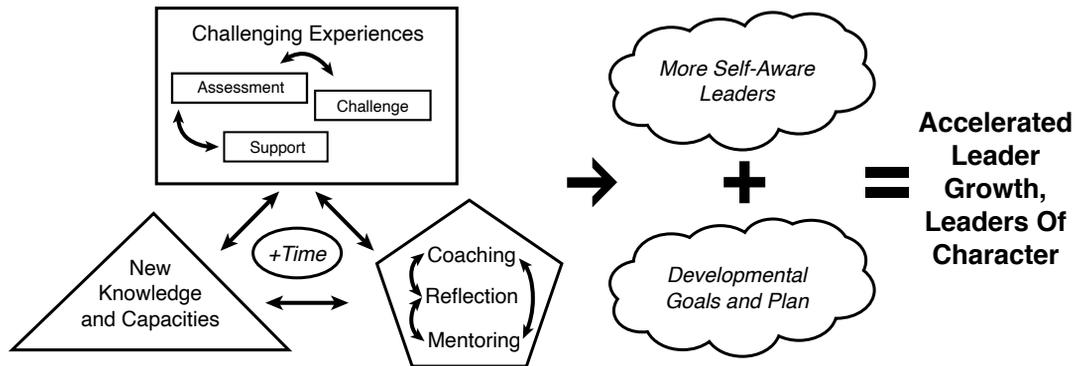
Discussion, Implications, and Recommendations

This study sought to determine the effects of leadership coaching within an intensive leader development environment having multiple developmental activities and substantial support within a leader development system. It also explored the role of leadership coaching in the development of warrior ethos. While there is significant evidence for the individual value of leadership coaching, mentoring, reflection, feedback, assessment, and new leadership experiences, the degree and nature of their value within a system including all these activities was largely unknown. Moreover, we

lacked clarity on how leadership coaching should be integrated into this leader development model (LGM) and system (WPLDS) to maximize its effect on leader growth, leadership performance, and warrior ethos.

The evidence from this study and extant research clearly demonstrates that leadership coaching has a place in leader development, creates value in an integrated leader development approach (LGM) and broader leader development system (WPLDS), and develops warrior ethos and its component factors, an area discussed below. From the cadet perspective, there was clear and substantial value from leadership coaching not produced by other actions, and there is reason to expect that coaching, mentoring, and reflection each have the potential of interacting to make the other two activities more impactful. While recognizing the substantial value of leadership coaching, its impact was limited by the lack of integration with other contemporaneous leader development activities. For example, in the study, coaching and written reflection were largely independent, with neither activity explicitly making use of the other. It is likely they could create greater value through their integration. To maximize the value of leadership coaching, its subsequent use should move beyond its inclusion within the repertoire of leader development activities. This should include 1) incorporating coaching to deliberately complement the mentoring benefits from military domain specific knowledge and experience and 2) developing a close integration of coaching and reflection activities to enhance the impact of both. While the latter is common practice within coaching programs, coaching at the military academies would ideally be integrated with the many existing reflection activities (there are more than 40 reflective activities within the 47-month WPLDS experience) and numerous sources of assessments and feedback (e.g., semester counseling with tactical officers, academic counseling from military and civilian faculty, military grades from a cadet chain of command, career compatibility assessments, etc.).

Figure 2

Revised Leader Growth Model

For example, the military leadership course deliberately integrated mentoring and structured reflection. Mentoring was focused on generating self-awareness and leadership knowledge through engagement with an experienced leader at West Point who provided feedback on the cadet's personal journey line, their leader self-assessment, and their leadership beliefs and approach expressed through a leader philosophy paper. Each of these three assignments provided structured reflection to focus the mentoring interaction on specific leader development outcomes, and the mentor interaction then provided feedback for additional reflection. This integration was not done for leadership coaching but should be in the future.

Coaching, when deliberately integrated with mentoring and reflection, should also make use of the copious, but underutilized, assessments and feedback available to every cadet; their new knowledge gained from multiple sources, and leadership experiences. The integration of leadership experience is an essential element of leader development and is integral to the leadership coaching process and outcomes. In one study, individuals rated new leadership experience and responsibilities as the most critical aspect of improving leadership capabilities, while coaching and mentoring without integrated experiences received relatively lower evaluations (Boak & Crabbe, 2019). With these

changes, the LGM approach will help developing leaders 1) process and learn from their past and current experiences, 2) understand and make use of new knowledge, 3) see themselves and their leadership strengths and weaknesses, and 4) facilitate leader development goals and plans.

Given the insights derived from this study, we propose a Revised Leader Growth Model (Figure 2) that integrates mentorship, coaching, and reflections, adds developmental goals and planning, and positions increased self-awareness as both an outcome and a necessary component for achieving optimal leader growth and improved developmental outcomes.

Who Does the Coaching and When? Beyond its integration with mentoring, reflection, assessment, and experiences, leadership coaching also requires systematic integration within the broader leader development system (WPLDS) in terms of its timing, duration, audience, and modality. The costs of coaching are significant, financially and in time requirements, so coaching needs to be used judiciously at the right time and place, with the right individuals, and within a system to best leverage leadership experiences and new knowledge from assessment, feedback, and leadership curriculum to achieve the desired developmental outcomes.

In terms of timing and duration, we believe it is best to 1) have a leadership role before coaching to provide the self-knowledge and experience needed to inform and focus limited coaching resources, 2) be in a current leadership role and work iteratively on

Leadership coaching is well suited to developing warrior ethos and is effective in helping individuals reinforce or change self-perceptions by strengthening their values and beliefs and helping them change their behavior to align with the organization's values and belief system.

ongoing leadership challenges and desired leadership capabilities, and 3) have a subsequent leadership role to focus and motivate stretch goals and developmental planning that will enable greater individual ownership and follow-through after coaching ends. We agree with the cadets that five coaching sessions spread across a semester while the cadet is in a leadership role is sufficient to achieve most of the coaching benefits and avoid diminishing returns and unsustainable demands on cadet time and Academy resources.

Ideally, one semester of coaching would be available to every cadet that volunteers for it. If leadership coaching is not feasible for all developing leaders who request it, cadets engaged in key leadership roles (e.g., team captains, cadet unit commanders, scholarship program participants) and those experiencing crucible failures and ongoing struggles should receive coaching. These cadets would gain the most from the coaching experience and coaching these individuals would create the greatest value for the institution.

Academies should include leadership coaching using certified external coaches in synchronous virtual sessions. First, cadets have a strong preference

for coaches from outside the Academy based on their ability to provide new perspectives and create the psychological safety needed to share weaknesses and failures. The online virtual coaching sessions also enabled more flexible scheduling and required less time

from their already stretched schedules. Second, coaching research reinforces the cadets' perspective and preferences, showing that outside coaches provide accountability, honest discussion, and trust based on the confidential nature of their relationship. The research on coaching format shows that all coaching modalities (e.g., face-to-face, blended face-to-face, and virtual coaching) had positive effects on organizational outcomes and there was no difference in effect on leader

development between the coaching formats (Jones, Woods, & Guillaume, 2016). Moreover, the online virtual sessions will enable the Academies/organization to access certified coaching talent from across the nation, potentially lowering costs and enabling the use of geographically dispersed coaches with knowledge of the cadet experience and military leadership challenges.

Leadership Coaching and the Warrior Ethos. Warrior ethos includes the *Moral Courage* to take morally-ethically appropriate actions in the face of adversity and negative personal consequences; the *Physical Courage* to put the mission and others' welfare before one's self, regardless of personal physical risk or hardship; and the *Grit* to persevere despite failures and physical and mental hardships to achieve long-term goals (United States Air Force Academy, 2020).

Leadership coaching is well suited to developing warrior ethos and is effective in helping individuals reinforce or change self-perceptions by strengthening their values and beliefs and helping them change their behavior to align with the organization's values and belief system. Developing moral and physical courage through coaching requires "deep insight into how

people self-motivate to do what is moral and difficult, and how they self-justify and obfuscate when they lack courage,” and requires coaches to serve as an external conscience and sounding board to facilitate high quality reflection (McLaughlin & Cox, 2015). Moral development and courage can be formed through the coaching process, with coaches guiding individuals to find courageous role models, helping them plan and practice morally and physically courageous behavior within the organizational context, and assisting them in developing necessary leadership attributes (McLaughlin & Cox, 2015). As an example, coaches will ask the cadet to think about other courageous leaders and reflect on their stories or narratives. Coaches then ask the individual to consider what they want their own story to be and help develop a plan to enact a pattern of behaviors that create the desired narrative of how to live and lead (Barner & Higgins, 2005). Within our own study, we observed examples of cadets developing attributes and practicing behaviors associated with the warrior ethos. When asked by coaches what attributes they wanted to work on, most cadets selected attributes associated with the warrior ethos, with confidence and assertiveness being the most frequently selected focal attributes (40% of all cadets) and the most relevant to moral and physical courage. Cadets also chose to focus on empathy, self-awareness, emotional expression, and interpersonal skills. As aspects of emotional intelligence, these attributes are essential to enacting moral and physical courage in ways that are authentic and engender trust and positive influence as a leader, and along with humility, are thought to contribute to moral development and courage (McLaughlin & Cox, 2015). Coaches and cadets then focused their coaching discussions, reflection, practiced behaviors, and action plans to achieve growth in these warrior attributes.

Identifying what coaching interventions lead to actual morally and physically courageous behaviors can be challenging. In a rare study that looked at the enactment of moral courage (in this case, intervening when observing someone stealing), the enacted

behavior was predicted by the individual’s readiness to act, sensitivity to perceived injustice, an increased solidarity toward the disadvantaged group/individual, and a spontaneous perception of being involved in a norm violation (e.g., not acting makes me feel like part of the problem) (Baumert, Halmburger, & Schmitt, 2013). While this is a complex set of antecedents, leadership coaching uses a combination of behavioral, cognitive, and emotional approaches that align closely to each of these areas (Douglas & McCauley, 1999).

Most researchers believe grit can be developed (Duckworth, Weir, Tsukayama, & Kwok, 2012) and leadership coaching is well suited to the task. For example, leadership coaches help individuals identify and live their purpose, and individuals who had a deeper purpose in their life and strong commitment to that purpose tended to develop greater grit (Hill, Burrow, & Bronk, 2016). Armstrong, Van der Linger, Lourens, and Chen (2018) developed an approach for enhancing grit that aligns very closely with the leadership coaching approach, and includes having self-awareness of strengths and weaknesses, setting high standards, establishing future-oriented goals, aligning personal and team goals, and developing the capacities to breakdown a complex challenge.

Conclusion

The value of this study rests in its direct application of skilled leadership coaching during an intensive leader development experience within a broader program. The insights of this study should prove valuable to businesses, governmental organizations, and universities engaged in leader development for young adults. While few of these organizations can engage their young leaders in this frequency or intensity of developmental activities and support, most will still use multiple activities (e.g., coaching, assessment, and leadership experiences) and therefore benefit from insights on which activities to use and when and how to integrate their developmental activities and resources to achieve optimal leader growth. Moreover, we expect that most universities, governmental agencies, and

major corporations could achieve coaching, mentoring, and reflection integration and implement the Revised Leader Growth Model in their own programs. Lastly, while the cadet population may seem unique, they are similar in many ways to other university students and new business leaders that are still developing an understanding of themselves, their approach to leading, and the inherent challenges of leading individuals and teams in complex competitive environments.

We acknowledge the limitations of this study and encourage future research in this area to explore the inclusion and integration of other leader development activities (e.g., switching the roles of coaching and mentorship as a variable in the study) and testing specific aspects of coaching (e.g., number of sessions and coaching focus). Additionally, future studies would benefit from a larger sample size, longer period of observations, and a more deliberate integration of coaching with other activities, similar to the integration of mentoring within the military leadership course.

◆◆◆

References

- Amsterdam, M. (2019). Mentoring and Coaching-Defining Their Roles and Importance. *Medium.com*. <https://medium.com/brain-bites/mentoring-and-coaching-defining-their-roles-and-importance-6213c6b7455>
- Armstrong, A., Van der Lingen, E., Lourens, R., & Chen, J. Y. (2018). Towards a new model of grit within a cognitive-affective framework of self-regulation. *South African Journal of Business Management*, 49(1), 1-8.
- Athanasopoulou, A., & Dopson, S. (2018). A systematic review of executive coaching outcomes: Is it the journey or the destination that matters the most? *The Leadership Quarterly*, 29(1), 70-88.
- Barner, R., & Higgins, J. (2005). A social constructionist approach to leadership coaching. *OD Practitioner*, 37(4), 37.
- Baumert, A., Halmburger, A., & Schmitt, M. (2013). Interventions against norm violations: Dispositional determinants of self-reported and real moral courage. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 39(8), 1053-1068.
- Boak, G. and Crabbe, S. (2019). Experiences that develop leadership capabilities. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, Vol. 40 No. 1, pp. 97-106.
- Bruno, A., Galuppo, L., & Gilardi, S. (2011). Evaluating the reflexive practices in a learning experience. *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, 26(4), 527-543.
- Bush, T., & Coleman, M. (1995). Professional development for heads: The role of mentoring. *Journal of Educational Administration*.
- Costa, A. L., & Garmston, R. J. (2002). *Cognitive coaching: A foundation for renaissance schools*. Christopher-Gordon Publishers, Inc.
- Cushion, C. J. (2018). Reflection and reflective practice discourses in coaching: *A critical analysis*. *Sport, Education and Society*, 23(1), 82-94.
- DeRue, D. S., Nahrgang, J. D., Hollenbeck, J. R., & Workman, K. (2012). A quasi-experimental study of after-event reviews and leadership development. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 97(5), 997.
- Douglas, C. A., & McCauley, C. D. (1999). Formal developmental relationships: A survey of organizational practices. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 10(3), 203-220.
- Duckworth, A. L., Weir, D. R., Tsukayama, E., & Kwok, D. (2012). Who does well in life? Conscientious adults excel in both objective and subjective success. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 3, 356.
- Dziczkowski, J. (2013). Mentoring and leadership development. *In The Educational Forum* (Vol. 77, No. 3, pp. 351-360). Taylor & Francis Group.
- Ennis, S. A., Goodman, R., Otto, J., & Stern, L. R. (2008). *The Executive Coaching Handbook: Principles and Guidelines for a Successful Coaching Partnership: The Executive Coaching Forum*. Institute of Coaching.
- Fulmer, R. M., Gibbs, P. A., & Goldsmith, M. (2000). Developing leaders: How winning companies keep on winning. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 42(1), 49.
- Gibbs, P. A., & Goldsmith, M. (2000). Developing leaders: How winning companies keep on winning. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 42(1), 49.
- Grant, A. M. (2012). Making positive change: A randomized study comparing solution-focused vs. problem-focused coaching questions. *Journal of Systemic Therapies*, 31(2), 21-35.
- Grant, A. M., & Stober, D. R. (2006). *Evidence based coaching handbook: putting best practices to work for your clients*. Wiley.
- Hill, P. L., Burrow, A. L., & Bronk, K. C. (2016). Persevering with positivity and purpose: An examination of purpose commitment and positive affect as predictors of grit. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 17(1), 257-269.

- Hobson, A. J., & Sharp, C. (2005). Head to head: a systematic review of the research evidence on mentoring new head teachers. *School Leadership & Management*, 25(1), 25-42.
- Holloway, J. H. (2001). The benefits of mentoring. *Educational Leadership*, 58(8), 85-86.
- Hopkins-Thompson, P. A. (2000). Colleagues helping colleagues: Mentoring and coaching. *NASSP bulletin*, 84(617), 29-36.
- Johnson, O. E. (2020). Creating space to think: The what, why, and how of deliberate reflection for effective leadership. *The Journal of Character & Leadership Development*, 20-32.
- Jones, R. J., Woods, S. A., & Guillaume, Y. R. (2016). The effectiveness of workplace coaching: A meta-analysis of learning and performance outcomes from coaching. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 89(2), 249-277.
- King, P. & Eaton, J. (1999). Coaching for results. *Industrial and Commercial Training*.
- Ladegard, G. & Gjerde, S. (2014). Leadership coaching, leader role-efficacy, and trust in subordinates. A mixed methods study assessing leadership coaching as a leadership development tool. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 25(4), 631-646.
- Lawrence, E., Dunn, M., & Weisfeld-Spolter, S. (2018). Developing leadership potential in graduate students with assessment, self-awareness, reflection and coaching. *The Journal of Management Development*, 37(8), 634-651.
- Marshall, T. (2019). The concept of reflection: a systematic review and thematic synthesis across professional contexts. *Reflective Practice*, 20(3), 396-415.
- Marson, N. (2019). Leadership coaching. In *Leading by Coaching* (pp. 135-169). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.
- Martineau, J., & Patterson, T. (2010). Evaluating leader development. *The Center for Creative Leadership Handbook of Leadership Development*, 251-281.
- McLaughlin, M. & Cox, E. (2015). *Leadership coaching: Developing braver leaders*. Routledge.
- Neupane, R. (2015). Effects of coaching and mentoring on employee performance. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Management*, 2(2), 123-138.
- Spain, E. (2020 Nov/ Dec.) Reinventing the Leader Selection Process. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2020/11/reinventing-the-leader-selection-process>
- United States Air Force Academy. (2020). *USAF A Pamphlet 36-3527: The Officer Development System*.
- United States Army. (2019). *Army leadership and the profession, Army doctrine publication 6-22, 6-10 – 6-11*. https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/pdf/web/ARN20039_ADP%206-22%20C1%20FINAL%20WEB.pdf
- United States Military Academy. (2018). *Developing Leaders of Character, the West Point Leader Development System*. West Point, NY. <https://harvardmilitary.files.wordpress.com/2018/12/2018-USMA-Developing-Leaders-of-Character.pdf>
- Wise, D. & Jacobo, A. (2010). Towards a framework for leadership coaching. *School Leadership and Management*, 30(2), 159-169.
- Wise, D. (2010). School leadership coaching: What does it look like? *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation*, 5(1).
- Wise, D. & Hammack, M. (2011). Leadership coaching: Coaching competencies and best practices. *Journal of School Leadership*, 21(3), 449-477.
- Woo, H. R. (2017). Exploratory study examining the joint impacts of mentoring and managerial coaching on organizational commitment. *Sustainability*, 9(2), 181.

FEATURE ARTICLES

Every Day is Game Day

Mark Verstegen, Founder of EXOS & Director of Performance for the NFL

Interviewed By: Daniel Bolin

Bolin: Mark, thank you for talking with me today. You have quite a diverse background that has taken you all across the globe. Could you tell us a little bit about that journey?

Verstegen: Of course. I have an undergraduate and masters in sports science, exercise science and nutrition. I played football at Washington State University. I got a Masters at Idaho curing an injury which really got me early on into bridging this gap on the continuum of care. What you started to find in sustainable high performance, and it didn't matter if you were dealing with world class athletes or neuroscientists or pianists, it was performers. Those that were competitive and passionate, as well as aspiring performers all shared the same four raw ingredients, of mindset, nutrition, movement, and recovery. They weren't stand-alone verticals, but they were meshed together in their DNA. When there was a systems failure around any one of those or a lack of strategy that is where they would tend to unravel and would have to rebuild from that standpoint. That's what really led my passion and my research.

I went down to Georgia Tech prior to the Olympics and then created the International Performance Institute at what is now the IMG Academy to envision the sports science hub for Adidas Soccer Academy, Better Golf, and all these different things, but it all came from that nucleus of high performance. After about four years, I moved out to

Lt Col Daniel Bolin is currently serving as the Air University Liaison Officer to the Air Force Academy. Lt Col Bolin is a 2005 Distinguished Graduate from USAFA and a Senior Pilot with over 2,000 hours in the HH-60 and UH-1 helicopters. He has deployed multiple times and has over 200 combat hours. After graduating from Air Command and Staff College in 2019, Lt Col Bolin remained for a year at Air University as the Director of Operations and an instructor of Airpower History. His athletic background includes the Under 17 U.S. National Team, Wake Forest University NCAA Div 1 Soccer, USAFA Men's Soccer, and the 2012 All-Air Force Soccer Team. As a cadet, Bolin was twice All-Conference, twice MVP, Academic All-Conference, and named USAFA's Scholar Athlete of the Year, 2005. In addition to his staff job, Lt Col Bolin is teaching Physical Education and Military & Strategic Studies.

Mark Verstegen is the Founder and President of EXOS a global leader in human performance. Mark is one of the world's foremost experts on human performance and he pioneered the concept of integrated performance training which he has used in collaboration with elite athletes, the U.S. military, and numerous corporations. He also served as the National Football League Player's Association (NFLPA) performance director for 20 years and has authored six books. <https://www.teamexos.com/leadership-team/>

the West coast with my wife, and we created Athlete's Performance Institute, which is on the grounds of Arizona State University. It is a youth inspired research platform but also application for elite athletes to really come to a refuge. The mission was really simple. It was about understanding and upgrading lives through performance. So we created an environment where we tore down all the walls to provide the finest performance systems with the specialists and platforms seamlessly integrated to efficiently and ethically enhance our clients performance. Everyone got treated equally within that. That led us on the long journey to where we are at today.

Over that history, we are now the global leader in human performance over the last 20 years. In sports, if we were a country, we would have placed 6th and 8th in the last few Olympics, even though that isn't our target market. Half of the first and second rounds of the NFL draft is on average for what we might do. I have been the performance director for the NFL Players Association Health and Safety for the last 20 years. You can look at the same thing globally in soccer, World Cup champions, German National Team support, highest winning percentage, MLS champions, etc. You keep working through those things because it is the same winning formula. We had the great honor in special operations for preservation of force and family. It's a great honor of ours for a long time. We are inside of 35% of Fortune 100 companies related to human capital optimization and human capital preservation. We have a ton of fun doing that. That is the short of where we are today.

Bolin: Thank you for sharing that. I have a soccer background, and that 2014 World Cup Champion German National Team was amazing. You have such a diverse background in business and special operations,

but to go to Germany and have an impact in a foreign country where they embraced you was different. Were you taking those pillars and saying do this and you will have success? Or were you having to tailor it to their culture and team?

Verstegen: You hit it on the head with the latter. When we first showed up, we were incredibly unpopular in Germany. We were American Football and they did not want the point of view. What we came back to was that we were global best practices. That is what EXOS stands for. In so many ways, that is a German approach in that we want to get very specific around what we want to do well. So, what is that vision? What is that purpose? How are we bringing people together? Looking at a style of play to pull off the mission by looking down to each individual player and that player's profile by matching those things up and by understanding them first. How do we elevate each player to have the great honor to put on that jersey or uniform? That was a much greater context for us. Then to continue to make sure that you are at the absolutely at the top of your game day in and day out and not just on and off. I think that is a pretty German approach that resonated well. I would go back to that 2004 to 2006 time frame where it was a very dynamic cultural shift for Germany where there were a lot of dynamics going on. It is similar to some of the things that we are seeing today.

Bolin: At the Air Force Academy, one of the institutional outcomes that we have is the warrior ethos which includes the embodiment of the warrior spirit. We use language such as tough mindedness, tireless motivation, unceasing vigilance, a willingness to sacrifice one's life for their country, if necessary, and a commitment to be the world's premier Air and Space Force.

Verstegen: Goosebumps. That is where I get my goosebumps. That is a tall order and a tall order to ask not just from one, but from all.

Bolin: It is. It involves toughmindedness, grit, hardiness, and the physical and moral courage. Do you see that in driving success at the team and individual level for the German National Team? That is a tall feat to win the World Cup. Everyone wants to do that.

Verstegen: Here is how I might preface that. When you start talking about leadership, I think there is the extrinsic element of leadership and I think there is an intrinsic level of leadership. If I just go to extrinsic, it is what you would expect. It is things like mission, vision, shared purpose and how can we actually bring clarity to that. That starts to become leadership. After that, we have to put in the right structure and systems in the Venn diagram, and I am absolutely passionate about the third circle being empowerment. Playing to win. If we've learned one thing over time, is that some of these things are not small. Structure is not small. How much is just enough structure? How much is just enough systems where everybody can be able to play in a style of play in business or sport that allows them to understand the rules just enough, that leaves them enough freedom? But then they need to be empowered so that they can go play to win. It's critical for creating a performance culture. As an example, a fear of failure versus a joy of performing, passion, and elevating others. It is a group of people who are closed and fixed minded versus, like Carol Dweck says, that are open and growth minded. It's about scared to be wrong versus this continuous improvement and doing everything you can personally. That is the environment today that we have to set up. I think those are the things from extrinsic leadership, like setting up the culture, setting up that leadership that really does differentiate. I also think that within

that extrinsic component is the seamless integration. That seamless integration means that in the past, we could work more in silos, but what we are finding today is that we have to have a multidisciplinary, seamlessly integrated team that is really hyper focused on solving a problem together. Especially, in this kind of Moore's Law of everything being disrupted and changing and knowing that you can't go solve for what is today, you are trying to leapfrog to solve things that are unknown. That requires great collaboration. Let me throw that in the extrinsic bucket of the strategy, tactics, and skill sets of being a leader. We can learn those things. How we apply that has to be localized to where we are at, on the exact environment, and the task that we have.

Now, where I think you and I might get even more passionate, is to come back and look at the intrinsic piece of things. That is where I see the greatest opportunity for growth in the military, business in leadership in the C-suite all the way through management, as well as sport. Let's say I have those skill sets. I have gone to great education and training places like the Air Force Academy and other special colleges and I have these skill sets. My ability as an individual to show up each day, and be able to play those skill sets to the absolute best of their ability. Not all of them, but the right one at the right time, gets to what is a great leader. I think that does require mindset, nutrition, movement, and recovery as a foundation to even show up each day with the qualities that are required of a great leader. That is the opportunity right there that we see that unlocks what I see as probably one of the biggest downfalls around emotional regulation. Around their emotional quotient and their ability to go do great leadership.

Bolin: I wanted to touch on a couple of the points you mentioned on setting the culture and a growth mindset. In your worlds, where it is an elite world,

whether it be special operations, the German National team, or the NFL, you have individuals that are playing for a team. In setting the culture where you are putting the mission or the team first, has that been difficult depending on the atmosphere where, for example, you have elite athletes who might think, if this person is playing, then that means I am not playing?

Verstegen: That's a great question. Let me break it down with ethos, the performance ethos that we have at EXOS. We say number one that there is a responsibility that is greater than yourself. If you want to don this great uniform that represents things like our flag, our country, and provide us our freedoms, that is an innate responsibility that you are signing up for. That is greater than you. If you want to don the U.S. National Team jersey, that is something that is greater than you and it is a responsibility that you are taking on. We will hold you accountable to that. But, you should be eager to go do that.

Secondly, gratitude and grit. Like your warrior ethos, we know that we want our team to show up every day grateful for what they have been given. That means that based on diversity, equity, and inclusion, they may have come from a much different place to get to this starting line, versus others who may have come into it from a different way. It doesn't matter, we need to have gratitude. Then, that grit—to have that relentless determination to see that through, but not just for self, but for others.

Then, we talk about that one team. That one team really is about something that is greater than just me and that we are going to go achieve together which unlocks the highest levels of human performance. When there is something that is greater than self that we can tie

ourselves to, we can literally do things that we could not do, or push ourselves or have a level of commitment to individually, if no one was watching. That is ultimately the definition of a high performance mindset of what am I doing, when others aren't watching? In team environments, we have to also know that one team means that I as an individual, have the responsibility to master self from the first thought that goes through my head to my actions in this "winning the process", where every day is game day. We are in that process all day long until the last thought goes through our head. Even in the most stressful, dynamic environments, I have to own that. I might not be 100%, but I have to own that so that I can show up better the next day and

Ultimately, at the highest levels of leadership you start to realize that the great leader is one who efficiently achieves goals for a greater purpose. They, in that leadership potential, essentially become the servant or the assistant to help others be their best to achieve the common goal.

fulfill my responsibilities, to play my position with my team, so that I can get the best out of those around me. Ultimately, at the highest levels of leadership you start to realize that the great leader is one who efficiently achieves goals for a greater purpose. They, in that leadership potential, essentially become the servant or the assistant to help others be their best to achieve the common goal. In order to do that, they have to be on their A game daily and they also, which is really tough, in their emotional regulation have to disassociate self, their own emotion and their present state, to be able to ask the best questions, be the best listener, to continue to probe, and ultimately gather conviction around

what it might be. That is where I have been lucky to witness a lot of great leaders in the military, in business, and sport. It really comes down to that same DNA of open growth mindedness.

Bolin: That made me think of the sports that I have played over the years, but also my experience of being part of a helicopter crew in formation. What you said absolutely speaks to that where as a co-pilot, aircraft commander, or flight lead, you have your individual role which goes to the mission of rescuing someone who is having their worst day. The flight engineer or the gunner also have to be on their game. That really speaks to my military experience.

Verstegen: That is something that I love, also coming from a perspective of piloting, which I also passionate about, but getting the game plans right, also allows you to free up this capacity to be a creator and adapt to be present to the existing situation that you are in. Everything that you just mentioned where there are so many variables happening to everyone on that team at that point in time, if you are overwhelmed or overloaded with what should be running in your nonconscious, that is a problem. That is why I think you align the structures and systems so that you can be present in the moment and express your skills with great flow.

Bolin: Along with mindset, you talk about engineering your sustainable high performance game plan. That is based on what you refer to as four pillars. I know you have written on those and mentioned them earlier. Do you mind talking about those a little bit?

Verstegen: Here is what we found as we were trying to understand the science and in examining people who had great success, it comes down to these four strands of

their DNA. First, behaviorally and mindset wise, there is something repeatable that is happening there for all of these types of people—pilots, professional athletes, elite operators, neurosurgeons, it doesn't matter. These same behavioral principles come to mind.

The next thing is that you have to fuel for it. You have to identify what that IT is, that purpose or mission. You have the mindset for it and you have to fuel it. As much as we talk about fuel, most people think about below the neck. I need to stay fit and my body needs to do that. However, we start almost all of these processes above the neck. How I fuel will drive my cognitive performance. If I am driving my cognitive performance, both conscious to nonconscious, below the neck just becomes things that are prerequisite. That is where we really start.

The third piece is that you have to move. You have to move to unlock your cognitive performance. From the very first thing that we ask people to do when they hydrate, which is a bit of nutrition, to rolling their foot out as they brush their teeth each morning. Those fascial sheaths and the balance of what it does from right brain to left brain, and starting to get things turned on, is like a preflight checklist. Those movement qualities and how we move to decrease pain, prevent pain, and perform are critical to all things. For example, if I was to take pilots with either neck or low back pain, regardless of airframe, that is a non-starter because it takes intentional focus away from you. If you are already starting in the hole, then you are not going to be your best for the mission, and be that person in the formation that I need to be.

Ultimately, the limiting factor for all performance is recovery. From global recovery of how I fuel and how I move to engineer this perfect day for sustainable high

performance, all the way down to how I breathe. Am I using breath to ramp up or come down? How does that drive my cognitive performance? What am I doing about sleep and sleep strategies? It doesn't matter the environment from downrange, to time zones, etc., all those are strategies that we have to nail and get right.

So, mindset, nutrition, movement, and recovery, but it needs to be on a simple one pager. It needs to be something that I have the confidence that I can own daily. I'd rather have these simple things that I can do savagely well and own that. Then, we can continue to challenge and achieve, challenge and achieve to grow that so most of that is running in the nonconscious. That is where we start to get in a really special situation as an individual, but more importantly at senior leadership and it trickles down in the culture of the organization. That is when you start to create sustainable performance that can adapt to any times.

Bolin: What is resonating with me is the sustainable part. When we talk about warrior ethos, the words we use are toughmindedness, tireless motivation, and unceasing vigilance. So, it is not once, but consistently. In your book, you talk about how every day is game day. So, it is showing up for your crew or your team every day and not occasionally. Being the leader that people can trust. Added to that, you talk about how habits can help move you ahead without thinking about it. Is that an important part of this, when things get tough, because they will?

Verstegen: You have to absolutely fall back on these things that when you had the time, you thought them through, and you have a very organized game plan for where you are currently at and where you want to go. You need to harden that until it runs in your nonconscious. You want to free as much capacity

as possible to address it for the task at hand. In the environments that high performers put themselves in, that will never be easy. In fact, you will probably have more problems when they are under stimulated and the challenge doesn't meet their training and expectation.

Bolin: You have influenced a lot of different job specialties and people. Is there any individual or team that stands out on embracing these pillars where you say, this person or team gets it?

Verstegen: When we started this about 25 years ago, I would say in the NFL, probably 5 to 8% of that unbelievably elite player population would embody what we are talking about today. Now, years later, through structures, systems, the collective bargaining agreement, collaboration, and head-butting with the NFL, coaches and cultures, you now probably see 80 to 85% of the players in the league. The teams are adopting everything that they can to win what is controllable by creating the right cultures and environments. Even then, we sometimes don't get it right. As an example, prior to this year 80% of the injuries that occurred for the entire year occurred in the first 2 ½ weeks of training camp where the team controls 100% of the variables. That is a broken system, so we as cultures within our organizations, we have to step back and ask the hard questions which is great because we have so many analytics. However, it is also the context in which need to view them. What I've noticed about great leaders is that they like transparency. They ask the right questions and the information they are given isn't sorted through five layers of people. General Colin Powell did this and wanted to get the information and raw data to see it and discuss it to get the context around the information. That is the benefit of information today. However, you can also have paralysis through analysis where there is so much information available

that is why we need to have these innate abilities to go to your gut.

Bolin: Being at a Service Academy, we have a difficult mission of developing leaders and developing combat warriors who are ready to take on these challenges we demand of them the day that they graduate. How do you train people to have this warrior ethos and embrace the four pillars?

Verstegen: I think it is like any new skill. The first thing that we really want to look at is how can we make it crystal clear on what those things are? These are not mystical things. I think the education that goes around succinctly breaking down things of, here are the successful behavioral traits. For example, emotion regulation. We know about stress and anxiety, and the different elements of what we want to have, but we also know that we can create relaxation based on certain techniques. Relaxation meaning I'm about to walk into something real, and I can take the next few seconds to frame it, prepare myself, and actually be unbelievably calm and present and execute at a really high level.

*... the great thing about leadership,
is that it has nothing to do with you.
It has everything to do with others.*

We also know where we can get into focus where people might be distracted and we can all of a sudden get into hyper focus on the situation and block out the noise is also a skill set. So, I think there are ways for us to create the curriculum or how I can localize it to me today and how do I start to own it today? That is the great thing that I do love about the Academies environments is that you are essentially starting to ritualize what it will take from that first thought to

the last thought and own those things. I think the challenge sometimes is to be able to strip things down to the absolute bear essence before you build it back up. You can lose a lot of people doing that so I think it becomes how you engineer that experience.

After that, you need to pressure test it. But once you get through the pressure testing, our job is to make sure that their battery and skill sets are charged all the way back up before I deploy or put them in harm's way. Here is the side note. We were challenged one time during the War on Terror. I take a group of special operators and I narrow these classes down and the last thing we do is deploy them for 30 days out in the desert. I know that I am going to have about a 60% attrition. Can you tell me out of those 30 people I put out, which 8 to 12 are going to be the ones standing at the end because they are going to leave from there and immediately get on the plane and automatically deploy to the Middle East and stand up immediately? So the question in the context of that is we could probably do some stuff, but the equation of how do we test them, challenge them, make sure they are ready for what they are about to go face, but let's not also go and put them in harm's way with 10% left on their battery with no ability to upscale that charge once you put them downrange. I think it is how we engineer the environments to make sure that we put people in a successful situation.

Bolin: You did talk earlier about passion and competition. Between your experiences with the military, business, and sports, what is it that drives the elite performers, the successful ones?

Verstegen: Here is what we really found. Number one, is that it has to be genuinely you. The more you disassociate from your behavioral profile the more emotional energy that will drain from you going

nowhere. You need to be you. You need to find out what your super powers are and you need to be able to embrace those. People will respect that so long as underneath that layer are these great structures and systems and you owning self so that you are always showing up and being present. Remember, the great thing about leadership, is that it has nothing to do with you. It has everything to do with others. When you are a leader, the expectation is that your job is to show up as close to your optimal potential with every interaction each day, all day, every day. That is the reality of it. That is not just something that you can will your way to. That is why the challenge to the warrior ethos is that you can't just will things to happen. You literally have to have a great game plan, a great platform to be able to continue to allow yourself the opportunity to win more than you lose. To be consistently there for those around you, whether in a leadership position or if you are following. That is really the essence of what we would like to get at. So, the behavioral aspects of performance are to be genuine to yourself, make sure you have a great game plan for self so that you show up each day, around open and growth mindedness, you realize that every day is game day and it will have plusses and minuses, you have a skill set to be able to adapt to the ups and downs of that day to reset and regulate and be on your A game throughout that process in a very present, calm, and focused way that can still have an amazing intensity whether you are extrinsic or intrinsic. But you really find out that high performers are competitors and that is what drives them. What you find is a lot of your teammates can also be looking to these people to be led and to be more like them, which is why we need to embody and walk the talk.

Bolin: I think competitor can sometimes have a bit of a negative connotation within leadership. But the Air Force mission is to fly, fight, and win. Winning is

a part of business, sports, and the military. So, being a competitor isn't a bad thing.

Verstegen: We are all in it to win it. At the same time, what I want to make sure everyone knows is there are many factors that go into the definition of winning. Especially in today's world. But, so much of what dictates the success of that outcome, will be all of these tiny micro decisions that you are running in your nonconscious 90% of the time or that you are making throughout the day, every day, day after day. The habits that we talked about that ultimately lead to excellence and success. When we start talking about performing at an elite level will dictate as much about those outcomes as "I hope I do really well today." Or I have to go play some strategy so that I might have a winning outcome. We are in it to win it, but that doesn't mean that you have to be better than me today to do that. It might mean that you elevated me today which elevated self. It is a fun dynamic around what competition is. You have to have a game plan. You have to have the team, that community to be able to help that greater shared purpose. There always has to be a scoreboard so that you have the feedback. That is why you need your teammates, that is why you need leaders, and that is why you need structures and systems, so that I can do that.

Bolin: Added to that, warfare has changed over the years where you have things like Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) operators who could be dropping bombs in the morning, and then putting their kids to bed that night. So, having the preparation and mindset is vital.

Verstegen: That is where I get goosebumps and am deeply appreciative for everyone's service. The hardest thing on a family unit is to be deployed and away. But

there is a whole different dichotomy of what you just described, and how the individual warrior is able to handle that when they show up to be the person in a family unit. It is tough. And I want to make sure there is an exclamation point around those populations. How they are viewed and respected by peers for what they are going through. It is a different thing. That is why I say these teams need to be multidisciplinary and engrained and we need to own the skills sets that we have been talking about to have people starting to focus in on these things because that will help ensure our sustainability, because what we are facing is not going away.

Bolin: As part of the warrior ethos, we work to instill grit, which is a hardiness of spirit and resistance to accept failure despite mental and physical hardships. I wanted to look at the failure part because failure is a part of life. But the avoidance of difficult situations is not an option in the military. Within your experience, how have you overcome that and seen other individuals or teams overcome that?

Verstegen: It is one of our three values at EXOS, which is why I resonate so much with it. Grit can also be defined as consistent work without satisfaction, or delayed satisfaction or gratification. That just means that you stay hyper focused and pound the rock even though it is not manifesting in anything enjoyable at this point in time. Grit is where I think greatness and leadership are truly honed and defined. We see it in almost every successful person. I think the number one thing is to lay the cultural foundation that performance is open growth mindedness. If you don't want to fail, that goes to closed fixed components where you want to set yourself on a pedestal and won't step off of it and they get so paralyzed by those tags. That is on us. Don't do that to people. We want to make sure that we are saying, I love how that person has and wins the

process, but they aren't scared to fail. They are going to continue to learn the way that they learn, and it is not if, but when they will succeed. That is why I love the analogy of "every day is game day." There isn't any game that any of us has played where there wasn't failure. It's that we learn from it and we don't have time to dwell on it. That is why this repetitive nature of growth, stimulus, achieve, challenge, achieve, challenge, is important. Failure is absolutely a part of it. It shouldn't be scary. When we talk about the Holy Grail of highest performance, where mind and body come together, it is flow. This nonconscious state, if you will, where your skill sets are honed, however you have honed them, which includes a lot of failure, where these abilities and skill sets match an equal challenge or slightly stretched challenge where you are hyper focused. Things get slow, and you can really relax where you are hyper present. It is expression of all of the things that we have talked about. That is the ultimate desirable state that we all want to get in, that nonconscious space. That is why you have to own these systems and being in a culture, because environment matters, that sets you up to win day in and day out, where you are empowered to do it, you are owning the responsibility to have gratitude and grit, have continuous improvement, in order to play your position as well as it can be played. But, it is for a greater purpose and that should charge you up in every different way.

Bolin: Thank you for your time and the many people that you have impacted over the years.

Verstegen: I want to thank you and your teammates for your service. There is not a morning or an evening that goes by that I don't start it off or finish it off without giving great gratitude for the freedoms that we enjoy. Thank you!

FEATURE ARTICLES

Reflections on the Intersection of Sports, Leadership, and the Warrior Ethos

Daniel Bolin, Air University

Having dedicated much of my youth and college years to sports, I am convinced that there are relevant connections between athletics and the development of the elite professionals I work with every day—the men and women who have chosen to serve in the military. While there are certainly many factors contributing to successful leadership attributes, athletics is one tradition with a rich history. Yet, it can be vague the connections between sports and leadership in the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) culture that we operate in today. To describe how athletics can shape leadership experiences across a spectrum of real-world challenges, I will provide a brief history of the sports-military relationship. Then, I will relay three personal stories that connect the warrior ethos, athletics, and the Leader of Character Framework (LCF) used at the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) (CCLD, 2011). After this, four professionals with a wealth of experience, share their perspectives on the relevance of sports to leadership. These include a current USAFA coach, a sports psychologist and former NFL player, a USAFA grad world-class athlete, and a former commander and Army combat soldier.

Lt Col Daniel Bolin is currently serving as the Air University Liaison Officer to the Air Force Academy. Lt Col Bolin is a 2005 Distinguished Graduate from USAFA and a Senior Pilot with over 2,000 hours in the HH-60 and UH-1 helicopters. He has deployed multiple times and has over 200 combat hours. After graduating from Air Command and Staff College in 2019, Lt Col Bolin remained for a year at Air University as the Director of Operations and an instructor of Airpower History. His athletic background includes the Under 17 U.S. National Team, Wake Forest University NCAA Div 1 Soccer, USAFA Men's Soccer, and the 2012 All-Air Force Soccer Team. As a cadet, Bolin was twice All-Conference, twice MVP, Academic All-Conference, and named USAFA's Scholar Athlete of the Year, 2005. In addition to his staff job, Lt Col Bolin is teaching Physical Education and Military & Strategic Studies.

Background: U.S. Military/Sports Interaction and Where We Are Today

In her book, *Playing to Win: Sports and the American Military from 1898-1945*, author Wanda Wakefield makes a case for the origins of the U.S. military-sport relationship originating in the late 19th Century (Wakefield, 1997). Because of improvements in media, transportation, and industrialization, by 1898, sports were a major part of America's civilian culture. In the late 19th Century, they had not yet become a part of the U.S. Military culture. The Spanish-American war in 1898 changed this. President Theodore Roosevelt and General Leonard Wood valued fitness and were both fierce competitors in their personal lives. President Roosevelt chose his famed "Rough Riders" from the ranks of athletes, and General Wood was Roosevelt's second in command (in addition to being a physician). These leaders advocated the troops' athletic development and linked sports directly to their ability to fight well. Additionally, with a growing U.S. international focus to combat Spain in Cuba and quell an internal rebellion in the Philippines, a rapid fivefold buildup of U.S. troops occurred in the late 1800s, an increase from roughly 25K to 125K soldiers (Wakefield, 1997).

As with most large troop movements, the soldiers had free time, and the U.S. Military was unprepared to support the soldiers' health and wellness while away from home. Out of necessity, the leadership instituted a sports program that focused on keeping the troops fit while simultaneously diverting their attention from vices such as gambling, prostitution, and alcohol. The military leadership deemed the athletic diversion a success in Cuba and the Philippines. Within the years leading up to WWI, leadership further formalized sports' role within the military (Wakefield, 1997).

In the early 20th Century, Wakefield enumerated sports' varying purposes within the military. Sports provided a common lexicon amongst diverse troops while attempting to break down racial barriers. Sports gave a sense of American identity while overseas, favoring baseball over "foreign sports" such as soccer and fencing. Finally, according to leadership at the time, it promoted the fighting spirit while reducing anxiety. Combat was frequently correlated with a "game" to pacify the nerves and provide a familiar context. Following WWI, General Douglas MacArthur became the Superintendent of West Point and immediately increased participation in collegiate intramurals. He did so because it "brings out the qualities of leadership, quickness of decision, promptness of action, mental and muscular coordination, aggression, and courage" (Wakefield, 1997, p. 53). Today, if you take a tour of any Service Academy, it is apparent that the sports-military relationship has grown significantly since MacArthur's West Point command.

Personal Examples

Within these next three examples, I would like to make a case that sports are vital in real-world leadership situations. In each scenario, there are instances that can be appreciated both within and outside of the military. Ultimately, the challenge is to rise above one's discomfort and rise to the challenge. The first story was when I was a 2nd Lieutenant in Pilot Training. The second is as a new copilot on my first deployment to Afghanistan. The third is as a senior Captain and aircraft commander on my third deployment to Kuwait.

Story 1: "Stop the Sim"

February 2006 - I am a new 2LT at Moody Air Force base in Undergraduate Pilot Training. I have completed the academic phase, and I am sitting in a T-6 Texan II procedural trainer (simulator). I have yet to fly the T-6. The instructor is an older, retired KC-135 Pilot that I'll call "Mr. Smith." He is running me through Emergency Procedures, and I feel out of my element. As I struggle through each step of the checklist, I say, "I *think* I will roll wings level....and then I *may* look at my gauges...then I'll analyze the situation." Mr. Smith is silent while I am fishing for guidance and approval. Mr. Smith pauses the simulator—never a good sign.

Mr. Smith: "Listen, Danny...No crew wants to know what you *think you may do or may not do*. This is an emergency. Your *indecision* is contagious and will breed a lack of confidence in those you lead. Just make an informed decision and move out."

Then Mr. Smith starts the sim again.

I can imagine I was the 1,000th student to which he bestowed this pearl of wisdom. Yet, to me, his advice made perfect sense. Largely because it drove home everything I learned from a career in sports. On the athletic field, there are times when you are uncomfortable and out of your element. Maybe it is getting pinned in unarmed-combat by someone smaller. Maybe it is playing on a new team in a new position. Or maybe it is being the go-to player, and everyone is counting on you. Regardless of your role, the team or your crew needs you to show up with confidence and make informed decisions—usually under pressure and quickly. "Give me the ball because I know what to do with it" has to be the attitude of a successful athlete and also an aircrew member. If you do not have this

mindset, then what are you doing on the field? Or at the controls of a multi-million-dollar aircraft? Or the leader of a high-visibility project for your organization?

The Leader of Character Framework (LCF) was developed in 2011 by the Center for Character and Leadership Development (CCLD) and gave structure and guidance to the ambitious goal of developing officers who must lead in defense of our nation. The LCF defines a leader of character as one who "lives honorably, lifts others, and elevates the team's performance" (CCLD, 2011). To prepare these young men and women, the LCF asks cadets to own the pursuit of their destiny, engage in deliberate experiences, and practice habits of thought and mind. Finally, the LCF speaks of a decision-action gap where a leader recognizes a problem and must have the inner strength to correct the situation. In addition to the LCF, USAFA has nine institutional outcomes that the educational-military cadet's four years are built around. One of these outcomes is to embrace the warrior ethos; "exhibit grit: a hardiness of spirit and resistance to accept failure despite physical and mental hardships."¹

As 2nd Lieutenants, both the decision-action gap and one's grit level are tested very early on. Whether the officer is leading a Maintenance Flight or soloing for the first time in a high-performance aircraft, or leading a formation into combat, the ability to perform is based upon a history of owning the pursuit of one's identity (CCLD, 2011, p. 13). The experiences on "the friendly fields of strife" in athletics prepare an individual for these stressful situations. By demanding that cadets experience various sports, they will likely excel in certain areas while struggling in others. One cadet may be good at racquetball, but there's a good chance that the same cadet has never been punched in

¹ <https://www.usafa.edu/app/uploads/Warrior-Ethos-White-Paper-approved.pdf>

the face before while boxing (me). To grow leaders from officer candidates, it is critical to experience the range and variety of sports requirements, including those that require developing grit when things are going terribly wrong. Otherwise, we would all gravitate to that which we are already good at and never stretch our limits.

There are unquestionably a variety of ways to develop grit and perseverance, and yet, I believe sports is unique, namely because of the combination of team dynamics and physical requirements. Unlike the aero club or debate team, the physical nature of sports demand individual sacrifice both in the short term and the long term. When you're on your last day of a deployment

There are unquestionably a variety of ways to develop grit and perseverance, and yet, I believe sports is unique, namely because of the combination of team dynamics and physical requirements.

or putting in an eighty-hour workweek, I believe one can gain confidence and strength from their previous athletic success and failure. And know that they can overcome the present hardships.

Story 2: "Go Around"

In 2010, I was a new HH-60G copilot in a Combat Rescue Squadron in Afghanistan. I was on my first deployment, and thankfully, the crew was accepting of a new copilot. Oddly enough, the pilot that I flew with was a classmate and friend from USAFA and, within a week, it was obvious that the crew worked well together. The separation of duties became second nature. It was not unusual to be called upon at 0100 to rescue a soldier who had stepped on an improvised explosive device (IED) and had sustained horrific

injuries. We also picked up injured Afghan Soldiers, Taliban Soldiers, and Afghan civilians as part of our mission. We always flew in a two-ship formation for mutual support. Each crewmember was trusted with a unique role. The Flight Engineer and Gunner would lay down fire when necessary and call the approaches. The Pararescue (P.J.'s) would gather information on threats and patient status.

Additionally, if needed, the P.J.'s would fight their way to a survivor's location and stabilize the patient while providing overhead cover. The Flight Lead was the Rescue Mission Commander and would decide risk levels, navigation, and tactics, among other duties.

When the alarm sounded, the crew ran to the helicopter and would be "wheels up," gathering information within five minutes. At the end of our deployment, our formation had picked up over 200 severely injured soldiers. Like every crew at that time, we had been shot at routinely and had shot back. Each

mission presented its challenges: routing, high altitude operations, ground threats, fuel limitations, and weather.

One particular night we were called to rescue the crew of a downed U.S. Army CH-47 Chinook helicopter and eight severely injured soldiers. It was unusually dark at 0130 when the call came. The Chinook had crashed while attempting a brown-out landing. This is where a helicopter lands in fine dust and loses visual references as high as 120 feet before touching the ground. There are varying techniques to accomplish a successful brown-out, but the key to a safe landing in a confined area is to set up a controlled approach early and to trust both your instruments and your flight engineer/gunner calls until the wheels touch down. On this night, we were the lead HH-60

of a two-ship formation and tasked with the landing and survivor pickup. The other aircraft would provide overhead cover. Additionally, a C-130 was overhead, lazily the landing spot within a tight canyon.

Over the radio, the ground element passed that the survivors were in bad shape, so our crew was in a hurry. We had practiced hundreds of brown-out approaches previously, yet, in our haste, we set up a rushed, turning approach and began to flare for landing. At 100 feet, the pilots lost all references while in a turning descent. At 80 feet, there was silence within the cockpit after the Flight Engineer said he lost ground reference. At 75 feet, I began to notice the instantaneous velocity vector shifting to the right – this meant we were drifting laterally fast. I said, "Stop Right." Within the next second, we were at 40 feet and descending rapidly. At the same moment, I noticed the velocity vector pointing directly to our screen's right again – it maxed out at 25 knots. I called "go-around" and took the flight controls. With the other pilot (not procedure), we wrestled the aircraft back into controlled flight and exited the cloud going slightly backward but up. We had narrowly missed crashing while "rescuing" another helicopter crew that had crashed in a brown-out. We all re-focused, and the pilot took his time to set up a second, controlled brown-out approach. He executed it to perfection. I should mention that this type of experience is familiar to any crew that has flown helicopters in the desert. When the dust cleared, our crew noticed an eight-foot-deep ditch just ten feet to the right of our helicopter's wheels. The C-130 couldn't see the ditch from their altitude, and it was obvious that this is where the Chinook had crashed. The margin of error was small, but we were able to pick up the injured members and return to base as a crew.

The LCF advocates that to "help someone develop as a leader of character, people of influence in the

organization must begin by assessing the person's growth, and then challenge them to become and do more" (CCLD, Read Ahead, 2011). The greatest motivation for me as a new copilot was to not let my crew members down. To pull from the LCF's verbiage - the "people of influence" on my first deployment, the more experienced crew included the pilot, flight engineer, and gunner that had accepted me as their new copilot. During the deployment, hundreds of split-second decisions were made, and I made plenty of wrong ones. Yet, the more experienced crewmembers let me make recoverable mistakes while I continued to improve. I knew they trusted me to take action if and when a dangerous situation developed.

This was similar to my experience in sports at USAFA. When I first joined the USAFA Men's soccer team, I had previously spent a year playing for Wake Forest University. As a new "4-degree" (freshman), I was not considered a leader within the greater USAFA sphere. The upperclassmen rightfully kidded me and treated me like every other 4-degree yet, when we laced up our cleats, the dynamics changed. They then trusted me to be the team's defensive center midfield and stop counterattacks while distributing the ball to those who could score. Within USAFA athletics, the upperclassmen teammates and coaches were the "people of influence" who challenged me to be and do more. Like the helicopter crew, the older players' trust and confidence gave me an intense desire to not let them down when the whistle blew. I've heard that fear of letting your fellow soldiers down is what allows individuals to conquer the debilitating terror of combat. In many ways, this is similar to sports.

In addition to knowing who the people of influence are, knowing one's role matters. During my first season at USAFA, we had an unusually good team and were ranked 19th in the nation at one point. It was a team

that still stands out in my mind because all of the players knew and embraced their role. A firstie (senior) defender was tenacious at stopping counterattacks but knew he could not distribute the ball well. After he stole the ball, he would always give it to the central midfielders, advancing the ball up the field. In succeeding years, where players did not embrace their role, a defender would often steal the ball only to do something “great” with it themselves—maybe beat the next defender or crush the ball down the field. In my role, I knew I was not a natural goal scorer. Because of this, if I ever had the opportunity, I would give the ball to those I knew could score.

Ultimately, this comes back to the warrior ethos outcome and “the ability to put the mission and others before one’s self” while “applying techniques to maintain effectiveness.”² Within USAFA and the operational environment, this translates to challenging others to become better leaders, pilots, athletes, or technicians, independent of the environment or personal discomfort. To knowing one’s role and how you fit into the greater mission. I can’t think of a better place to practice the warrior ethos outcome than on the athletic fields.

Story 3: “I have a bad feeling about this.”

In the summer of 2012, I was deployed to Kuwait as an aircraft commander. Although we weren’t shot at in Kuwait and never picked up a survivor, the conditions were still precarious for helicopter operations. It was not uncommon at night to lose the horizon and rely on instruments while still maintaining formation position. On one particularly dark night, our crew was briefing to accomplish “live” night water training in the Arabian Gulf. This is where we simulate a survivor

in the open ocean and drop in P.J.’s to rescue them. They normally jump out while we troll at 10 feet/10 knots over the ocean. Once the simulated survivor is “packaged” by the P.J.’s, we often use a hoist for the extraction. On this night, illumination barely met minimums to accomplish training, and we had a cover helicopter for safety mitigation. In night water training, like brown-outs, the pilots have to trust their instruments, and the crew has to work together to not lose sight of the P.J.’s in the water while maintaining a stable platform. After departing base, we flew past the bright lights of cities and into the utter blackness of the Arabian Gulf. As we went “feet wet,” we ran through our overwater checklist and began to descend. The entire crew had a sinking feeling about how unusually dark the night was. As we continued at 125 feet over water to our training area, there was silence in the cockpit. I focused completely on keeping the “spinny-side up” while reviewing the training requirements in my head and keeping the formation position. The other crew members scanned for boats and monitored for undeclared descents.

Within about three minutes of silence, the Flight Engineer said, “It’s really F’ing dark out here.” More silence...then the gunner says, “Guys, I have a bad feeling about this.” At that point, I realized that my silence as the aircraft commander was creating an overly tense situation. We had practiced this both at home and in Kuwait many times before; it was up to me to instill confidence in the crew. I knew we would perform better if the crew was calm, so I tried to think of something. The previous night, we had watched “21 Jump Street” as a squadron. It is an incredibly stupid and funny comedy where a couple of undercover cops go back to high school. I ended up bringing up a scene from it. Immediately, the P.J.’s chimed in. Then the copilot and the rest of the crew started laughing while

² <https://www.usafa.edu/app/uploads/Warrior-Ethos-White-Paper-approved.pdf>

continuing to scan. We were still concentrating, but the crew was not in a bad spot—they were at ease and could focus on their specific role. We safely accomplished the training mission and returned with confidence in our ability when the real call came.

This was a clear example of the LCF's decision-action gap mentioned previously. The first step was to recognize there was a problem and the source of the problem. In this case, the problem was my lack of confident, decisive leadership. After understanding that I was the problem, the next step was to decide how to correct the situation and act on it. It was essentially the CCLD's *ARDA Model* at work. The LCF defines the ARDA model as a "technique and an approach to ethical and effective leadership" (CCLD, 2011, p. 24). Within the ARDA Model, the *A* stands for being *Aware* that a leadership issue is at stake. The *R* is *Reasoning* through the next step to correct the leadership problem. The *D* is *Deciding* that something has to be done, and the *A* is *Acting* on that decision. "I have a bad feeling" and "It's really dark" were clues that something was wrong, and yet, this was not a good enough reason to cancel the training. The weather and illumination were above minimums. To be ready for the survivor who is having a terrible day, we must practice in harsh conditions.

As in the other stories, my operational experience was similar to my background in sports. Within a team, the athlete constantly trains for game day. At USAFA as a cadet, this meant training when there was four inches of snow, and you could barely see either the ball or the opponent from five feet away. It meant running down from Chemistry class in 40-knot wind immediately after taking a test that didn't go well. It meant putting personal interests aside and showing up ready to play at every practice despite the inevitable, competing interests. Everyone on my helicopter crew

thought that training conditions were difficult that night over the Arabian Gulf. I also remember thinking that we had no business training in the snow at USAFA when my toes were freezing, and I could not see the ball. And yet, I was thankful for my training when the survivor needed us on a black night in Afghanistan. Or when we played against San Diego State in a blizzard. Our teams and our crews depend on us showing up every time, whether in training or at game time. That practice reduces the decision gap that leads to decisive leadership. The LCF advocates for deliberate practice that supports the pillars to live honorably, lift others, and elevate performance. The warrior ethos includes "continuously honing physical, mental and professional skills in supporting the ability to employ military capabilities."³

I believe in the connection between sports and one's ability to lead in challenging circumstances. This said, it is only one perspective within a sea of individuals who have dedicated their lives to either coaching, leadership, or the development of others. The following are some of those who have graciously agreed to give their thoughts on the intersection between sports, the warrior ethos, and leadership.

Dana Lyon - USAFA Graduate; Former Member Air Force World Class Athlete Program; Current USAFA Assistant Coach, Track and Field

The way you do anything is the way you'll do everything.

I had only been in the uniform—my Track & Field singlet, that is—for 15 months when a senior competitor, from Texas A&M, said to me, "Dana, the fact that "AIR FORCE" is printed across your chest tells me you're more than a just good javelin thrower..." She

³ <https://www.usafa.edu/app/uploads/Warrior-Ethos-White-Paper-approved.pdf>

went on, but that conversation was the first realization for me in my athletic career, that the core of our mission at USAFA infiltrates every aspect of our lives, especially athletics. It ingrained in me not only the high calling for excellence, but the empowerment to achieve more than I could have ever imagined. The physical act of any military or athletic training is critical for growth because we won't get it right the first time; we don't just drill to get it right; we drill until we can't get it wrong. Basic Military Training, Combat Survival Training (CST), Airmanship 490, and other military training at the Academy are in lockstep with athletics at USAFA. Likewise, drill after drill, rep after rep—on the court, in the field or gym—develops in us the will to achieve and overcome. I call it creating patterns of behavior—we beat our bodies into submission, we set our minds to conquer, and we come out victorious. Not because we know the drill, it's because we know how to master the drill. The mindset of a champion is a powerful vessel. The hunger for victory is never satiated.

If my javelin coach only told me how to throw the javelin, but I never practiced, I would have never won championships. If we only sit in a classroom or watch a briefing on the critical programs we expect our cadets to be successful in, they will undoubtedly fail—and we would have failed them. It's the physical courage to work, battle, fail and respond with an attitude to overcome that gives us the ability to conquer any challenge the military, or life, may throw at you. I would take it one step further: it's not enough to simply complete a course or drill, you must be excellent. There is no victory in survival.

For me, track & field at the Academy was my life's training environment. Now, as a coach here, it is critical to the development of my athletes. I want my practices and training sessions to be more difficult than anything their competitions will ever throw at them.

Who I was determined to be as an athlete, the grit and determination to surmount any challenge, has spilled over into every facet of my life. It is my calling to inspire my athletes to achieve the same in sport and life.

Lt Col Kaipo McGuire, Ph.D.— Former NFL Player; Current Deputy Department Head/Director of Support, Physical Education at USAFA

Lt Col McGuire's view is that athletes and warriors are similarly developed to perform at increasingly higher levels, starting from a low-stress environment and then advancing to a high-stress environment. Later on, as highly trained warriors or athletes, these leaders draw on their experiences in increasingly challenging and difficult circumstances, whether making the clutch field goal or fighting in combat.

Lt Col McGuire also describes how practicing repetitively the often mundane and boring drills help these athletes and warriors learn to perform at their very best regardless of the conditions. The drills can be immeasurable, such as watching films, strategizing with the team or coach, or staying after practice for the extra reps. The consequences of not performing well in the highest levels of amateur sport, (e.g., in hockey, if you're not checking, you're going to get checked.) align with the consequences of not performing well in combat. Where do they learn these skills? Both athletes and warriors learn these skills more on the practice field than they do in the arena. When they put in the work on the practice field, both learn to perform at their very best in the moment required. They reach their peak performance when it counts.

Another equally important point is that athletes and warriors learn to immediately “dump” negative thoughts. These negative thoughts have a direct relationship to poor performance, so learning to clear

your mind and focus on the mission at hand takes mental training. Within the sports, combat, or business world, failure will be a part of taking calculated risks. Athletes learn that dwelling on the past missed shot will only negatively affect their future shots. In combat and business, there will be mistakes and, yet, one must keep going forward. Focusing on the mission and well-being of the team over your individual disappointments is critical.

**Rich Ramsey - Lt Col (ret) U.S. Army,
Former Army Commander/Air Officer
Commanding (AOC); Executive Coach**

There are parallels between an athlete and a military warrior in conditioning. Both the athlete and the warrior begin their training with physical and mental conditioning, as well as basic drills. Overextended conditioning, this preparation leads to a "live under the lights" experience. For both the warrior in combat or the athlete in the game, everything is predicated on training. Both fall back on repetitive and increasingly intense training, and the individual becomes capable of doing things without conscious thought. It becomes automatic that the warrior naturally flips the safety switch on their weapon when in a firefight, or the athlete effortlessly makes the free throw in a game – despite the pressure to not fail. Practice doesn't make perfect; practice makes permanent. Just as warriors wire their brains in training so that combat comes naturally, so athletes wire their brains in practice so their skills will be automatic in competition. Finally, these same skills translate to leading others, whether at the tactical level in the military, an athletic team, or a civilian organization. The same dedication and grit that led to success on the friendly fields of strife will pave the way to success in other life tests.

In combat and business, there will be mistakes and, yet, one must keep going forward. Focusing on the mission and well-being of the team over your individual disappointments is critical.

**Coach Sam Barber - USAFA Wrestling
Coach**

The first rule for coaches is to be a leader who teaches and models character and integrity. Coaches set the program goals for the warrior ethos, holding their team accountable and providing stability during times of uncertainty and adversity. Coaches provide experiences that directly impact future leadership during times of high stress. A model sports program for the warrior ethos will create an environment where cadet-athletes will have to balance multiple life demands while pursuing challenging but realistic athletic goals over a set period. Additionally, the model program will flex, support and demand that cadet-athletes pursue excellence in all areas of their lives. There is a right way to win versus winning at all costs. The coach will provide a challenging and supportive environment that builds resilience despite or in the face of failure.

Great coaches are strategic thinkers and use all the tools required to achieve and track progress toward mission success. Accountability is critical in both the individual and team's development. This, in turn, can influence a shared growth mindset where failure isn't accepted but can be teaching points for the future.

Finally, the coach can teach athletes how to be strategic thinkers, not just on the athletic field, but in service to their nation. With the right mindset

and approach, the coach can create transformational experiences in the athletic world that develop maturity and confidence that translate to their future capabilities as leaders of character.

Conclusion

At USAFA, athletics is one of the pillars of a cadet's development. Like the other Academies, USAFA is tasked to prepare leaders of character who are ready to lead with integrity in defense of our nation. To prepare to serve in the Air Force as a leader, tactician and strategist, the Academy uses athletics as a building block for personal development. All of the Service Academies value competitive sports as a means of developing leadership and the warrior ethos. The intersection of Athletics, the Warrior Ethos, and the tenets of the LCF to "Own, Engage, and Practice" will continue to be dynamic and integral to the development of Air Force officers.

♦ ♦ ♦

References

- Center for Character and Leadership Development (CCLD), (2011). Developing leaders of character at the United States Air Force Academy: A conceptual framework. Retrieved from <https://caccapl.blob.core.usgovcloudapi.net/web/character-development-project/repository/developing-leaders-of-character-conceptual-framework.pdf>
- Center for Character and Leadership Development (CCLD), (2011). Leader of Character Read Ahead [Unpublished report].
- Wakefield, W.E. (1997). *Playing to Wing: Sports and the American Military, 1898-1945 (SUNY Series on Sport, Culture, and Social Relations)* (First Printing ed.). State University of New York Press.

FEATURE ARTICLES

The Importance of Human Capital Development

Brook Leonard, Chief of Staff, USSPACECOM, Brig Gen, USAF

Interviewed By: Douglas Lindsay

Lindsay: I appreciate you taking time today to talk with me about leadership and character. You have an extensive background leading different size organizations and teams. I understand that you did a lot of work with leader development, specifically coaching and mentoring, when you were the 56th Fighter Wing Commander at Luke AFB. Could you talk a little bit about what you did and what you got out of that?

Leonard: I'll rewind a little bit to get to our why and then talk about how we pursued our why. It really goes back to what I think is the real third offset, and that is human development and decision-making. I feel like that is our biggest resource and untapped in many ways. It is hard to measure and it is hard to do, but the return on investment curve is very steep. So, just a little bit, adds a ton. That is my perspective. That was our starting point. I wanted to invest in that piece with our leadership teams. We needed to put our money where our mouth was but how were we going to do that? I felt the biggest thing that we do as leaders is make decisions every day. So, the overall objective was to be better at making daily great decisions. To make those decisions, I created a decision gym. The decision gym was really a process of gathering decision tools, equipping people, and then giving them opportunities to execute those decisions. A sandbox if you will.

Then, there was the critical feedback piece of...how did you do? That feedback piece breaks down into mentoring and coaching, about understanding what you did and encouragement to get back in the fight. We brought in a lot of folks, materials, and dedicated resources toward it. I really just tried to feed everybody with information and

Brig. Gen. Brook Leonard is the Chief of Staff, United States Space Command, Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado. He is the principal advisor to the USSPACECOM commander and deputy commander, and directs the activities of the command staff in order to deter aggression and develop combat ready forces prepared to fight for and preserve the United States and allied space superiority. Brig Gen Leonard graduated from the United States Air Force Academy in 1992. He has a distinguished career commanding and different levels, serving as the Senior Military Assistant to the Secretary of the Air Force and the 56th Fighter Wing Commander. He is a command pilot with over 3000 hours, with 576 of those as combat hours. <https://www.af.mil/About-Us/Biographies/Display/Article/838665/brigadier-general-brook-j-leonard/>

opportunities. One tool and opportunity was to be intentional, for example, instead of just telling someone that I wanted them to be in charge of something like the unit's annual holiday party, I could be more intentional by aligning the opportunities and areas for growth. So, it was about being more intentional and more personal. It was, hey Doug, I noticed you are struggling with delegation, so I am going to have you do the holiday party and I am going to give you three folks that are extremely capable in delegating that you can learn from. I really want you to practice delegating and trusting these individuals to create the holiday party. After that, we are going to sit down and see how it went. That is how you take an everyday event, and turn it into an actual developmental opportunity where you have a specific mission, where I have told you what I have seen, I have given you feedback, given you a task and then armed you with the resources to execute and succeed or fail and learn. And then after the event, I give you feedback and close the loop with you. Then once you got feedback we provided a battle buddy to discuss it with. Everybody had a battle buddy that knew you and could go through your feedback with you pull out what was pertinent and get you back on track. That was the gym, the methodology of training decision makers so they could make decisions that had real impact and risk, what we called below the water decisions because to win in combat or competition you must be able to make decisions that matter about things that matter.

To get to below the water line decisions you had to start above the water line and progress into situations that mattered more and more. So how do you progress from leading the holiday party to leading the airshow to leading in combat? A big part of that progression was the coaching and feedback. It was arming them with tools but also incorporating the reflection piece. We are not taught a lot about coaching formally in the military, so I wanted to demonstrate how to do

that and also get smarter on it myself. So, I started two levels down with my squadron commanders, not with my Group Commanders. I felt it was good to go two levels down for a couple of reasons. One, because they weren't my direct reports. So, it was a little more of a relaxed environment because they were separated from me in reporting. I didn't want equipping to be mixed up with assessing. The other piece of it was I felt that spreading those tools down to them would help percolate it across the Wing faster. I broke them into two groups of four at a time and we did four sessions with each group over eight weeks, basically one week with one and the next with the other group. I asked them to come to the meeting with one thing they were trying at home and one thing that they were trying at work, but wasn't working. We would meet and go around the table, they would record the conversation, and then had two weeks between meetings to reflect on what we talked about, put it into practice, and then get results one way or another, reflect on that, and then talk about it.

I struggled to describe what we were actually setting out to do, but eventually called it moaching because I thought there were two key elements. One was the coaching element where I was listened and asked questions. Through coaching, I was trying to help them find the answer in themselves. When we talk coaching, and I know you are familiar with this, it is all about you asking questions. You dig and allow the person to walk through the issue. But there was a mentoring part too. The mentoring part is essentially, I have walked this path, I don't know if this will help you, but here is a suggestion of what I have learned in a similar situation. And by the way, I want you to go out and try it and then come back to me and tell me how it went, if you are comfortable doing that. That is why I called it moaching because I thought both of those elements were important, but not equally, more of an

80/20. 80% of the session coaching, listening, and question asking and 20% of it was hey, here is a thought that I had.

There were some other pieces and parts of it as well. For example, not only did they record the session, but then I asked them right after the session to give me feedback on what they valued from the discussion and how they felt it would be useful. It was feedback to me to see if I was meeting them where they needed to be met. It helped me, as the coach get these reflections. Then, they were to go over that transcript a week later and do the “homework” I gave them to do.

So why did I have them bring a personal problem and a work problem, and why were they to be problems that they were working on that they hadn’t been able to solve? First, I didn’t want a flippancy, help me solve world hunger type of discussion. I wanted it to be a real issue for them, something that they had worked at but weren’t successful at. I wanted a work one and a personal one because I wanted to illustrate to them that you are one person. The flaws that you have in one aspect of your life are the ones that you have in another aspect. Sometimes they come out in different ways and maybe you can recognize how to fix the one at work and you can use that strategy in your personal life, and vice versa. It also helped provide two perspectives on maybe the same core issue. Two different perspectives, helped us really get to a core understanding of the leadership issue that they were struggling with, and help them through that. Also, sometimes, it is easier to change yourself in one area and you can gather courage and can try it in the other environment with a little previous success, experience, or preparation.

I could go on and on about the benefits of the details and the intentionality of what we set up, but that was the original format that we then modified as we went. For

example, I started off with four folks, and went down to three because four was just too many to get into any in-depth questioning on two different issues and get around the table in an hour and a half. Another thing we learned was that it was good to have other people in the room because they learned from each other. They saw that each other had the same sort of struggles. It may not be exactly be the same issue, but just that they were struggling too. And sometimes they had a great suggestion or question, so I started encouraging them to talk, to moach too. It built this incredible teamwork across the commanders and an incredible amount of empathy in that it was okay to have issues, share them, and work through things together.

Overall, squadron command is the first level of true command. The Air Force, at the time, wasn’t really equipping people very well. I think they are doing a better job now, but still have work to do. That is why the moaching part was really important. I got some great help and advice from some outside agencies that are really good at this. I spent a lot of time working on the format because I felt that was very important. Even how I questioned. I would start of the discussion and the person who would go first is the person I thought would go the deepest. If the conversation started out deep and open, the rest of them would also be deep and open. If it started out really shallow and at the surface level, the rest of them tended in that direction and I would really have to work to drive them deep. The success of the overall session, in many ways, was contingent upon the first person that went.

I also spent a lot of time arranging the groups where I thought I had someone who would go real deep every time so I didn’t have to guess and could just start with them. I didn’t let them know that initially the methodologies at play, but I let them know that at the end and shared with them all of the background,

philosophy, framework, and design to equip them to go out and do this with their folks. I would do the sessions with them, and then the next eight week session, they would go and do the same thing within their squadrons. The group commanders were doing the same thing with the flight commanders. It was every other echelon throughout the Wing. We got to where squadron commanders were moaching below the flight commander level. Group commanders were moaching the flight commander level and I was moaching the squadron commander level. On the enlisted side, we had a little bit of that, but not as much as I wanted to. It was powerful...we talked about potty training your kids, dealing with in-laws, and how to lead diverse teams. I had people break down and cry in my office that I never would have expected. I had people learn and make huge personal changes and accordingly make huge difference in the people around them and our mission.

Overall, you never really know exactly the impact you are having. People often tell you the good stuff and not always the bad stuff. So while I got a lot of good feedback, I was hungry for what we could do better in this area. I spent a lot of time and energy on human development, a lot of money, resources, and focus was on leadership and decision-making. One of the questions I most remember, a squadron commander asked me at one of the leadership offsites, and it was "what is your measure of effectiveness with all of this time you are spending on leadership?" I thought it was a great question. I had been struggling with this because I think investment in human capital is important but often hard to quantify. Where was my return on investment? I told them, it was that one day, when you have led your family well, and you had led well in the Air Force, and you are successful as a mom or dad, husband or wife, and you can look back and say that part of that was because the time we spent

on it at Luke, then I will feel we were successful...so stay in touch and write me back in five years. As for immediate success, it was a mixed bag. In some ways, I thought I was pushing it a lot, and when I left, some of it stopped. So a question you need to ask as you do a change like this is, are you forcing this change on the organization at a rate it can handle it or are you forcing it on the organization at a rate it can't and therefore it snaps back? And to that end what is the best way to do it? I felt like, at the time, it was the best methodology at Luke because in the end, it was tactically helpful and strategically sustainable. In reality based on the amount of time it took, it probably would have taken another year or so to get to that strategically sustainable place and show the exponential growth in tactical gains. Through this process an accelerant is external support and to get that you often need to show those outright, immediate gains, but that isn't necessarily the right and long view you must have with human development.

A focus on decision making isn't the only thing that helps decision making...adding other things that grow the character of your folks is an accelerant as well. So another thing that we did was instead of having the standard wingman day, we worked on resiliency, which is often best done by focusing on someone else. For example, someone is having trouble dealing with a loss, and when they started helping someone else with a loss, it helped them in their own loss. As an example, we closed down Luke for a day, we put on our orange Luke Thunderbolt shirts, and the order of the day was to go out and serve the community. That was our wingman day...to go out and serve others. I felt that day made us more resilient. It is interesting because we weren't flying or producing students, but it absolutely bubbled up and yielded a huge return. It was really critical that we went out and served and it wasn't your typical sit in a room and talk about resiliency. We are going to go out, help the homeless, clean up, and do some really

interesting things. The feedback I got was really good. It was a huge investment on something different and it is a necessary part of a larger context of what we were trying to do in building human capital.

Lindsay: You hit on a lot of important things there. Training can happen over a set period of time, depending on what we are training to, but development occurs over time. Development doesn't often occur when we are comfortable, but when there is a reason for that development to occur. What I liked about your examples were that they showed commitment from the top level and it had many second and third order effects as well on things like trust, psychological safety, and commitment to the organization. I think it shows that it can occur at all levels of the organization. You also mentioned your own personal development. As a senior leader working on your development, that sends a powerful message. That you learned a lot through that process and are still working on your own development as a leader.

Leonard: Absolutely. It is the, if you stop growing, you die kind of philosophy. It is really about suspending judgement your whole life and listening and learning... and putting what you learn into action, and trying again. I think the higher in rank that you go, because of some of the protocol afforded to you, and this came out to me at my time at North Carolina in their leadership school, when your strengths get overplayed is usually when you fail as a leader. One of the ways that I buffer myself against that is if you can put yourself in the room and actually suspend judgment, listen, and ask questions and just sit there. Instead of, "I have been in that position before and I know the solution." As a matter of fact, doing that as a coach, made me better in the Wing standup. Instead of saying, "No, on Tuesday you are going to do this," I instead asked, "Why do you think that?" It really helped.

The key about development, and you hit it on the head, is that it can be uncomfortable. It is the gym analogy. We go to the gym not to get a little bit hotter, but to sweat, and if my muscles are sore, that means I had a good workout. But we don't approach our development in leadership that way, at least not naturally. We go to the gym, work out and break down our muscles and then we will have a protein shake and recover. But we don't have the same thing on leadership development... we don't have an organization or methodology to do that to break down and build up our leadership. That is what I think is critical. It is that developmental process that you have to put in place as a leader to build other leaders. You have to give people the tools and you have to give them an opportunity where it counts. You can start off with the holiday party, but you are going to have to get to a "do we land on Normandy or not type of situation?" You have to get them from where they are to that level, and you do that by first getting them to the level that they should be. For them to be a flight commander, they have to make decisions at the flight commander level. So, whatever responsibility the organization wants them to have, they need to be able to go at that speed and make decisions at that level to beat the enemy. But they are typically nowhere near that point, especially when they first take that position, you have to get them up to that point. In the NFL you don't start the season with the Super Bowl. You practice a ton and play a bunch of games and finally you get yourself up to that fighting category, and then you go win it.

We don't often do that systematically or over the time horizons required within the Air Force to equip people to make those decisions to where we can really trust them to make them and know that they are going to be great. We sort of give them the opportunity, a little episodic training and let them go. And then we are often episodic with intentional feedback. The feedback

piece is important to be able to learn and grow...the protein shake of development. So with human capital development, you have to create the process to do all of that. It is incredibly important to equip, test with intention, assess, digest, repeat. Then, on the character and teamwork side, we don't spend time in each other's lives. The coaching and mentoring process was all of those things. Let's just talk. What are your hopes and dreams? Where are you? The higher up in rank we go, the less we talk to each other and ask about each other. This is the delta that I think we need to get better at. It's that gym process and about being uncomfortable. If you go and work out and get sore, but you don't recover, that is bad too. If you don't know how to do a bench press and you hurt yourself, that is also bad. It is those nodes of arming and educating, running out into the arena, getting dirty and beat up, recovering, and then cycling back again.

Lindsay: I like that example because it talks about intentionality in the process. Being intentional about what you are doing and why you are doing it. That coaching process and development is important. I know that when I coach others, I also learn a lot about myself. Along those lines, if you could go back, and Brigadier General Leonard could sit down with Cadet Leonard, what advice do you think you would give yourself?

Leonard: I would say, take advantage of the opportunities. As an example, the Academy from what I had seen had never gotten the squadron commanders together and tried to fill up their tanks before they assumed command. However, our senior year, they started doing that. Do you remember that?

Lindsay: I do, I was the Squadron Commander for CS-15.

Leonard: They got us all together at a hotel off base. That was the first time that they had done that. It wasn't that event specifically, but the idea that they were going to invest in you as a person, not just as a student. It was this focus on leadership that was very individually focused. I remember one of the things that we did was write down on index cards for each other, "You are at your best when..." I still have those.

Lindsay: So do I.

Leonard: It made a huge difference. We spent time away from the Academy, it felt special, it was individual, and it was about leadership. That was later in our time at the Academy. I felt like we could have done that earlier and much more intensely. If I could speak to my earlier self, I would say, go seek that out because it was going on, just hard to find. I knew it was going to make a difference the second I did it. It was just getting plugged into these seemingly peripheral opportunities.

There are many more things out there like that now, but the key is how do you get plugged into that? That was the other thing about moaching, it was in my office, it was just a few people, but it wasn't a syllabus or a module that the Air Force issued. It was something different. It was individual. I would tell myself to seek that out and to individually start the journey. That got me going a little bit and then later I went to the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies (SAASS) at Maxwell Air Force Base. That reinvigorated it for me. To seek out personal growth in my profession, as an officer who is responsible for leading. Whatever your AFSC is, it comes back to what the Air Force really needs out of you—to be a great leader. Personally invest in that development. Go find it, immerse yourself in it and make it part of your life. There have been some really great power pellets during my career, and the more you can find the better. That is what I would

suggest to me as my younger self. To the organization, I would say provide those opportunities more overtly, and intentionally and especially at the daily unit level.

There are more pieces and they wrap into some of the other things we tried. In pilot training, I can show you my grade book. Is he good at formation flying? Is he good at instrument flying? Is he good at this or that? I take a PT test, and you know exactly what I can do and how long it takes. If you would ask, what are my leadership strengths? What are my tendencies and biases? You can't tell me that. Hopefully, I know them. It is important for me to know that, but institutionally we don't provide people the tools to know themselves. Don't get me wrong, it is hard. But, there are tons of things out there, low hanging fruit that can be done. For example, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator is a very simple assessment. There are others out there, and I saw them put into amazing use at the U.S. Army War College. The instructor took information based on numerous assessments, unbeknownst to us, and seated us based on that. He took the extraverts, as we were sitting in a u-shape, and put them on either side of him. He put the introverts at 10 and 2 o'clock right in his line of sight...all to balance the discussion where everyone contributed, but not too much. Then, he mixed things up. We were doing a creative thinking assignment where we had to come up with the latest gadget and how we would advertise it. He intentionally organized those groups for certain results. We went off and did the project and had to work with each other in groups. When we came back, he said, I am going to tell you what happened in each group before you brief me. Group A met for about a half an hour of the three hours allotted, and came to a decision. They think it is the greatest thing ever and thought that they had too much time to do it. Group B, couldn't come to a conclusion. They had about a thousand examples, and still don't know what is best and Group C, they fought the whole time.

He was spot on in each case. The reason was, because he used the results from our assessments and chose groups based on that. He made one of super decisive people, one of creatives, and the last one he mixed it up in a way he knew would create chaos. That was the lesson. The whole creative advertising thing wasn't the lesson. The lesson was how we need to pay attention to our personalities. Coincidentally, on our name placards, which had been there for about a month, he had written our Myers-Briggs scores inside of them and as he went through how he used them he had us flip them open and see physically how powerful knowing yourself and each other is. A brilliant demonstration of how important that is.

There are other examples, but I say that because I think we need to give people the tools to understand themselves and organizationally, we need to understand each other and that will help us with development and our return on investment. It is really important. Knowing that, understanding that, and measuring that goes back to human capital development and where I think it is important to spend resources at all levels. It is really important that we begin at the earliest levels and keep it up across a career.

Lindsay: Exactly, if we don't catch people early on about what they think and how they think, we are missing a huge opportunity and the potential return on investment.

Leonard: That was the biggest thing that I was trying to do as the Wing Commander in doing all of that human capital development. Yes we wanted to be better right now, but we really wanted to create habits early on, and be better exponentially and across our great service. As a matter of fact, I still have habits as a pilot that started when I was a Lieutenant at Luke AFB. I still do some of those things. It is even better

if we can get them while they are at the Academy, their mind is even more wide open. The earliest time is the best time to put them on that vector. The opposite is also true. If you are not putting that in their time at the Academy, it is a lost opportunity and other things start to compete for you time and attention, and it becomes hard to turn that around when they are a Lieutenant, or even later.

Lindsay: Development will occur anyway, even if we don't support them in that. One way we can build on, the other, we may have to recover from. It is that intentionality that is important.

Leonard: Agreed. Thanks for what you are doing and if I can support in any way, please let me know.

♦ ♦ ♦

FEATURE ARTICLES

Inclusion: The Power in Diversity

Christopher Miller, United States Air Force Academy

Americans in all walks of life—in civil society and the military, including the Air Force Academy—were distressed and galvanized by George Floyd’s death and all that followed it, and spurred to introspection on how we treat each other. As part of that reflective process, it may be time to reconsider the phrase diversity and inclusion. Since the Civil Rights Act of 1965, this phrase has gained increasing prominence in media, academia, corporate and governmental leadership priorities and in the consciousness of the nation. As noble as those two linked ideas may be, and as hard as so many have tried to achieve the promise the combined concept implies, success may require us to rethink the order in which we habitually write and conceive those two words. Why? Because some simple yet powerful realities apply especially strongly to the military context: All leaders can foster inclusion in the teams and relationships they touch, yet few leaders in military hierarchical organizations can directly or rapidly influence the diversity of their own teams. Moreover, success in military conflict places a premium on cohesion, where inclusion with diversity is powerful, but diversity without inclusion fosters division. These realities strongly suggest that leader development must focus intently on how leaders at all levels can more reliably build truly inclusive teams.

The very nature of the future conflict environment demands revisiting inclusion as a preeminent part of military leadership. Tomorrow’s warriors will still do battle in units threatened by enemy weapons, so strong interpersonal bonds among increasingly diverse teammates is as vital as it always has been. Yet those same warriors’ success or failure will also increasingly hinge on an incredibly broad set of capabilities in the electromagnetic spectrum, in cyberspace, in orbit, and in industry, which are provided by an ever-more demographically and cognitively diverse

Lieutenant General Christopher D. Miller (Ret) serves as the Helen and Arthur E. Johnson Chair for the Study of the Profession of Arms at the U.S. Air Force Academy Center for Character and Leadership Development. He previously served as the Executive Editor of the Journal of Character and Leadership Integration (JCLI) which was the predecessor to the JCLD. His active service included leadership as the Air Force’s deputy chief of staff for strategic plans and programs, US Northern Command and NORAD’s director of strategy, plans and policy, and as the senior Air Force operational commander deployed in Afghanistan. He also commanded the Air Force’s B-2 wing and B-1 bomber units, and held a wide variety of positions in policy analysis, international relations, human resources, aviation and academia. He was a 1980 distinguished graduate of the Air Force Academy, and earned graduate degrees from the U.S. Naval War College and Oxford University.

workforce, most recently exemplified by creation of the US Space Force. Put less politely, modern militaries still need the strength of their warfare tribes, but the grunt and the geek, the pilot and the programmer, the sailor and the satellite operator are increasingly tightly connected. One cannot win without the other.

In this daunting environment, mission and individual success and creating the kinds of high performing, welcoming environments that leverage every diverse attribute in their teams demands inclusive leadership. Greater inclusion increases the probability of building strong teams that can work effectively with other strong teams. Importantly, inclusive leaders must also be good stewards of the people they *can* influence and develop capability—for their own organization and for the future—valuing diversity as one aspect of potential. Inclusive, aligned leadership at all levels will also give strategic-level leaders greater leverage to shape a force more representative of society as a whole and that values, rewards, and advances more equally all who chose to serve.

Why This, Why Now?

Suggesting we think first of inclusion, then of diversity, is not to suggest less earnest effort to achieve greater gender, racial, or other social justice—nor is it an endorsement of the status quo. Rather, it is an attempt to focus on one practical, attainable leadership perspective that might make a real difference in actually achieving diverse, AND inclusive teams.

These thoughts are shaped by practical experience overseeing the Air Force assignment process nearly two decades ago as part of a career of followership and leadership in small and large units. They were finally crystallized by reading the views of almost 124,000 people responding to the 2020 Racial

Disparity Review¹ initiated by the Secretary of the Air Force, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, and Chief of Space Operations.

Importantly, the Department of the Air Force—past, present and future—is in many ways a microcosm of American society. It competes with myriad other government and commercial entities for those who join its ranks, and it benefits or suffers from the economic forces in society. It differs from most in that its fundamental purpose is to prevail in adversarial combat or competition that could affect the United States. It is challenging, potentially deadly, and morally dangerous work. Physical, intellectual and conduct standards shape who may join and who may remain; and while it aspires to excellence in all things, it remains drawn from the society that it serves. This matters because the Air and Space Forces have no more right to recruit talented, committed Airmen and Guardians than they can earn. Every potential recruit has many choices.

The snapshot of demographic metrics presented in the Racial Disparity Review give valuable insight into how Air Force processes have succeeded or failed over time to create opportunities, attract new talent, shape personal and institutional decisions, and produce positive outcomes. Like all personnel metrics, they reflect the sum of many factors beginning with every demographic, individual, and experiential attribute of those who choose to serve, and how those individuals, groups and systems interact over decades. Decisions shaped by “the system” and individuals in the late 1980s or early 1990s produced the senior leadership makeup of today. Decisions affecting racial disparity made by today’s senior Air Force and Space Force leaders will only be holistically reflected years and decades from today—most likely far beyond the tenures of those senior leaders. Thus improvements in

1 <https://www.af.mil/portals/1/documents/ig/IRDR.pdf>

many demographic metrics on promotion, discipline, education, career field participation, and the like will not be fully apparent until multiple senior leadership terms have passed, even given any given leader's most visionary, concerted, and dedicated actions.

Yet a close reading of the review suggests while force-wide demographic measures are important, they may obscure the most important goal. What if the real targets—the most impactful things that leaders can affect—are the views of 124,785 military and civilian members who voiced varying degrees of dissatisfaction with trust, fairness, bias, opportunity, and relationships? What if leaders were to aim at achieving a future state of affairs where the number of Airmen and Guardians expressing serious concern about bias and racial disparity were to be roughly equal across every race? Would we consider ourselves successful if we were to achieve a societally representative percentage of all demographic categories in all career fields, disciplinary statistics, or other data-driven metrics—if Airmen and Guardians *still* voice discontent? In other words, are we really seeking to eliminate all numerical disparity, and is that an achievable end? — or are we seeking to achieve a professional environment in which all members, regardless of race or the personal career choices they choose to pursue, are generally and equally satisfied with its equity, their own opportunities, the people around them, and the lives they lead within it? It seems likely the latter is far more likely to be the desired effect.

If we are seeking to create a leadership environment where people and units perceive fairness and choose to serve gladly, then perhaps this small change in

how we think about the challenge—operationalizing inclusion as the key to diversity's success—can make all the difference.

Beyond doing what is right from a human perspective, we must again consider external realities we cannot fully control. Modern militaries are already inextricably dependent on competent, committed rear-echelon support personnel and on civilian industry—but future warfare will require an even more intimate degree of interconnection and understanding between very different kinds of people than it ever has. To the degree the core competence of the evolving military profession and its corresponding ethos can be effectively redefined over time, patterns of interaction all throughout that redefined military profession will need to be substantially different than they have historically been if for no other reason than the tasks expected of such a modern military grow increasingly

Decisions affecting racial disparity made by today's senior Air Force and Space Force leaders will only be holistically reflected years and decades from today—most likely far beyond the tenures of those senior leaders.

broader. As just one example, the interface between military professionals and homeland security personnel crosses jurisdictional, territorial, and conceptual boundaries to intertwine military and civil actors ever more closely. This is traditionally manageable in natural disasters and localized unrest but will be increasingly pressurized by future space and cyber threats and peer competitors capable of viable conventional, not just nuclear, attacks. These kinds of future conflicts already

place a far higher premium on systemic understanding and decision-making, at a more consistently global scale, with greater reference to civilian infrastructures and issues, and in time scales both shorter and longer than traditional military operations and planning have historically encompassed. These trends are accelerating, not slowing.

Why Inclusion?

Inclusion is powerful. When leaders model, encourage, and expect openness and mutual respect among those they lead, it helps connect the gifts, desires, cultures, constraints, and contributions of every team member, regardless of what they look like. Inclusion is a recognition of common humanity, not

creeds, and outlooks, adding value for each and every individual by seeing and valuing differences and by reinforcing common bonds.

No leader can just summon real or lasting desirable diversity outcomes when the resources to do so lay beyond their authority. Throughout levels of command in the military, but especially at the core unit level of the squadron, leaders have almost no direct influence on the near-term demographic makeup of their unit, nor can they choose the kinds of cognitive diversity that people bring with them. The diversity attainable in any given unit reflects results of birth, education, training, family circumstances, geopolitical events, and innumerable human interactions—most notably

...very few leaders have direct control over how their unit “looks”—however, every leader can powerfully set the conditions to enable and create a better future which metrics will then reflect.

choice by individuals of all kinds—over periods of years. It also inevitably reflects needs of the military service and the inventory of those who are prepared to fill those needs. In short, very few leaders have direct control over how their unit “looks”—*however, every leader can powerfully set the conditions to enable and create a better future which metrics will then reflect.*

just an organizational imperative; it is the right thing to do. Inclusion elicits the best effort and broadest perspectives—intellectual, cultural, experiential—of all involved, and elevates the performance of an organization by bringing the diversity inherent in its members to bear. An inclusive organization is an attractive organization; it is one in which team members feel valued, heard, and elevated. Talented people will seek to join it; those who are less confident of their talent will see it as a way to move their lives forward; and most importantly, it will be seen as a place where all can flourish. If an organization is truly inclusive, it will be a good place to work—equitably including people of different genders, races, ethnicities,

For any leader in any context, inclusion is a lever they can influence. Leaders can and do control the way they interact, what they model, how they decide, and what they expect, thereby shaping the culture of their organization. They can value each team member’s worth as a person and as a professional, not ignoring their skin color, gender, ethnicity, or any other characteristic, but appreciating it in context. This is not a post-racial mindset; it is a post- and inherently anti-racism mindset, that recognizes and values difference, but encourages and expects common endeavor and values. It reflects the reality that society has much work ahead to address the interplay of interests, social

disparities and injustices, but no individual military or civilian leader in DoD can resolve all such challenges endemic to the pool of those who choose to don the uniform. Nor can they change or erase the past: they can only go forward. Seeking to build a future that does not echo past wrongs, every leader has the power—and the responsibility—to do right in the moment, to include all within their sphere of influence, and help lift those they lead to be their best possible selves.

Importantly, inclusiveness depends on the leaders' good intentions, but also requires a degree of humility that can be seen as superficially antithetical to the discipline, hierarchy and heroic leader stereotypes often associated with the military profession. Inclusion requires mutual respect and true listening; it does not necessarily cede authority or dilute responsibility for leaders, and it recognizes that power shared can be power multiplied for mission accomplishment. Inclusion is a way of structuring a team and an attitude on the part of leaders and team members that comes naturally to some and less to others, so it is incumbent on leaders to create a shared culture that both demonstrates and demands inclusion as the default relationship between teammates and with important partners.

At the strategic level, too, a pattern of thinking of diversity and inclusion in that order subtly tempts us to overlook the reality that diversity is a *dependent* variable; policy can affect some metrics, but an organization's diversity also reflects many individual perspectives and decisions influenced more by the intangibles of organizational culture than by directive. Senior leaders' policy objectives guide personnel systems and processes to attract, retain, and distribute a diverse workforce, but do so in the nationally competitive context; they shape but do not determine diversity outcomes. Without removing all freedom

of choice for people to live as they wish, choose their own professional paths, make choices about family and where and how they live, it is simply not possible to guarantee that any leader at any given level—much less all levels—will be able to mandate proportions of any demographic.

Given that they generally cannot choose who they lead, then, leaders must still build effective teams from whatever human talent and potential they are entrusted with. Those who lead inclusively are more likely to retain diverse teammates and build healthy cultures; those who are blessed with greater diversity *and value it* will benefit accordingly. Diversity without inclusion can institutionalize and magnify resentment, division, and alienation. Put differently, an inclusive organizational climate fosters healthy diversity; while diversity in and of itself does not necessarily lead to inclusion, to personal fulfillment, to excellence in mission accomplishment, or to addressing the concerns expressed in the Racial Disparity Review. How, then do we think about the process of developing more inclusive leaders, particularly those beginning their service in the military profession?

One Approach to Leader Development

There exists today a useful, still maturing template for achieving diversity's potential through strengthened inclusion. As part of an important developmental framework², the Air Force Academy defines a Leader of Character as one who “lives honorably, lifts others to be their best possible selves, and elevates performance to a common and noble purpose.” From this definition, we can infer some valuable guidelines for developing inclusive leaders for diverse groups of people.

² <https://caccapl.blob.core.usgovcloudapi.net/web/character-development-project/repository/developing-leaders-of-character-conceptual-framework.pdf>

At the fundamental level, leaders who *live honorably* (i.e., consistently practice the virtues embodied in the Air Force's articulated core values of integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all we do) will necessarily respect themselves and the dignity of others. Those who embrace the goal of living honorably are likely to seek to demonstrate, encourage, and expect honesty, courage, accountability, loyalty, discipline, and a sense of duty to their team's mission. Honor in this sense goes beyond the warrior's honor in battle; it is a larger commitment to doing the right thing for the right reasons, and it inherently drives leaders to be fundamentally inclusive of those with whom they share common purpose, regardless of their differences. In many ways, this is the attribute that makes the US military the apolitical institution that it is: the American military professional honors, supports and defends the Constitution and those chosen to exercise civil authority under its aegis.

Secondly, the leader of character's mandate to *lift others* is not conditioned in any way upon that other's gender, race, religion, ethnicity, or any other immutable (or voluntary) characteristic. As an aspiration, it is unbounded, applying to all in the leader's potential sphere of influence, including subordinates, colleagues, superiors, and sometimes people beyond their immediate team. In practice, it depends on the leader's abilities, energies, closeness of contact with others, and—importantly—the degree of shared understanding they can develop. But whether in theory or practice, achieving the goal of *lifting others* is necessarily inclusive because it depends on a real, constructive, and mutually respectful relationship with the leader. It depends on seeing and caring to know others. It inherently places value on the both the person and contribution of those others, empowering them as individuals and providing powerful motivation for self- and group-oriented positive behaviors. Lifting others

also requires a sense of larger stewardship for inclusive leaders, and mandates they think beyond their immediate unit and needs, considering diversity as an important factor in the many developmental decisions they make that can and do change the course of their subordinates' lives and the character of the future force.

Finally, the leader of character is expected to *elevate performance* to a common and noble purpose. In the professional military context, "elevating performance" often means excellence in assigned mission preparation and mission execution; it can also mean achieving organizational excellence in managing people, developing talent, using resources, acquiring new capabilities, and planning for future challenges. Achieving any of those desirable outcomes requires constructive team members who bring education, training, experience, commitment and courage to bear, among other contributions. An inclusive team elicits the best of everyone on the team; a *diverse team*, inclusively lead and operating, brings even more varied knowledge, life experience, cultural breadth, and a variety of perspectives to any challenge—while powerfully leveraging shared purpose and common human virtues. It stands to reason that a team that is both truly inclusive *and* diverse will do better than those which are neither.

Consistently lifting others and elevating performance is a challenging bar for leaders to reach even in a homogenous setting. Because leaders aren't always successful in forging strong teams, a frequently articulated argument against diversity has been that it can dilute unit cohesion, a vital if intangible component of military victory throughout history. Lack of cohesion can lead to death and defeat. From Shakespeare's Henry V, in which the King prepares his army for battle calling them "we few, we happy few, we band of brothers," to innumerable modern examples, there is no doubt that interpersonal bonds make units stronger

in combat. It is also indisputable that the very nature of the American military's purpose – to employ lethal or other destructive means against identified “others” when properly authorized—accentuates natural human tendencies to form and identify with exclusive groups based on perceived common characteristics. Yet inclusive leaders create an organizational culture that knows the difference and encourages members to rise above instinct, bonding with others based on shared goals, contributions, and experiences. There is no immutable law that says a diverse group cannot share these things; many examples exist of just such groups, from athletic teams to special operations units. The key is in the reciprocal bonds that flow from sharing and experiencing what matters, and inclusion—underpinned by mutual respect—enables that sharing to take place.

A leader of character can gauge how inclusive they and their organizations are by asking some simple questions, every day: Do I *really* listen to my people, and respect what they say whether or not I agree? Do I do so without prejudging their inputs and work based on a pre-existing expectation? Do I model, and see, indications of consistent respect between peers, and between leaders and followers? Do I allow disrespect to exist without correcting it? Are there in- and out-groups? Do I solicit, mentor, recognize and reward excellence and collaborative effort, and do I reject self-centered or prejudiced conduct whenever it becomes apparent? And finally, do I seek to give opportunities to people who bring diversity to the table in race, gender, background, culture, life experience, and cognitive style?

Good leaders in diverse organizations face failures—on the part of individuals or the unit— and must hold people accountable, but do so respectfully and

constructively, where the goal is always the greater good, not the leader's gratification or evasion of responsibility. Leaders at all levels in the Air and Space Forces can do no better at creating inclusive environments than seeking to emulate graduates of the Air Force Weapons School, whose watchwords are humble, approachable, and credible³. Those who exhibit those attributes are well equipped to lead inclusively by living honorably, lifting others, and elevating performance.

Conclusion

The opening assertion of this essay was that the power of “diversity and inclusion” is best achieved by focusing on development of greater inclusion as the universally practical and achievable means to that end, particularly in the military leadership context. This does not diminish the immense importance of achieving greater diversity and minimizing disparity, which is vital for our society and for individuals. In every setting, recruitment, education, mentoring, and other systems must be made relentlessly fair and must eliminate racial and other bias as much as is humanly possible using the tools of policy, law, and other incentives and disincentives. All of these things are necessary, and conscious attention to the diversity of Air and Space Force organizations remains critical.

One caveat is important: while the US military certainly has the potential to achieve real, exemplary success in shaping a high-performing and diverse workforce, it is not because the military has any exclusive claim to moral superiority over the citizenry it serves. Rather, the military recruits capable people by its nature, has the luxury of a compelling set of missions to incentivize shared purpose and most of the resources to do so in reasonable fashion, and benefits from an historic and collective expectation

³ <https://www.airforcemag.com/article/humble-approachable-experts/>

of sacrificial service that provides overt and admirable standards for all military members to achieve. Thus it can serve as a useful template for nonpartisan, principled, and inclusive service without claiming any particular birthright to do so. This is in the best democratic tradition.

Consistent with that tradition, inclusion is the most available and most important leadership tool to enhance diversity over time and holds the greatest promise of maximizing both satisfaction and contribution for individual people and the Department of the Air Force. All leaders, at all levels, lead more effectively when they strive to be more inclusive, respecting and valuing diversity and valuing without accentuating difference, thus lifting all around them—regardless of demographic category—to be the best they can be. Leaders who think beyond the present, as stewards of the future military profession, will invest in development of people, valuing diversity of all kinds in their decisions. Successful inclusion of a fuller degree of the talents of more people of more different kinds cannot help but elevate the performance of the organizations in which they work. Even more, realized inclusiveness brings out the best in individuals and makes diversity not just a matter of metrics, but of more fulfilled and fairly treated people.

Our national motto—*e pluribus unum*—depends equally on the many, and on the one. We can't have unity without embracing all. The inclusive many make for one powerful, diverse, and exemplary military.

♦ ♦ ♦

FEATURE ARTICLES

Rethinking Warrior Ethos: Developing (Not Selecting) Leaders

Robert D. Reimer, United States Air Force Academy

Maximillian Bremer, North American Aerospace Defense Command

Hans Larsen, United States Air Force Academy Preparatory School

Training, developing, and inspiring innovative leaders with warrior ethos to fight and win the Nation's wars is a noble, necessary, yet decidedly complex enterprise. The Nation requires leaders who are highly effective in the face of uncertainty. Warrior ethos, which we define as *that mastery of character which blends passion and caution in the face of physical and moral adversity while pursuing noble goals*, serves to meet this need, but requires intentional development. Warrior ethos is both an individual character quality and a shared cultural norm. As a character quality, warrior ethos is what sets Airmen, Guardians, Marines, Sailors, and Soldiers (henceforth collectively referred to as leaders) apart from civilian counterparts. A shared warrior ethos is what binds together those who serve in the profession of arms. Additionally, the foundational elements of warrior ethos are frequently innate in a volunteer force, but require deliberate awakening, development, and cultivation. Challenges, like those faced in early military life, are a natural catalyst for awakening a military leader's warrior ethos, but are often insufficient to develop this character quality to full stature. Military organizations conspicuously lack a well-ordered approach to equip leaders for increasingly challenging professional work, to enhance unity, and to inculcate the force with

Lieutenant Colonel Robert D. Reimer, Ph.D., U.S. Air Force is an Associate Professor at the United States Air Force Academy in the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership. Bob leads the team that designs and delivers the leadership core curriculum for fourth-class, third-class, and second-class cadets at the Academy. He shares leadership with two other course directors and a faculty team from the Athletic Department, the Cadet Wing, the Center for Character and Leadership Development, and the Dean of the Faculty. Bob holds a Ph.D. in Industrial and Organizational Psychology from the Pennsylvania State University and studies organizational performance. He is an awarded educator with experiences leading individuals, teams, and organizations in educational, professional, and austere environments. He has applied experiences advancing the performance of global companies, government organizations, professional associations, and educational institutions.

a mature warrior ethos culture. Formative experiences should be deliberately planned and adaptively executed, with the goal of developing elite, diverse leaders who exhibit a unifying warrior ethos.

Our nation relies upon leaders as a “solution to the problem of collective effort—the problem of bringing people together and combining their efforts to promote success and survival” (Kaiser, Hogan, & Craig, 2008, p. 96). Yet, the rate of leader failure is gravely concerning. Incidents of civil unrest, racial disparity, and manifested national divide in 2020 serve as unmistakable indicators that some leaders did not simply fail, but were directly responsible for substantial negative consequences. Contrasted with the definition of warrior ethos, adversity has the upper hand, opportunities are being missed, and decisions appear self-serving rather than noble. In a recent report on urgent needs and challenges, 71% of global citizens reported experiencing the lowest point in their respective national histories (Milken Institute &

Harris Poll, 2020). Nearly two thirds of respondents reported that their leaders are out of touch and really don’t care about people. These examples are illustrative of high-ranking leaders who are failing late in their careers and failing big.

Conflicts of the early 21st Century indicate that warfare is rapidly evolving. Whereas traditional warfare involved massed armies, industrial networks, and projecting power across expansive distances to decrease an enemy’s will to fight, modern warfare emphasizes the strategic qualities of participants. Ideas and culture increasingly account for the emergence of conflict, rather than massive reserves of arms. Whereas traditional efforts to amass reserves of weaponry could involve years and even decades of effort, technology makes it possible for information to rapidly evolve and spread (McChrystal, Silverman, & Collins, 2015).

Warriors desire the most modern, effective weapons at their disposal. It is easy to become enamored with

Colonel Maximilian K. Bremer, U.S. Air Force is the NORAD & U.S. Northern Command liaison officer and Chief, Space Command Integrated Planning Element at the U.S. Transportation Command. A 1997 distinguished graduate of the Air Force Academy, he has an MPP from Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government and an MAAS from the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies. His experience includes over 600 combat and combat support hours in the KC-135, command in combat of the world’s largest tanker squadron, and multiple other staff, instructor and operational assignments. Additionally, he has deployed as the Title 10 Deputy Commander to multiple National Guard Dual Status Commanders for Defense Support to Civil Authorities operations.

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

technology, and in doing so overlook the most critical weapons in any arsenal: leaders and those they lead. We expect, and even demand, military members to be technical experts in their career fields. Specialized, rigorous, and continuous training ensures the Nation's warriors establish and maintain mastery of the most technologically advanced and complex weapons in the history of warfare. In the arsenal of democracy, however, it is humans who wield these weapons. Humanity is immeasurably more complex, diverse, and crucial than the technology it wields. Success and survival require nothing less than the systematic development of leaders who are exceptionally prepared to fight and win in highly uncertain environments.

Reconceptualizing Warrior Ethos

Considering that leaders set themselves apart and exist as a narrow subset of society, additional range restriction within the subset of leaders creates conditions where leaders are increasingly less likely to understand or represent those that they lead. Leadership development in today's military organizations overly relies on assortative processes that reproduce a narrow set of desirable leadership qualities. Using a term borrowed from biological science, assortative processes emphasize qualities that are of perceived value to address known challenges. In assortative processes, selection and promotion systems reward leaders with similar leadership styles and qualities, and thus perpetuate those styles. By discouraging the cultivation of deep and functional diversity of leadership traits and styles within junior ranks, assortative processes contribute to leader capabilities that are increasingly homogenous at senior levels. This can be a very effective strategy when challenges are predictable and problems can be resolved with known processes. When problems are novel and processes must be created, however, lack of a diverse leadership pool limits organizational adaptation, and

thus limits success and survival. Observations of the problems assortative problems present are not the authors' alone. Sounding the alarm for organizational change in the Air Force, Colonel 'Ned Stark' observed that, "The most successful high-potential officers are those who make their seniors look good in shallow pursuit of the latest fad, thereby avoiding potential mistakes that could result from taking actual risks to advance the mission" (2018).

Today, in the Information Age, increasingly unrelated conditions interact and result in divergent outcomes (e.g., a novel virus serving as a catalyst for civil and political unrest). The Information Age marks a departure from work that is specific and repetitive; organizations require leaders who can adapt as novel challenges arise (Cascio, 1995; Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007). Organizations that persist with assortative selection and promotion processes not only reduce valuable diversity in senior leaders necessary to succeed and survive in the face of uncertainty, but also unwittingly inhibit the development of diverse qualities amongst aspiring leaders.

The problem of assortative processes has been further exacerbated by portions of the multibillion dollar leadership industry (see also Hogan, Curphy, Kaiser, & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2018; Kaiser & Curphy, 2014; Pfeffer, 2015; Sørensen, 2017). The pressures of the Information Age, where radical uncertainty is a constant and strong cultural expectations assume leaders have solutions to problems, have served to intensify organizations' eagerness to improve their leaders. The benefit of this realization has been a proliferation of the scientific leadership literature and accompanying best practices. At the same time, the industry has witnessed an avalanche of alluring, faddish, yet user-friendly products and services that do

little if anything to improve leaders or organizational performance. Leadership development products and services must be tested and evaluated not on their own merits, but with respect to organizational performance. As a starting point, organizations should demand that providers offer evidence that demonstrates how products and services actually contribute to clearly defined performance objectives. Absent such proof, leadership industry providers are incentivized to deliver well-orchestrated interventions and products that are entertaining and make bold promises, but produce no quantifiable changes to the way work is done in the organization.

Service academies have long been criticized for costs that far exceed other commissioning sources (e.g., Fleming, 2017). There is simply a dearth of empirical evidence that academy graduates are better prepared than counterparts who graduate from public and private

...academies are in the advantageous position to serve as the Nation's authorities on the creation of evidence-based programs, practices, and policy that guide the broader defense enterprise.

universities. Recent national interest demonstrates that society holds exceedingly high expectations of service academies. These expectations persist years after graduation and continue even when military members depart military service and return to private citizenship (Weinstein, 2021). Social expectations and critiques signal a clear demand. Service academies currently maintain a privileged position in two ways, a position which should not be squandered. First, they are in the unique position to create and establish comprehensive programs that promote the future security of the United States. Employing evidence-

based practices must reliably produce the intended outcomes in graduates. Additionally, academies are in the advantageous position to serve as the Nation's authorities on the creation of evidence-based programs, practices, and policy that guide the broader defense enterprise. Success and survival are inextricably tied to the reliable development of a warrior ethos that encompasses moral and physical strength, freedom of action, and firmly established convictions that motivate service to the Nation.

The Significance of Moral Courage in Addition to Physical Courage

A modern warrior ethos requires prioritization of individual moral courage, while sustaining the need for physical courage. As the 21st Century and the Information Age mature, the nature of uncertainty continues to evolve, and organizations are experiencing indisputable consequences from failing to understand

what is taking place and what is at stake. In this vein, former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld wrestled with the idea of unknown unknowns when justifying the invasion of Iraq in 2003 (CNN, 2002). President Obama, likewise, struggled with the uncertainty of the identity of the unknown man in the Abbottabad compound (Kay & King, 2020). In

both cases, the potential risks and outcomes were not only unknown, but also unquantifiable. The decisions had to be made without the certainty of hindsight or bounded outcomes. Additionally, a significant challenge we face in promoting moral courage is that unlike physical courage where those who demonstrate it are lauded in both success and failure, morally courageous individuals are often excoriated in success, and rarely celebrated in failure, at least in the near term. It is only in hindsight we appreciate the valor—this is the elusive nature of moral courage.

Conceptual progress on the idea of unknown unknowns evolved into what Kay and King (2020) now call radical uncertainty. Radical uncertainty captures the idea that there are unmeasurable prospects and subsequent unpredictable effects. As a nation, the United States places a moderate amount of effort into establishing norms, rules, and procedures to alleviate unpredictability (GLOBE 2020, n.d.). Viewed in combination with a very high performance orientation, the United States places exceptional demands on leaders to perform regardless of conditions. As the aforementioned examples illustrate, these demands increasingly challenge leaders to face the realm of conscious action (e.g., sensation, desire, emotion, cognition, rationalization, and making decisions). In an information intensive world, we must develop leaders who express physical courage but are increasingly morally courageous in ambiguous contexts.

Fear of failure, in contrast with moral and physical courage, is not simply an individual quality that stops leaders from doing what they can and should do. Fear of failure is also a cultural and organizational norm. Organizational culture is a pattern of shared assumptions where organizational members learn acceptable responses to adaptive challenges (Schein & Schein, 2017). Since failure is a natural outcome of trying new things, and trying new things is necessary for innovation to occur, innovative organizations are those which promote a culture that accepts and even encourages some level of failure. Organizations that espouse beliefs about innovation and collaboration often maintain structures that reward immediately successful individual performance and punish any individual or collective failure. In this manner, many organizations unwittingly teach leaders maladaptive strategies that result in avoiding challenges or testing innovative solutions that could result in failure. Leaders who embrace the organization's espoused

values (e.g., contributing to innovation) take positive steps to stretch their leadership capacity, and as a result are more likely than their peers to fail. When their efforts are not rewarded, and, moreover, when leaders who don't take risks are rewarded, organizations create conditions that are counter to the stated goal of innovative and morally courageous leadership. Warrior ethos in the Information Age requires developing moral courage.

The Significance of Shared Leadership over Hierarchical Leadership

Leaders who embrace the modern perspective on warrior ethos are rarely, if ever, heroic representations of the archaic prototype who save the day with unnatural talent. Modern contexts require reformulation of leadership behaviors to invite and encourage maximum participation. In industrial systems, outcomes are achieved on the basis of applying known solutions to known problems, and the leader is the focal point for selecting and bringing about the desired outcomes. At the dawn of the 20th Century, Taylor (1911) predicted that managers would become efficiency experts, driving success from the top down. In individualistic cultures and the modern Information age, leaders are expected to be adaptive and collective problem solvers, elevating solutions from the bottom and middle up.

As modern organizations face challenges and consider how to prepare and employ leaders, the association between shared leadership and team effectiveness cannot be overlooked. For challenges that must be met with change and development, shared leadership has specific benefits, in contrast to earlier leadership structures resembling the industrial processes they were designed to support (Contractor, DeChurch, Carson, Carter, & Keegan, 2012). Researchers, therefore, argue the association between shared leadership and team effectiveness will become increasingly important to

team goal achievement (Pearce & Conger, 2003). This prediction is particularly relevant to outcomes that are complex (e.g., guiding and influencing attitudes and behaviors). There is a growing body of evidence that supports the positive relationship between shared leadership and team effectiveness (Wang, Waldman, & Zhang, 2014), where the effects of shared leadership are stronger when the work that teams accomplish becomes more complex. Embracing a warrior ethos to achieve goals through collective effort requires sharing authority, even to the lowest levels of the organization.

As work becomes increasingly complex, leaders who overly rely on authority and their past experiences are at a substantial disadvantage. Leaders who routinely practice micromanagement, overly emphasize task completion, and tend to tell others how to do tasks fail to appreciate the creative potential of their people. In contrast, leaders who invite others to invest deep-level qualities (e.g., psychological characteristics like personality, values, and attitudes) and functional expertise bring about improved team performance, team creativity, and innovation (Mathieu, Ghallagher, Domingo, & Klock, 2019). The uncertainty of modern conflict requires leaders who can see through complexity and focus others' attention on what matters most. Such leaders provide mission-type orders that are based on clear and simple statements of intent (Fischer, 1995). Leaders who establish intent and invite others to contribute the depth and breadth of their personal qualities into the generation of solutions play an important role in bringing about collective outcomes. Developing leaders for the Information Age must reward team-builders over individual performers.

The Significance of Creating Commitment over Demanding Compliance

In the Industrial Age, commitment was simply not all that important. Workers worked for pay and were

readily replaced. Labor was often highly skilled, but not unique. In the Information Age, laborers are increasingly valued for their deep (e.g., individual differences) and functional diversity (e.g., educational and experiential qualities) that serve to generate unique ideas and innovations. Laborers in the Information Age are incredibly unique, and not readily replaced.

Key to the success of modern leaders is the creation of reciprocal relationships between leaders and followers. As conceived by Burns (1978), transformational leaders encourage followers to set aside personal interest for the good of achieving shared outcomes. Whereas exchanges in the Industrial Age involved work for pay, exchanges in the Information Age increasingly involve work for satisfaction, opportunity, and development. A key mechanism to providing development is empowerment (Bass, 1985). Empowerment is a means to create intrinsic motivation. Leaders who empower followers produce conditions for followers to experience influence and control over work activities. Interpersonal processes that emerge from and contribute to how organizational members think, feel, and act about work experiences are a fertile area for leaders to cultivate commitment.

In contrast, leaders who demonstrate hubris create substantial, negative effects on how organizational members think, feel, and act in reaction to work experiences. Leaders who hold high, unrealistic perspectives of their personal worth on the basis of past success are simply incompatible with the demands of modern conflict. Such leaders are at risk of suppressing processes that contribute to adaptability. These same behaviors make it less likely that organizational members will speak up (e.g., offer observations and suggest solutions) for fear of ridicule or reprisal. No leader can think of themselves above reproach simply because of an untarnished record. At executive levels, past success can be detrimental to current performance

(Hamori & Koyuncu, 2015), evidence that runs counter to generally held perceptions of what traditional military selection and promotion systems reward. Past success is not only insufficient as a safeguard against future failure, but may also result in interactions with others that undermine performance.

With an eye towards building commitment, organizations need to observe and recognize collective achievements that result from an advantageous learning orientation (Dweck, 2017; Sosik, Godschalk, & Yammarino, 2004), a commitment to leadership performance (Chan & Drasgow, 2001), and involve efforts to develop future leaders (Lapierre, Naidoo, & Bonaccio, 2012). Leaders must prioritize efforts so that organizational members can more readily convert individual and shared efforts into outcomes of value. For the Information Age, military organizations must create leaders who create commitment, rather than relying on directed compliance to meet and exceed standards.

The Significance of Team Orientation over Task Orientation

Teams are the essential organizational building blocks, the amino acids of organizational proteins. Industrial age teams were formed, trained and led for specifically defined, even if somewhat flexible, tasks. From a KC-135R crew conducting a highly complex, night, communications-out air refueling mission in combat conditions to a small recreational soccer league, teams are configured to meet specific requirements. The KC-135R crew and the soccer team both serve as examples of teams that are able to meet a wide range of needs within specific functional domains. The Information Age, however, is fundamentally different and requires the addition of new types of teams. Working in conditions that are characterized by rapid

and unpredictable change, modern teams deal with knowledge and information that must be examined from a variety of perspectives to identify, analyze, and solve emerging, ill-defined challenges.

Rapidly changing conditions require organizations to realign teams to solve novel problems. Teams are rapidly assembled, changed, and dissolved to maximize the value of organizational members. These rapid shifts require organizations to consider what it takes to effectively lead dynamic teams. Within the human domain, available resources are expressed as knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics (KSAs). When led well, teams have the potential to not only outperform individuals, but to produce results

...or the Information Age, military organizations must create leaders who create commitment, rather than relying on directed compliance to meet and exceed standards.

that exceed the sum of individual contributions. By extension, leaders who are competent at configuring teams to meet emerging and ill-defined requirements have an adaptive advantage over leaders who do not. Consequently, instilling traditional qualities like tough mindedness are of scant value if leaders persist in overvaluing individual contributions when interdependence and synergy are needed. The advantage belongs to organizations who develop and inspire leaders who are skilled at uniting people and configuring them to work interdependently. The importance of team orientation over immediate task accomplishment emerges as a critical quality of warrior ethos.

Toward an Integrated Model of Warrior Ethos

Warrior ethos is a psychological construct that represents a broad domain of human behavior. As we have started to illustrate, a modern perspective on warrior ethos supplements traditionally held values. The modern perspective comprises a range of individual qualities and interdependent processes (courage, shared leadership, motivational processes, and team leadership) that combine in complex ways. Additional research is required to achieve the ends of this effort. Leaders and researchers must close the gaps between the practice and science of leadership with a specific emphasis on the Information Age. The current distance between science and practice is justification for opening dialogue and taking action to address the value of tried-and-true solutions and creating new solutions for emerging challenges. Objectively specifying the knowledge, skills, motivation, and attitudes required of modern leaders to demonstrate courage, share leadership, create commitment, and lead as active participants of teams is the next step.

In the same way that an athletic coach must possess a clear understanding of what elite athletic performance looks like, developmental organizations must establish behaviorally anchored descriptions of warrior ethos. Additionally, developmental organizations must shift focus from outcomes (e.g., subjective ratings of performance and stratifications) to the behaviors that produce outcomes. Comparing warrior ethos to a swim stroke, lap time is not the objective measure we are after. A swim coach needs to pay attention to what is going on above and under the water before attending to lap time. Lap time is the outcome of diverse interdependent factors that can be observed, measured, analyzed, and corrected through targeted drills that are refined through repeated practice.

Adapting the developmental enterprise against the foreground of increasingly unpredictable modern contexts involves creating and sustaining a culture that cultivates leaders who securely hold essential beliefs and aspirations that form the modern warrior ethos. These beliefs and assumptions are not simply ideals and values, but must be evidenced through thoughtful and practical application by individuals, teams, and the organization.

Preliminary Recommendations

It is surprising that given all of the leadership qualities that have been described in the leadership literature over the last 100 years, warrior ethos emerges as a unique construct that has received little-to-no research attention. Military organizations, especially service academies, must plan and organize developmental efforts to produce elite leaders with this indispensable leadership quality. Nonetheless, additional work is required to fully define and validate warrior ethos before future research can take place.

The traditional operationalization of warrior ethos overly emphasizes control and task achievement and conspicuously espouses ends justifying means. However, authoritative leadership styles have long been critiqued as unethical (Machiavelli, 1961, introduction by Bull; Allen, 2020). Scholars (Kaiser, Hogan, & Craig, 2008; Mathieu, Gallagher, Domingo, & Klock, 2019) have proposed that performance is best understood as a blend of process (i.e., how organizational members interact and function together) and ends (i.e., the goals or objective results an organization accomplishes). Maintaining a strategic advantage in the face of uncertainty requires due attention to the pursuit as well as the achievement of objective results. The major contribution of our review is to provide a practically-oriented perspective to start

answering the following question: “How can we best prepare leaders who are highly effective in the face of uncertainty?” This paper has been written to point out the substantial ways that leaders are falling short in the modern era, to convince our readers that the solution lies in adapting perspectives and behaviors from what worked in the past to what is required today, and to illuminate foundational principles of scientific leadership that promise to meet the need. This research stream is essential to informing and advancing the outcomes military organizations hope to achieve. Be this as it may, we offer five recommendations and accompanying risks/benefits to guide efforts that can start serving today’s practical needs.

First, military organizations need to intentionally create a cycle of assessment, challenge, and support (Deal & Yarborough, 2020). Likened to efforts to produce elite athletes, coaches continually scrutinize athletes’ performance and adapt practice regimens to stretch the capacity of athletes’ strength, endurance, and technique. As athletes’ demonstrate performance gains, they are tested in increasingly challenging competitions. Athletes who achieve personal bests or who set records of human performance represent a complex developmental system. Intentional leadership development stands in contrast with experiences that provide a context to lead, but fail to provide necessary developmental support. Just because someone is in the pool and moving their arms doesn’t mean they are swimming; they may actually be drowning. Coaching someone to lead requires development of specific KSAOs which lead to better leadership in support of quantifiable goals. These include building competency in fundamental knowledge and skills, practicing effective learning strategies, being comfortable in front of people, persisting despite setbacks, using appropriate training aids, and building confidence but not recklessness as increasingly difficult concepts,

skills, and responsibilities are introduced. Beginning these practices in the shallow end of the pool before venturing into the deep end is common sense.

Second, military organizations need to attend to the contextual conditions that support development. Developmental teams work because of factors like regular interaction, shared work and goals, interdependence, and role differentiation (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006). Like any elite training regimen, development starts with the proper selection criteria to ensure that foundational qualities exist. Development, however, is decidedly more complex. Special attention is required to avoid unproductive emphases on cross-sectional measures of knowledge, skill, and attitudes that immediately privilege certain leaders. Leadership development is not about achieving performance outcomes per se, but is better represented by continual and incremental development. While considerably more complex to measure, an inclusive approach to assessment accounts for how individuals develop over time while accounting for factors that affect developmental achievement (Anderson, 2012).

Like athletes, leaders require assistance in understanding their baseline, how to vary workouts, how and when to rest, and finding joy in the process of setting and achieving developmental goals. Consider an inexperienced, but motivated leader who is working on their own and is overly focused on using power to achieve objective results. A coach (someone who is providing personal and professional guidance and training to achieve goals) could start by helping the leader discover missed cues with respect to what motivates others. Once the leader begins to understand the fundamentals of influencing followers, the coach can stretch the leader’s capacity as they explore increasingly diverse opportunities to practice influence (e.g., with peers and with other leaders).

Key leadership experiences, however challenging, are of little developmental value if they are experienced, but not explored. Like athletes, leaders also require periods of recovery. Leadership requires substantial efforts to organize, behave, and align with organizational structures and culture through

When continual assessment, challenge, and support are lacking, individual leaders are at risk for specializing in leadership styles and behaviors based on innate personal qualities. Specialization is particularly dangerous in the Information Age where it creates counterproductive extremes...

self-regulation and social interactions (see Hobfoll, 2011). A coach must closely monitor the need for a leader to step back and receive instructive feedback. Structured reflection is a promising exercise to support developing leaders (DeRue, Nahrgang, Hollenbeck, & Workman, 2012). Additionally, research suggests that interactions of leadership experiences (e.g., challenging settings, developmental programs, and interpersonal support) have supplemental and synergistic effects (Seibert, Sargent, Kramer, & Kiazad, 2017). It is simply not enough to provide a leadership laboratory; experimentation must be repeatable and the results verifiable.

Third, scaling developmental efforts from one-on-one to one-on-many requires special consideration. Regardless of scale, the leader developer and the leader must serve as willing sponsors and benefactors of a shared, encompassing system. Developing world-class leaders requires dedication and an adaptive,

rigorous development program that accounts for the leaders as they are today, the rate of individual development, and provides milestones to track progress. When continual assessment, challenge, and support are lacking, individual leaders are at risk for specializing in leadership styles and behaviors based on innate personal qualities. Specialization is particularly dangerous in the Information Age where it creates counterproductive extremes: leaders simultaneously neglect deficiencies and overuse strengths (Kaplan & Kaiser, 2006). This approach also serves as fertile, but unproductive ground contributing to poor leadership habits like micromanagement, which retard and restrict development of followers. No one becomes physically strong, fast, or tough by continually doing the same, limited workout. In the same way, leaders who practice limited skills lack the critical breadth

of leadership competencies to succeed in complex and uncertain environments. More worrisome is when they teach young leaders to do the same through assortative selection.

Fourth, as with athletes, a leader's workout needs to be tailored to the sport and the desired outcome. If we desire Information Age leaders who address volatility, uncertainty, confusion and ambiguity (VUCA) with a firm warrior ethos, these should be perpetual elements in the leadership training and development program. Eliminating VUCA from leadership development, in the interest of making it supposedly objective (or measurable) and fair, actually hamstring those who need the most practice in the challenging aspects of leadership. Introducing VUCA into leadership development programs is essential to making development universally accessible. Inclusive design provides experiences, challenges, and support so everyone has the opportunity to engage in the

developmental venture, where experiences are available to all, and every leader emerges from experiences better prepared for future roles. Organizations must identify and support leaders who lack strong implicit leadership models and provide opportunities to practice and develop leadership KSAOs. Leadership habits are incredibly important and become ingrained over time, so leaders must practice (train) like they are going to lead in a fight. They must exercise team-building and team-maintaining skills regularly to keep in leadership shape, just as athletes keep in top physical shape for competition.

Fifth, failure is always an option. Adherence to this unpopular adage serves two purposes. In leadership development, early and frequent small failures can prevent big failures later. If we let developing leaders fail small and often, they also learn to deal with commensurate consequences and how to recover. Notably, leaders who learn these lessons at low personal and organizational cost are more likely to impart similar expectations upon followers. Failure, restitution, and recovery lead to humble leaders who learn to accept the right amount of risk (of failure) and press onward, a critical aspect of warrior ethos. Permitting and creating situations that result in failure allows for selection of those with the potential (if not the immediate skills) to make great strategic leaders. Unfortunately, not every leader makes the cut. Thus, having clearly defined goals and objective standards remains important. It is essential to conduct these decisions to maintain the highest standards of respect and dignity. When failures of sufficient magnitude or duration (moral or physical) are identified, there is a right way to dismiss leaders from their roles and even from the organization. Unclear standards create conditions that lead to uncomfortable wait periods and require guessing on who gets to stay and who should go. Over time, as leaders fall further behind, their failures

become increasingly apparent to organizational members and a broader audience. It is far better for the organization to have objective standards to make decisions before institutional investments become too high or the private or public fallout too great.

Finally, and probably most crucial to the future of Air Force leaders, our leadership programs must deliberately focus on development, not selection. This is especially important for those future leaders who would otherwise be underprivileged in our legacy leadership systems due to their diverse backgrounds. The developmental needs of a top-tier high-school, varsity football captain are going to substantially differ from an emancipated minor who grew up in the foster care system. Both have experiences that can serve them well as leaders, just as both require support to develop and expand their leadership capacity. Leaders from diverse communities, cultures, and social backgrounds arrive with a wide array of experiences. Leaders who arrive with a portfolio of traditional leadership experiences must be pushed harder and past their limits, rather than allowing them to coast on inherent skills. For leaders who have had fewer opportunities to lead in sports, local communities, or school, the organization has a responsibility to establish foundational qualities (e.g., self-efficacy) and then similarly push these leaders past their limits. Every leader has unrealized potential and can benefit from a deliberate development plan.

Conclusion

General Douglas MacArthur (*The Officer's Guide*, 1942) summed up the history of military failure in two words: "Too late" (p. v). Time is the pernicious adversary that applies when leaders fail to recognize a threat or seize an opportunity. Now is the time to develop leaders with warrior ethos. Moral courage drives leaders to embrace challenges and failures. Shared leadership allows leaders to invest in every

Table 1

Leading for Warrior Ethos

<p style="text-align: center;">Leading for Warrior Ethos</p> <p>In the historical context, developing Warrior Ethos has largely been treated as an individual quality or pursuit, as something a person does or does not have. Our position is that leaders create the conditions that cultivate warrior ethos by influencing individuals and teams to passionately contribute to and take appropriate risks furthering organizational goals. This table provides an executive summary of key takeaways for anyone charged with fostering warrior ethos outcomes for their organization.</p>		
<p>What? Leadership Principles</p>	<p>Why? Outcomes</p>	<p>How? Representative Competencies</p>
<p>Lead with culture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve and promote shared assumptions (strong organizational culture) where principles, norms, and values are widely held, practiced, and become self-reinforcing • Encourage innovation while keeping failures small to demonstrate the value of learning over appearances of perfection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create conditions to develop diverse leaders, not just select for them • Understand how organizational culture relates to organizational performance • Establish, communicate, and protect ideals, goals, and aspirational values • Measure success by development instead of merely completing tasks
<p>Lead the people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational work, goals, and performance are inherently interdependent • Organizational members selected and promoted on the basis of deep and functional diversity are valued for who they are, not just what they do 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define performance in terms of processes (how the game is played) as well as objective results (if the game is won) • Focus on bringing people together to collectively, and willingly, to work on organizationally valued tasks
<p>Connect people to the mission</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A highly skilled and motivated workforce provides a competitive advantage • Increased self-efficacy and satisfaction leads to commitment and promotes innovation that serves the organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower organizational members to grant autonomy and responsibility for organizational performance • Align organizational practices to the desired culture

organizational member to achieve collective outcomes. Commitment replaces self-interest with a perspective that values the good of the team and organization. Teams provide leaders of large organizations with infinite options to configure (and reconfigure) human talent to meet emerging challenges. By the time service academy graduates serve in command roles, these elemental shifts will have strategic effects.

The Information Age creates an increased need to focus upon the humanity implicit in leadership processes. For all of the talk about the changing character of war, however, approaches to developing leaders and warriors have changed little. The Nation's success and survival are at risk if educational, training, and developmental processes and systems do not reliably produce leaders who are fully prepared to lead in uncertain situations. Emergent challenges in complex environments require military organizations to intentionally focus on preparing high-quality leaders. Derived from research on leadership effectiveness, this paper identified limitations of current development approaches, evaluated shortfalls, and proposed solutions to meet modern challenges.

Leadership development is the responsibility of the whole organization. The selection of team members at all levels, the creation of effective developmental efforts, and the emphasis on the interactive processes that produce team members' thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are critical. Each affects the other, so each is always evolving. Likewise, leaders must pay close attention to the patterns of assumptions shared by organizational members, especially differences within and between espoused beliefs and established norms. Leader developers must understand and use these ideas to create elite leaders. Organizations should select faculty and staff not only for their technical expertise or academic backgrounds, but also for a

variety of demonstrated leadership skills and, crucially, the ability to mentor and coach developing leaders. Both formal assessments and informal forums are important platforms providing evidence of success and failure, and promulgating new techniques and organic solutions to emerging challenges. For these reasons, leadership development and the inculcation of warrior ethos cannot simply be relegated to any

Now is the time to develop leaders with warrior ethos. Moral courage drives leaders to embrace challenges and failures.

single role or department, but must rather be an institution-wide campaign. Although the physical nature of warrior ethos endures, individual and organizational strength of character in the face of moral adversity and uncertainty hold even greater promise for the challenges of today and those yet to come.

♦ ♦ ♦

References

- Allen, S. (Host). (2020, September 21). Dr. John Dugan--Praxis (No. 22) [Audio podcast episode]. In *Phronesis: Practical Wisdom for Leaders*. Buzzsprout. <https://www.buzzsprout.com/979897>
- Anderson, D. (2012). *Hierarchical linear modeling (HLM): An introduction to key concepts within cross-sectional and growth modeling frameworks*. (Technical report #1308). University of Oregon. Behavioral Research and Teaching. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED545279.pdf>
- Bass, B. (1985). *Leadership and Performance Beyond Expectations*. The Free Press.
- Bell, S. T. (2007). Deep-level composition variables as predictors of team performance: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92(3), 595-615. <http://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.92.3.595>

- Machiavelli, N. (with Bull, G.). (1961). *The prince*. Penguin.
- Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. Harper & Row.
- Carson, McChrystal, S., Silverman, D., Collins, T., & Fussell, C. (2015). *Team of teams*. Portfolio Penguin.
- Cascio, W. F. (1995). Whither industrial and organizational psychology in a changing world of work? *American Psychologist*, 50(11), 928–939.
- Center for Disease Control (n.d.). Previous U.S. COVID-19 Case Data. Retrieved January 14, 2021, from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/previouscases.html>
- Chan, K., & Drasgow, F. (2001). Toward a theory of individual differences and leadership: Understanding the motivation to lead. <http://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.86.3.481>
- CNN. (2002, February 12) Rumsfeld /Kknows [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=REWcBzGuzCc>
- Colonel 'Ned Stark' (2018, May 14). *A call for senior officer reform in the Air Force: An insider's perspective*. War on the Rocks. <https://warontherocks.com/2018/05/a-call-for-senior-officer-reform-in-the-air-force-an-insiders-perspective/>
- Contractor, N. S., DeChurch, L. A., Carson, J., Carter, D. R., & Keegan, B. (2012). The topology of collective leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 23(6), 994–1011. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2012.10.010>
- Davis, M. H. (1983). Measuring individual differences in empathy: Evidence for a multidimensional approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 44(1), 113–126. <http://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.44.1.113>
- Deal, S. T. & Yarrow, P. (2020) Higher education student leadership development: 5 Keys to success [White paper]. Center for Creative Leadership. <https://www.ccl.org/articles/white-papers/higher-education-student-leadership-development/>
- DeRue, D. S., Nahrgang, J. D., Hollenbeck, J. R., & Workman, K. (2012). A quasi-experimental study of after-event reviews and leadership development. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 97(5), 997–1015. <http://doi.org/10.1037/a0028244>
- Dweck, C. (2016). What having a “growth mindset” actually means. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2016/01/what-having-a-growth-mindset-actually-means>
- Fischer, Michael E. (1995). *Mission-type orders in joint air operations*. [Thesis, School of Advanced Airpower Studies]. <https://media.defense.gov>
- Fleming, B. (2017, June). Naval Academy graduates no better than the civilians they defend. *The Baltimore Sun*. <https://www.baltimoresun.com/opinion/op-cd/bs-cd-naval-graduation-20170605-story.html>
- Frazier, M. L., Fainshmidt, S., Klinger, R. L., Pezeshkan, A., & Vracheva, V. (2017). Psychological safety: A Meta-Analytic review and extension. *Personnel Psychology*, 70(1), 113–165. <http://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12183>
- Glick, P., Berdahl, J. L., & Alonso, N. M. (2018). Development and validation of the masculinity contest culture scale. *Journal of Social Issues*, 74(3), 449–476. <http://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12280>
- GLOBE 2020. (n.d.). *Results--United States of America*. Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness. <https://globeproject.com/>
- Hamori, M., & Koyuncu, B. (2015). Experience matters? The impact of prior CEO experience on firm performance. *Human Resource Management*, 54(1), 23–44. <http://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.21617>
- Haskins, C. (2013). Do teams' leaders really matter? In Salas, E., Tannenbaum, S., Cohen, D., Latham, G. (Eds.), *Developing and enhancing teamwork in organizations: Evidence-based best practices and guidelines* (pp. 6–10). Jossey-Bass.
- Hobfoll, S. E. (2011). Conservation of resource caravans and engaged settings. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 84(1), 116–122. <http://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8325.2010.02016.x>
- Hogan, R., Curphy, G., Kaiser, R. B., & Chamorro-Premuzic, T. (2018). Leadership in organizations. In D. S. Ones, N. Anderson, C. Viswesvaran, & H. K. Sinangil (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of industrial, work & organizational psychology: Organizational psychology* (p. 269–288). Sage Reference.
- Hu, J., Wang, Z., Liden, R. C., & Sun, J. (2012). The influence of leader core self-evaluation on follower reports of transformational leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 23(5), 860–868. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2012.05.004>
- Ilgen, D. R., Hollenbeck, J. R., Johnson, M., & Jundt, D. (2005). Teams in organizations: From input-process-output models to IMOI models. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 56(1), 517–543. <http://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.56.091103.070250>
- Kaiser, R. B., Hogan, R., & Craig, S. B. (2008). Leadership and the fate of organizations. *The American Psychologist*, 63(2), 96–110. <http://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.63.2.96>
- Kaplan, B. & Kaiser, R. (2006). *The versatile leader*. San Francisco: Pfeiffer.
- Kay, J., & King, M. (2020). *Radical uncertainty: Decision-making beyond the numbers*. W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.
- Kozlowski S. W., Ilgen D. R. (2006). Enhancing the effectiveness of work groups and teams. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 7(3), 77–124. <http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1529-1006.2006.00030.x>

- Lapierre, L. M., Naidoo, L. J., & Bonaccio, S. (2012). Leaders' relational self-concept and followers' task performance: Implications for mentoring provided to followers. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 23(5), 766-774. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2012.01.001>
- Mathieu, J. E., Hollenbeck, J. R., van Knippenberg, D., & Ilgen, D. R. (2017). A century of work teams in the Journal of Applied Psychology. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 102(3), 452-467. <http://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000128>
- McChrystal, S., Silverman, D., Collins, T., & Fussell, C. (2015). *Team of teams*. Portfolio Penguin.
- Merton, R. K. (2009). The unanticipated consequences of purposive social action. *Sotsiologicheskii Zhurnal*, (2), 5-17.
- Milken Institute & The Harris Poll. (2020, October 12). The listening report. <https://milkeninstitute.org/reports/listening-project>
- Pearce, C. L., & Conger, J. A. (2003). *Shared leadership: Reframing the hows and whys of leadership*. Sage Publications.
- Pfeffer, J. (2015) *Leadership BS: Fixing workplaces and careers one truth at a time*. Harper Business.
- Reimer, R., Charlton, R., and Lindsay, D. (2017). Getting what you inspect not what you expect: Leveraging technology to enhance leadership assessment methodologies. In D. Watola & A. MacIntyre (Ed.), *Technology and Leadership: International Perspectives*. Canadian Defense University Press.
- Schein, E. H., & Schein, P. A. (2017). *Organizational culture and leadership* (5th ed.). John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- Seibert, S. E., Sargent, L. D., Kraimer, M. L., & Kiazad, K. (2017). Linking developmental experiences to leader effectiveness and promotability: The mediating role of leadership Self-Efficacy and mentor network. *Personnel Psychology*, 70(2), 357-397. <http://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12145>
- Sorensen, P. (2017). What research on learning transfer can teach about improving the impact of leadership-development initiatives. *Consulting Psychology Journal*, 69(1), 47-62. <http://doi.org/10.1037/cpb0000072>
- Sosik, J. J., Godshalk, V. M., & Yammarino, F. J. (2004). Transformational leadership, learning goal orientation, and expectations for career success in mentor-protégé relationships: A multiple levels of analysis perspective. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 15(2), 241-261. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2004.02.003>
- Tesluk, P. E., & Jacobs, R. R. (1998). Toward an integrated model of work experience. *Personnel Psychology*, 51(2), 321-355. <http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.1998.tb00728.x>
- The officer's guide*. (9th ed.). (1942). The Military Service Publishing Company.
- Taylor, F. (1911). *The principles of scientific management*. Harper & Brothers Publishing.
- Uhl-Bien, M., Marion, R., & McKelvey, B. (2007). Complexity Leadership Theory: Shifting leadership from the industrial age to the knowledge era. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 18(4), 298-318. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2007.04.002>
- Wang, D., Waldman, D. A., & Zhang, Z. (2014). A meta-analysis of shared leadership and team effectiveness. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 99(2), 181-198. <http://doi.org/10.1037/a0034531>
- Weinstein, M. L. (2021, January). Open Letter to Air Force Academy: "MRFF Told You So". *LA Progressive*. <https://www.laprogressive.com/retired-air-force-officer-in-capitol-riot/>

FEATURE ARTICLES

Thinking Like a Round Table Leader: How Mental Complexity Enables Leaders to Succeed in a Complex Environment

Ryan Hill, U.S. Naval War College

When we consider what it means to be a great military leader, we often conjure up iconic Hollywood imagery, such as William Wallace charging across the battlefield toward the enemy, George S. Patton addressing the Third Army in front of a giant American flag, or Leonidas leading the last stand at Thermopylae. These brave and inspiring leaders were dauntless, willing to sacrifice for their nations, and possessed many of the qualities to which we aspire. To many, they pose as the embodiment of the warrior ethos.

This vision of the warrior ethos also promotes the idea that leaders stand aloft, separate from those they lead, and with the sole responsibility for action. We understand these leaders to possess what the great military theorist Carl von Clausewitz called *coup d'oeil*, the ability to evaluate and comprehend the environment “at a glance” (Clausewitz, 1976, p. 578). This idea, which authors David Bradford and Allan Cohen call *heroic leadership*, implies that leaders have the sole responsibility for assessing the situation, setting objectives, and executing plans (Bradford & Cohen, 1998). This is understandable, as leaders normally come to their position because of their previous success and

Colonel Ryan “Rhino” Hill is a command pilot with over 2,500 hours in the A-10 and A-29. He is a former commander of the 81st Fighter Squadron and has served in combat in Afghanistan as an A-10 pilot and as a Battalion Air Liaison Officer. He is a 1999 graduate of the United States Air Force Academy and has master’s degrees from the Air Command and Staff College, the Army’s School of Advanced Military Studies, and the Naval War College. Colonel Hill is currently serving as a military professor and director of the Stockdale Leader Development Concentration at the US Naval War College.

proven performance; they are generally adept in their field and have a history of making good decisions. However, if leaders feel like they alone have the best solutions to every problem, they are likely placing their own pride ahead of the good of the unit. The warrior ethos places service before self, and that may require abandoning the idea of the leader as the sole-source of knowledge and ideas.

The changing dynamics of current military operations demand more from leaders than to be brave and take charge. To succeed in an increasingly complex world, leaders must think differently; they must think more complexly and see beyond their own perspective. This paper examines how leaders can achieve this through increased levels of mental complexity, calling upon Harvard professor and author Robert Kegan's human developmental theory. The paper further explores how these levels translate into three distinct leadership styles: the desk leader, the conference table leader, and the round table leader; ultimately promoting a "round table" approach, in which leaders utilize mental complexity to form organizations that can adapt to the rapid changes inherent in the modern complex environment.

Environmental Complexity

The environment in which organizations operate is growing increasingly complex. Globalization, technology, and mass and social media have opened systems to interact with one another in novel and unpredictable ways. This rapidly growing complexity is often illustrated by referencing Moore's Law, which predicts that the processing power for computers will double every two years (Moore, 1965). While the law is specific to computer processing, it is often used as a partial analogy to the exponential growth in the complexity we experience. It is only a partial analogy because the computer's processing power and speed

greatly add to this boom in chaos. Thomas Freidman wrote about a similar concept, identifying that society does indeed adapt to changes, and does so at an increasingly faster rate as well; however, the rate simply cannot keep pace with innovations or novel ideas that affect public order. He illustrated this by stating that society was able to adapt to the oncoming pace of the internal combustion engine by instituting new laws, conventions, and infrastructure, but today's firehose of technology does not allow civilization to adapt before it changes again (Freidman, 2016).

Historian John Lewis Gaddis provides valuable insight into the realities of complexity. He claims that most people desire a *reductionist* view of reality, the idea that "you can best understand reality by breaking it up into its various parts" (2002, p. 54). This perception holds that factors in the environment can be isolated in such a way as to reduce them into independent variables, allowing control. However, such reductionism only works in a closed system, or in a vacuum, where each factor can be isolated from the rest of the world around it. In such a system a person could alter a variable or two and produce the desired outcome. This tidy view of reality leads people to believe that if they control enough variables, they can control the events of the future.

Gaddis contrasts the perception with that of the ecological view of reality, which goes beyond taking specific values into account and focuses on "how components interact to become systems whose nature can't be defined merely by calculating the sum of their parts" (2002, p. 55). In explaining his *ecological view*, Gaddis was describing 'open systems.' Such systems are not comprised of variables that can be controlled, and they are open to input from sources external to the system. As such, systems interact with other systems, eliminating the boundaries for predictable

input or output and creating the possibility for countless ‘unintended’ consequences. Economist and author Emile Grunberg equates “open systems” with complexity, stating that in open systems, variables “are themselves dependent variables in other theories, ad infinitum” and therefore open systems “lack constants” (1978, p. 546). The result is unpredictability, a fundamental characteristic of complexity.

Most organizations, by their design, are not equipped to deal with this level of complexity. Instead, they are designed to be as economical as possible and often trade

Standard operating procedures and specialized roles are implemented to maximize all resources. Once an organization achieves an equilibrium in which it has become optimized to reach its potential, leaders tend to focus on maintaining the status quo.

in flexibility to achieve efficiency. Standard operating procedures and specialized roles are implemented to maximize all resources. Once an organization achieves an equilibrium in which it has become optimized to reach its potential, leaders tend to focus on maintaining the status quo. The achieved equilibrium often corresponds with a cognitive consensus that Thomas Kuhn describes as a “paradigm,” or a “constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on shared by the members of a given community” (1996, p. 175). In other words, when an organization accepts certain assumptions as truth and relies on those assumptions to do its business effectively and efficiently, it begins to take on a stasis in which change, if it is to be considered at all, is only tolerated in small and almost insignificant

ways for fear of disrupting the efficiency the organization has gained within the existing paradigm.

Additionally, as organizations become more specialized, they can generate groupthink and isolationism. Economist and system theorist, Kenneth E. Boulding, in writing about what he referred to as “isolated subcultures” wrote that “total growth of knowledge is being slowed down by the loss of relevant communications. The spread of specialized deafness means that someone who ought to know something that someone else knows isn’t able to find it out for lack of generalized ears” (1956, p. 198-199). This is a fitting metaphor for what happens in leadership. Ideas become so engrained in cultures that they develop a similar specialized deafness to outside thought; people are closed (deaf) to concepts that come from outside their own circle of like-minded people. Because organizations are normally filled with the expertise specific to that organization, people tend to think only in the terms of their own expertise, remaining ignorant of ‘outside’ information that may in some way be applied to their own field.

The concept that organizations, and more specifically the leaders of organizations, rely on paradigms and develop specialized deafness to other fields and areas of thought is comparable to a closed system; in fact, it could be considered a closed mental system. People have their own meaning-making system, formed by a composite of study, experience, and even genetics. If a person’s mental model remains closed, just as with closed systems used in scientific experiments, the outcomes are restricted and predictable. Here we find a problem with the idea of heroic leadership. If leaders feel they must generate all the answers themselves, they create a closed mental system. Such a closed model is perfectly adequate to deal with a simple problem or

closed system. However, if a person is dealing with open systems that interact with one another, like those found in the modern military environment, the closed mental system is limited in the ways which it can perceive the uncertain possibilities. Often in these cases, people tend to ‘bend’ reality to fit their own mental constructs. Leaders and organizations must instead try to match the openness of the environment with an openness of mind, or put another way, they must match environmental complexity with mental complexity.

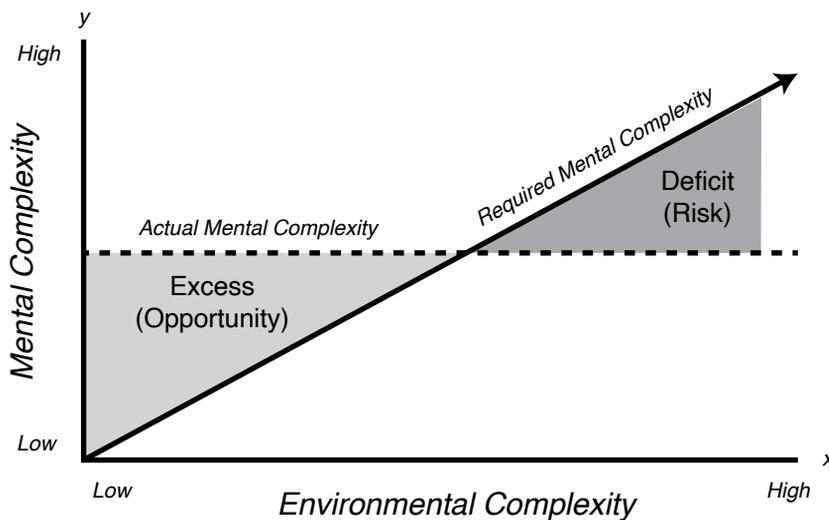
Matching Environmental and Mental Complexity

Robert Kegan’s developmental theory supports the need for an environmental and mental complexity match. He and his fellow author of *Immunity to Change*, Lisa Lahey, explain that “when we experience the world as “too complex” we are not just experiencing the complexity of the world. We are experiencing a mismatch between the world’s complexity and our own” (2009, p. 12). Figure 1 is a conceptual graph

that illustrates this idea; the up-sloped line represents the mental complexity (along the y axis) required to match the environmental complexity (along the x axis). The line is a non-quantitative representation of the relationship that should exist if mental complexity is to match the environment. The dashed horizontal line represents a person’s actual mental complexity, or the openness of his or her mental model or sense-making mechanism. The point on the graph where the two lines cross represents the point at which the person’s mental complexity is sufficient to engage with the complexity found in the environment.

To the left of this point, where mental complexity is greater than required, leaders utilize excess mental complexity to build efficiency, create opportunities, and increase mental complexity within themselves and the organization. To the right of this point, the leader’s lack of mental complexity can lead to limited options and put the mission at risk. This graph serves to illustrate the concept that in a complex environment, a lot may be riding on one’s ability to match, or ideally

Figure 1
Mental and Environmental Complexity Match



surpass, the required level of mental complexity. In much of society, this dynamic is in proportion and people are able to adequately cope with the complexity they face on a daily basis. However, for leaders who face a complex environment, there is a high demand (and need) for mental complexity.

What is Mental Complexity?

Mental Complexity, in the context of this paper, is based on Dr. Kegan's theory of human development. Increasing mental complexity involves not merely increasing knowledge of facts, but being able "to think abstractly about the facts" (2003, p. 23). Kegan explains the brain's growth in capacity during adulthood in the same way he explains a child's mental capacity growth, through a mechanism described as a "subject-to-object shift." In short, this theory poses that as humans develop, they are able to differentiate between what is self, or subject, and that which is other, or object. As the mind is able to do this at increasingly significant levels, it is growing in complexity. According to Kegan, "*Object* refers to those aspects of our meaning-making that we can look at, take a perspective on, reflect on, integrate, and exercise control over because we can "see it." It is visible for us in some way" (2003, p. 25). In short, it is something that we can look at objectively. Kegan contrasts this with what we are unable to look at objectively, explaining that "*Subject* refers to those aspects of our meaning-making that we are identified with, that we are run by, are controlled by, and are fused with. So is for us invisible." He then plainly states that "...we *have* that which is object, we are that which is subject" (2003, p. 25). Growing in mental complexity involves being able to clearly, or objectively, look at assumptions that were previously hidden from us, or subjective to us. Kegan theorized that the mind transitions entire categories from subject to object; once the mind transitions one category of

experience from subject to object, all experiences, thought, and perceptions within that category move as well. Additionally, these transitions occur in stages, so that once a category has transitioned, the perceiving individual has, in essence, become a different perceiver.

Kegan identifies five major subject-to-object transitions that occur somewhat naturally in life; although, not all adults transition through all five stages. At some point in the process, people may unconsciously decide if they are willing to undergo the discomfort that comes with the next level of subject to object transference, or growth in mental complexity. Kegan's model recognizes that the process is not easy; he describes our subject assumptions as being part of us, conflated with our own identity. So, in the transition process, we lose subject and create object (Kegan, 1982). This process can be very uncomfortable because it creates a sort of "separation anxiety." For this reason, most people find it difficult to break free from their hidden and comfortable assumptions and achieve higher levels of mental complexity.

In order to provide the context for the mental complexity required in leaders to optimize organizations to match the complex environment, this paper examines the three stages found in adulthood (Stages 3-5). These final stages (the Socialized mind, the Self-authoring mind, and the Self-transforming mind) are displayed in graphic format in Figure 2 below. This graphic, which appears in Kegan and Lahey's *Immunity to Change*, displays the stages as plateaus, indicating that there are distinct times of stability and times of change (2009). As stated previously, the changes occur when categories change from subject to object. In a sense, it occurs when an individual can examine the world through a wider lens, one that is able to view and assess their previous lens. This graphic also

provides a brief description of each of these final stages, explaining what these categorical subject-object shifts imply for leaders.

Socialized Mind

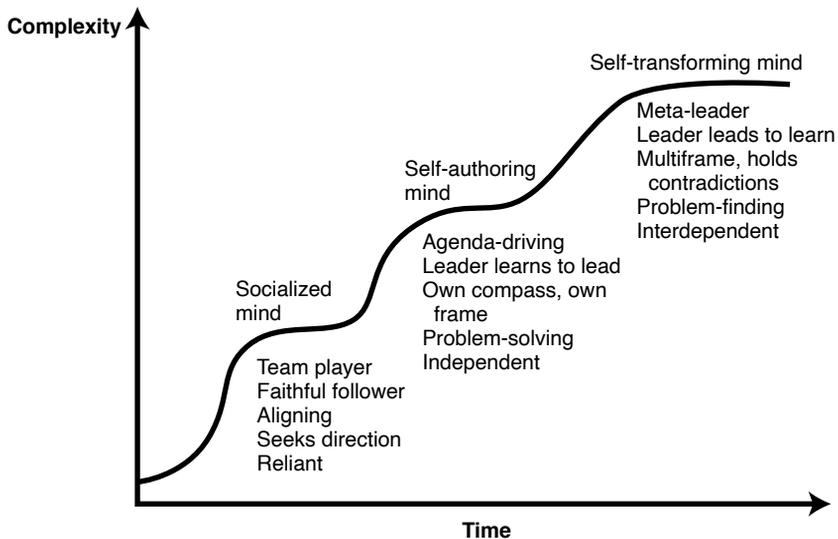
The socialized mind is normally achieved in older adolescents, and it is at this stage that most adults tend to settle, finding comfort in their socialized beliefs and without a desire to “rise” any further (Helsing & Lahey, 2010). This is understandable because it is in this stage that people find their identity, or self, in others. Breaking out of this stage is perhaps the most difficult because it can sever familial and friendly bonds. Therefore, the afore-mentioned “separation anxiety” locks most into this stage of sense-making. In the socialized mind, as Kegan stated, “there is no self to share with another; instead the other is required to bring the self into being.” An individual becomes somewhat “fused” with the group (1982, p. 97). People at this developmental level may be able to see or even understand another individual’s or group’s perspective, but they cannot

make any objective assessment of it because, as authors Helsing and Lahey explain, “their own theories, values, and expectations about personal and professional relationships and responsibilities are essentially made up by the theories, values and expectation of these others [in their group]” (2010, p. 74). Because this is true, people often become emotional when someone presents an alternate view. The socialized mind simply does not have the lens through which to evaluate these different views.

Self-Authoring Mind

When a person is able to access the self-authoring mind, they broaden their lens to see the views of their previous group and objectively compare them with the views of other individuals or groups. The mind opens, takes on a broader perspective, and sees more of the environment objectively. In Kegan’s words, people “can reflect on, handle, look at” the reactions and beliefs they previously held as truths. Kegan describes the self-authoring mind this way: “instead of being, so to speak, made up by or

Figure 2
Stages 3-5 of Kegan’s Developmental Theory (Kegan & Lahey, 2009, p. 16)



written by our surround, our culture, our family, the institutions that we value, we are capable of orienting ourselves more autonomously in these contexts” (2003, p. 35). We become the authority on our own beliefs; we choose what we ascribe to, rather than unconsciously surrendering that choice to our social groups. When we self-author, we, in a sense, break away from the herd. Then, when outside the herd, we can look back and more clearly see the herd, where it is heading, what it believes, and why. With this perspective, people make their assessment of what is best, what is right, and what should be.

...the greater diversity of thought that is considered, the more individuals minds are stretched and are able to make sense of the environment.

Self-Transforming Mind

The final transition in Dr. Kegan’s model occurs when an individual with a self-authoring mind is able to once again step out of their own belief system and look at their lens rather than merely looking through it (Kegan & Lahey, 2009). This transformation, if it occurs, only does so later in life (Kegan, 2003). This is where a leader truly begins to appreciate the ideas of others. Kegan and Lahey state that a person possessing, or at least accessing, this level of mental complexity “both values and is wary about any one stance, analysis, or agenda” (2009, p. 19). These individuals “make space” for others views rather than beholding to their own agenda. Such a leader is interested in, and even seeks information that will disrupt their own system and their former lens. Kegan noted that this level “involves this capacity to hold on

to opposites; to reclaim the projections that we would tend otherwise to put somewhere else” (2003, p. 42). Whereas in the self-authoring mind, people are able to appreciate the views of several groups in order to decide between them, in the self-transforming mind, they are able to see the different ways in which one might be inclined to decide between the groups. In this way, this stage of mental development is a system of systems, or as Kegan labeled it, “trans-system” (1994, p. 315). It is at this level of openness that we find a comparable match for the open systems that characterize the complexity of the environment.

As described above, a closed mind is comparable to a closed system in which a scientist may isolate factors in order to control outcomes. Whether with experiments or with mental processing, this closure makes the product restricted and predictable. However, when individuals reach a new stage in mental complexity, their minds open. Each time it does so, it is, in some ways, no longer limited to its own understanding but can facilitate and even harvest the understanding of others and hold a collective understanding. Additionally, the greater diversity of thought that is considered, the more individuals minds are stretched and are able to make sense of the environment.

Just as breaking free from the socialized mind can be uncomfortable, many find the idea of holding multiple realities as objective very disconcerting. It should be noted that accessing the self-transforming mind, like any other stage, does not preclude an individual from accessing any previous stage. The larger perspective still includes the previous perspectives; the self-authoring, and even socialized mind still exist within the larger view and people may choose to return to these levels as they are inclined. Accessing the self-transforming mind greatly enhances a leader’s ability to fully understand

the essence of another's beliefs and ideas without requiring them to permanently forfeit their own chosen beliefs.

Applying Mental Complexity to Leadership

Kegan's theory, along with other similar stage models in the field of developmental psychology, are widely used in modern leadership literature and theory (Joiner & Josephs, 2007). Many, such as Kaz Gozdz and Joseph Jaworski in the four level leadership models and Bill Joiner and Stephen Josephs in the five levels they propose in their book *Leadership Agility*, are building upon the idea that higher developmental stages aid leaders in addressing complexity (Gozdz, 2017, Jaworski, 2015, Joiner & Josephs, 2007). Having established the correlation between the mental complexity as an 'open mental system' and environmental complexity as described in general systems theory, this paper will use Kegan's stage-development framework while incorporating the principles of other works to describe three types of leaders, utilizing an illustrative-metaphorical structure of "tables." The three approaches to leadership described here are the desk leader, the conference table leader, and the round table leader; each relying on a higher level of mental complexity than the pervious and capable of addressing increasing levels of environmental complexity. The first two leadership styles - the desk and conference table leaders - carry with them the heroic leadership connotations that the leader alone has all the answers, while the third, the round table leader, introduces a post-heroic view of leadership that encourages participation and shared responsibility (Joiner & Josephs, 2007). The following will examine how each of these leadership approaches affects the leader's sense-making and how they address five critical leadership areas: communication, expectations, oversight, feedback, and organization.

It is also important to keep in mind that the use of categories is to illustrate the differences in leadership styles and their utility in dealing with complexity. In applying these models, leaders may choose to exercise characteristics from any category to fit the mission of the organization and their leadership position within it.

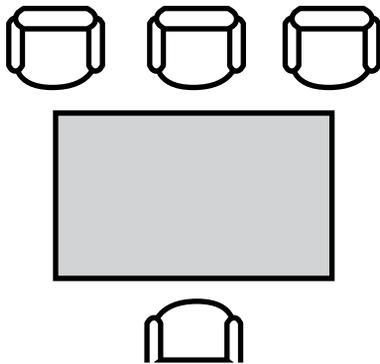
The Desk Leader

The desk leader represents a leader who operates in a socialized mind, which, as we have already addressed, means that they belong to a "herd." These leaders understand the world as it is translated through the views of the group to which they belong. This mindset assures the leader that the group is right, while anyone who disagrees with the group is wrong. Desk leaders ascribe to the paradigms held by the organization and believe that the organization's way is the best, and perhaps only, way of doing business; it is right, and therefore, they feel compelled to ensure it is enforced and propagated. Such leadership is typical in organizations because they are designed, in many ways, to keep everyone on the same page. With this view, the leader believes that others should understand what to do based on assumed shared beliefs (Kegan & Lahey, 2009). Joiner and Josephs refer to this type of leader as an "expert" who believes that power comes from "authority and expertise" (2007, p. 8). This leadership style is illustrated in the picture-metaphor of a desk, (Figure 3) highlighting that the leader sits alone, as the sole authority. These basic beliefs, fomented in the socialized mind, keep the mental system closed and translate to some consistent and predictable leadership methods.

The first resulting trait is a communication style that is very directive. With the expectation that people within their span of control know how to do

their tasks, they simply need to be told what to do, not why. Secondly, the leader expects little more than compliance throughout the organization. Enjoyment, satisfaction, or even a desire to improve a process are somewhat irrelevant; personnel are simply expected to do their job in the prescribed fashion. The leader understands that the standard operating procedures within the organization are there because they are tried-and-true and have worked in the past. Paradigms, and all the assumptions that go with them, are held as gospel. Ensuring compliance brings out the desk leader's third defining characteristic, oversight via micro-management. They understand that part of their job is to ensure that the tasks are being carried

Figure 3
Desk Leader



out correctly. Because these leaders direct and do not empower, they will micro-manage supervisors and workers alike. The fourth leadership trait these leaders exhibit is feedback through critique. Workers can expect that if they do things “right,” they won’t hear anything; however, if they make any mistakes, they can expect to be critiqued by the leader in an unhelpful manner, usually consisting of “this is where you went wrong,” and nothing more. This is not intended to

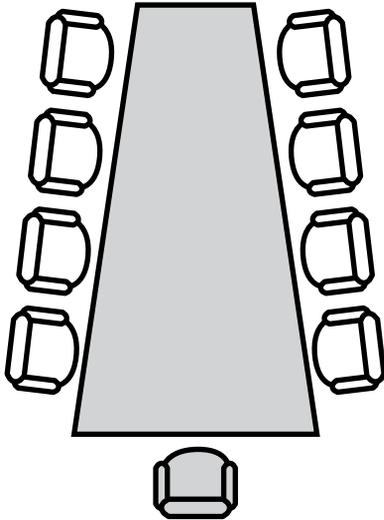
help the employee get better, it is meant to reinforce the rules within the paradigm and mental model, to affirm the leader’s expertise and position of authority, and to reiterate his expectation of compliance. This organization becomes strictly task-oriented. The *why* of the work is lost in the work itself and everyone is laboring simply to accomplish the next given task with no real concern for the organization or its mission. In a relatively simple and steady environment, this organization can be effective by maintaining the status quo

The Conference Table Leader

Conference table leaders are likely to possess a self-authoring mind, understanding that people think differently than they do, but feeling the need to get everyone in alignment with their own beliefs, vision, and purpose (Hendel-Giller, 2018). Conference table leaders are critical and “outside-the-box” thinkers; they have undergone a difficult transition to rise above the felt need to go with the flow. In this way, they feel enlightened, able to look at matters objectively and choose between them. They examine why the organization does the things it does, question the status quo, and seek to find better ways of doing business. According to Kegan, these individuals have “a direction, an agenda... of what is needed,” and about which “others need to hear to best further the agenda or mission” of their design (Kegan & Lahey, 2009, p. 19). They also understand that it is the individuals in the organization that carry out the mission, and that they need to get them all on the same page and press forward together. Joiner describes a leader with this mindset as an achiever, who seeks to motivate others “by making it challenging and satisfying to contribute to important outcomes” (Joiner & Josephs, 2007, p. 7). This leadership style is illustrated in the picture-metaphor of a conference table, (Figure 4) highlighting

that these leaders sit with those they lead, still maintaining authority at the head of the table, but at the same time fostering the team mentality.

Figure 4
Conference Table Leader



While the desk leader sits across the desk and directs people toward their tasks, the conference table leader communicates by attempting to inspire employees toward a shared vision. These leaders know it is their job to cast a vision for the future and to ensure everyone shares that vision; therefore, they invite everyone to join them on this new path. This leader expects buy-in to the vision and mission of the organization. Mere compliance is not enough, as these leaders understand that they can get more out of their people if they have a cause in which to believe. Their perspective allows them to understand that some folks may see things differently; these are the ones who need to be convinced and motivated to change. Once they achieve buy-in, conference table leaders are comfortable enough with their people to delegate responsibilities. In doing so,

they demonstrate a certain level of trust. This trust is also enforced by providing feedback in the form of constructive criticism, helping personnel accomplish their tasks without intervening directly. This leader creates a climate in which people are praised for good work or are provided with an improvement plan if needed. Conference table leaders lead vision-driven organizations that can be very successful, making them an attractive and aspirational leadership style.

The Round Table Leader

The two previous leadership styles carry with them the heroic leadership connotations that the leader alone has all the answers. However, these styles simply may not be enough to address the degree of complexity in the environment, and a different approach to leadership may be required. Round table leadership goes beyond the typical heroic leadership style of directing or inspiring; it surpasses efforts to maintain the status quo or to cast a new vision. This advanced leadership approach harnesses the intellectual and visionary firepower within the team to turn the organization into an adaptive organism. To create such a team, leaders must be able to access a self-transforming mind in which they can see that others have different views, AND appreciate those views as useful perspectives that should be examined and considered (Hendel-Giller, 2018).

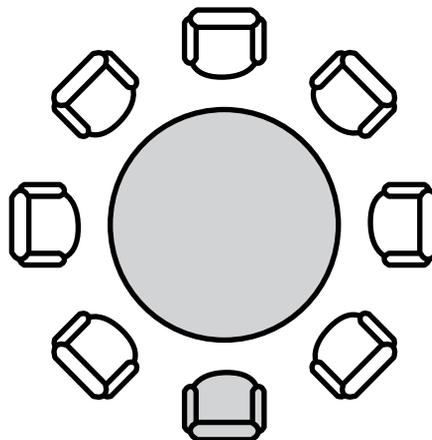
While a conference table leader walks in with a vision or agenda, the round table leader does not. This runs counter to what so many see as the leader's role or responsibility; however, such a view may be conflating leadership with authority. Addressing this issue, Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky contend that people grant authority "on the assumption that you will... promptly provide solutions to problems" (2009, p. 24). Round table leaders depart from this safe zone

of using authority and providing answers and instead lead their team to develop a vision and plan together. Kegan writes that a person with a self-transforming mind makes “space for the modification or expansion of their agenda or design” (Kegan & Lahey, 2009, p. 20). Leaders with this kind of openness in their mental model are able to harness the ideas and perspectives of others, making the team full participants in the direction of the organization. Joiner and Josephs assert that such leaders “create a participative culture,” possessing an “openness to change” and a “willingness to rethink basic assumptions and their visionary orientation” (2007, p. 10). This leadership style is illustrated in the picture-metaphor of a round table (Figure 5), highlighting that leaders sit as intellectual equals with those they lead, not possessing all the good ideas, but incorporating everyone on the team, facilitating active and open discussion, and taking the perspective of others.

The openness of the round table leaders’ mental model allows members of the team to communicate through collaboration, expecting them to participate and become co-owners of the vision and direction of the organization rather than merely complying or even buying-in to the leader’s vision. With co-ownership

comes a natural empowerment, understanding that not only is each voice heard, but every team member’s position is relevant and valued; each member

Figure 5
Round Table Leader



understands that the leader and other members of the team trust them and rely on them to perform their role in the organization. Evaluation and feedback are generated in the form of back-and-forth learning, in which teammates are encouraged to discuss what went wrong and seek solutions together with other members of the team. Ultimately, these leaders and their

Table 1
Summary of Leadership Approaches

	Communication	Expectation	Supervision	Evaluation	Organization
Desk Leader	Directs	Compliance	Micro-Manages	Critique	Task-driven
Conference Table Leader	Inspires	Buy-in	Delegates	Constructive Criticism	Vision-driven
Round Table Leader	Collaborates	Co-ownership	Empowers	Learning	Vision-creating

people become a vision-creating team, bringing together the best ideas from everyone in the continually evolving and adapting organization like a living, breathing organism.

Exercising and Applying Round Table Leadership

Round table leadership is not a style that should be applied without consideration of mission or position. Like the mental complexity model, leaders may choose and apply aspects of this leadership style where it is appropriate. It is also not something that comes naturally. Given that it corresponds with the highest level of mental complexity and that fewer than 8 percent of the researched population were able to access this self-transforming mind, this leadership style may be difficult to embrace and put into practice (Kegan & Lahey, 2009, p. 28). In fact, mental complexity is not a skill that can be learned by mere study. Greater mental complexity is only achieved through practice, whether that comes through intentional efforts, life experience and circumstances, or both. Leaders must be willing to form the habit of suspending bias, going through the pain of losing one perspective in order to gain another, and continually working toward becoming open to new ideas. This requires leaders to think and communicate differently.

Thinking Differently

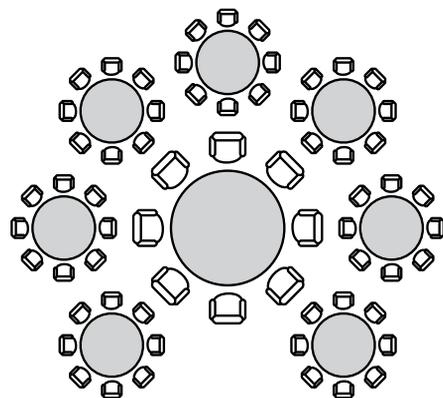
Adopting a leadership approach begins with how a leader thinks about their own position as a leader. Some may view the title of leader as the just reward for hard work. Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky wrote that “one of the most seductive ways your organization rewards you... is to call you a “leader” (2009, p. 25). Round table leaders must reject this view of leadership and understand that their authority does not equate to omniscience. Sitting at a round table requires a different perspective on leadership, one that places a premium

on inclusivity and downplays the assumed expertise of the leader. Former Pacific Fleet Commander, Admiral Scott Swift summed up this challenging leadership quality as vulnerability, not in a sense of being weak in the face of a threat, but in the sense of promoting inclusivity and engendering maximum participation for the group (Nelson, 2017). Inclusivity requires being open to new ideas and thoughts and to increase the leader’s mental complexity to address the complexity faced in the environment.

Distributing Inclusivity

Over and above inclusivity, a leader of leaders has the additional and critical responsibility to develop lower-level leaders into inclusive leaders as well, that is, to grow their mental complexity. If only the head table is round, that enables the leader to harness the intellect of only those at that table and excludes all the intellect found elsewhere in the organization. However, if each individual at the head table takes the round table approach to their own section of the organization (Figure 6), then the best ideas from the level below begin to surface as well, eventually making their way to the head table. Distributing inclusivity throughout the organization could bring an exponential increase in the intellect from which the leader is able to draw.

Figure 6
Developing Round Table Leaders



Communicating Differently

Building Trust and Accepting Risk

Communication must be built on a foundation of trust. If the people within the organization are going to contribute to the openness and complexity of the leader and the organization itself, they must understand that they are empowered to think and act, that they are allowed to take risks and make mistakes. If no one is willing to take risks, people will simply maintain the status quo, playing it safe and continuing to do the same thing they have always done. Diane Halpern of Claremont McKenna College wrote that “creative responses, especially when they are in response to novel situations, will be reduced if there is little or no tolerance for errors” (2004, p. 135). To establish this trust, a leader must be willing to let subordinates try, and let them fail.

The characteristics of round table leaders allow them to facilitate ideas that are inconsistent with their own subjective beliefs, broadening their perspective and increasing their ability to cope with a complex environment.

Facilitating Open Discussion

Trust enables leaders to facilitate open discussions, and one of the best ways of doing this is to ask questions. Marquardt wrote that “Leaders, through questions, can build a culture in which questions are welcomed, assumptions are challenged, and new ways to solve problems are explored. Questions establish an inquiring culture in organizations, and such an inquiring culture builds a learning organization” (2005, p. 27). It is imperative that leaders foster this

open flow of information because it could very well preclude disaster. Marquardt holds that the sinking of the Titanic, the Challenger explosion, and even the botched 1961 Bay of Pigs incident could all have been avoided if people surrounding the decision makers had felt free to speak up and question perceived expertise and authority (2005). Leaders must be willing to admit that there are considerations other than those they themselves have foreseen. An organization that engages in questioning can safeguard against blind spots and avoid catastrophe.

Two common objections to facilitating discussion are the lack of time and the fact that some matters simply do not call for deeper discussion. These are legitimate concerns; even Clausewitz warned that leaders must be careful not to be “dragged down to a state of dreary pedantry, and grub around in the underworld of ponderous concepts where no great commander... was ever seen” (Clausewitz, 1978). However, these concerns should not inhibit leaders from hearing disparate ideas when time is available and the complexity of the situation calls for it. Hearing new and disparate ideas can not only help prevent pitfalls, it can also illuminate new paths forward. Often one idea triggers another and acts as a springboard to generate new concepts. Author Edward de Bono calls this concept lateral thinking. He wrote that “vertical thinking selects a pathway by excluding other pathways. Lateral thinking does not select but seeks to open up other pathways” (1970, p. 39-40). The concept of lateral thinking provides an opportunity to generate new paths and provides additional and alternate options to explain the environment, to discover problems, and to generate approaches to overcome them. Lateral thinking also breaks paradigms and avoids specialized deafness by eliminating classifications and categories.

The characteristics of round table leaders allow them to facilitate ideas that are inconsistent with their own subjective beliefs, broadening their perspective and increasing their ability to cope with a complex environment.

Conclusion

Great military leaders must be more than brave and inspiring. The warrior ethos that elicits iconic views of heroic leadership must also include a post-heroic perspective that takes in the thoughts and ideas of others and expands the leader's ability to match the complexity in the environment. The interaction of open systems has always produced uncertainty, but globalization and advances in technology have significantly increased the pace and nature of change. Leaders facing these types of environments can easily find themselves outmatched. Traditional styles of leadership limit organizations to only what their leaders know and perceive. In complex environments, this can put their mission at risk, especially where these leaders and organizations fall victim to restricted thinking and strive to maintain the proven status quo. To address the openness and complexity in the environment, leaders must create openness and complexity in their own mental models as well. Round table leaders embrace the ideas, perspectives, and thoughts of those around them to increase the collective understanding of issues within the environment. Through the collaborative efforts of their team, leaders can create the mental complexity to adapt to complexity of their environment and remain relevant and successful.

♦ ♦ ♦

References

- Boulding, K. E. (1956). General Systems Theory—The Skeleton of Science. *Management Science*, 2(3), 197-208.
- Bradford, D., Cohen, A. (1998) *Power Up: Transforming Organizations Through Shared Leadership*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc..
- Clausewitz, C. (1976) *On War*. Princeton University Press.
- de Bono, E. (1970) *Lateral Thinking*. Harper & Row.
- Freidman, T. (2016) *Thank You for Being Late: An Optimist's Guide to Thriving in the Age of Accelerations*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Gaddis, J. L. (2002) *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past*. Oxford University Press.
- Gozdz, K. A (2017) *Blueprint for Performance Scaffolding and Development at Scale; Kaz Gozdz Helix Group, LLC..*
- Grunberg, E. (1978). "Complexity" and "Open Systems" in Economic Discourse. *Journal of Econ Issues*, 12(3), 541-560.
- Halpern, D. F. (2004) The Development of Adult Cognition: Understanding Constancy and Change in Adult Learning. In Day, D. V.; Zaccaro, S. J.; Halpin, S. M. (Eds.), *Leader Development for Transforming Organizations: Growing Leaders for Tomorrow* (p. 135).; Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- Heifetz, R., Grashow, A., & Linsky, M. (2009) *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing your Organization and the World*. Harvard Business School Publishing..
- Helsing, D. & Lahey, L. (2010) *Extraordinary Leadership: Addressing the Gaps in Senior Executive Development*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Jaworski, J. (2019, May 6) *The Advent of Stage IV Leadership*. Generon International, LLC. <https://www.generationinternational.com/download/advent-of-state-iv-leadership/?wpdmml=1824&refresh=6000abc0da0431610656704>
- Joiner, B. & Josephs, S. (2007) *Leadership Agility: Five Levels of Mastery for Anticipating and Initiating Change*. Jossey-Bass.
- Kegan, R. (1982) *The Evolving Self: Problem and Process in Human Development*. Harvard University Press.
- Kegan, R. (1994) *In Over Our Heads: the Mental Demands of Modern Life*. Harvard University Press.
- Kegan, R. (2003) *Hidden Curriculum of Adult Life: An Adult Developmental Perspective*. Stockholm Lectures in Educology: Lecture Series No. 2. Stockholm University Department of Education.

Kegan, R. & Lahey, L. L. (2009) *Immunity to Change: How to Overcome it and Unlock the Potential in Yourself and Your Organization*. Harvard Business Press.

Kuhn, T. S. (1996) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. The University of Chicago Press.

Marquardt, M. (2005) *Leading with Questions: How Leaders Find the Right Solutions by Knowing What to Ask*. John Wiley & Sons Inc..

Moore, G. E. (1965). Cramming More Components onto Integrated Circuits. *Electronics*, 38(8).

Nelson, C. Admiral (2019, December 6) *Scott Swift on Leadership, Risk, and a Life in the U.S. Navy*. Center for International Maritime Security. <http://cimsec.org/admiral-scott-swift-leadership-risk-life-u-s-navy/33578>

FEATURE ARTICLES

Contextualizing Military Insight Within Higher Education: Mitigating Social Vulnerability & Maximizing Sustainability in the Time of COVID

Anthony Andenoro, St. Thomas University

ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 global pandemic, social and political polarization, and economic downturn have caused an untenable situation for many higher education institutions nationally. Concurrently, students, staff, faculty, and administrators are also struggling with the significant adversity stemming. This precipitates increases in emotional wellness challenges and decreases in productivity and motivation across institutions of higher education. To address this pervasive need the author examines a three-phase process, inclusive of 1) issue identification, 2) internal capacity building, and 3) external partnership development that is employed by the United States Coast Guard 7th District. The process increases emotional intelligence and personal hardiness across the organization, and concurrently mitigates social vulnerability and maximizes the emotional health and wellbeing of their service men and women. This yields a transferable model for higher education institutions, as they attempt to survive the increasing challenge of sustainability in the time of COVID.

Introduction

Institutions of higher education, both nationally and abroad, are experiencing significant adversity regardless of their institutional classification (Marinoni et al., 2020). The global pandemic, increased civil unrest, disparity of global polarization, political dichotomization, and the significant economic downturn have caused institutions of higher education to reframe how they approach teaching and learning, allocate resources, and ensure salaries, benefits, and professional development funding, all while attempting to remain fiscally solvent (Andenoro & Skendall, 2020; Neuwirth et al., 2020; Zhu & Liu, 2020). This is further complicated, as the domestic and international markets have continued to impact endowment performance.

However, while daunting, these issues culminate in a much larger problem for faculty, staff, administration, and higher education as a whole—our students are struggling. Paralleling global communities, universities are seeing significant increases in student anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation. This epidemic is compounded as faculty, staff, and administrators are facing their own increased mental health and wellness challenges, which undermine their ability to serve student needs. This ultimately creates the foundation for two overarching complex adaptive problems.

First, the foundation of learning, and the essence of higher education are being challenged. These ideas and are inherently linked to a person bettering themselves, and the idea of bettering oneself requires hope (Ristau, 2011; Waytz & Epley, 2012; West, 2014). Considering the reduction of resources due to a depleted fiscal infrastructure, the erosion of positivity due to anxiety and depression, and the lack of empathy and social interaction due to social distancing and polarization, there is a scarcity of hope in our communities and by association our higher education environments (Baum, 2012; Park et al., 2020; Pimlott, 2020). Second, there is massive expectation violation on the part of students, faculty, and staff within the higher education environment. The experiences and environments of higher education have shifted considerably from what we have come to expect, and regardless of how much preparation or communication takes place, we are conditioned to the default. A default that has been conditioned within higher education environments to include all of the tenets of slowly evolving disciplinary ideations that hold firm to the traditions dating back to in *loco parentis* (Conte, 2000). These complex adaptive problems undermine the sustainability of higher education environments (Satterwhite et al., 2020).

Anthony C. Andenoro, Ph.D., serves as the Executive Director and Professor for the Institute for Ethical Leadership at St. Thomas University in Miami, FL. His research includes the development of moral decision-making in leadership learners, the role of cognitive diversity and active learning strategies in the development of engagement, positive sentiment, and neuroplasticity within leadership learning environments, and the use of behavioral economics principles to shift attitudes and change behaviors in under-resourced communities for the purposes of addressing complex problems and creating sustainability. He has published 58 refereed and invited scholarly works, presented more than 70 refereed and invited conference papers, and secured and managed more than \$10.3 million in gift and grant funding to advance his programmatic, teaching, and research initiatives. He earned a BA in Communication from the University of Toledo, a MS in Educational Administration from Texas A&M University, and a PhD in Agricultural Education with an emphasis in Leadership Education from Texas A&M University.

Understanding this, in times of adversity it is incumbent upon organizations to innovate and invest their scarcity of resources in their most valuable commodity, their people (Kouzes & Posner, 2014; Patterson, Goens, & Reed, 2009; Sawalha, 2015; Wilson & Rice, 2004). While this would seem commonplace to the early-adopter and liberal education focused mindsets within higher education, perplexingly institutions often regress, furlough and eliminate positions, and allocate resources from innovative academic programs and critical student development priorities to traditional and politically insulated areas of the university (Grawe, 2021). Again, these practices undermine the overall sustainability of institutions and undermines the holistic experience required for the development of well-rounded, educated, and engaged graduates (Alawamleh, 2020; Bhagat & Kim, 2020; Sá & Serpa, 2020).

While the complex problems presented may seem daunting, this article offers an alternative practical approach grounded in a more cosmopolitan and trans-industry perspective. Currently, the United States Coast Guard is facing the same global issues facing our higher education institutions. However, they are approaching these issues from a very different perspective. Through an investment in those that serve, they are ultimately creating value for those that are served. The following provides insight into a phased implementation plan aimed at mitigating social vulnerability that is grounded in personal hardiness, emotional intelligence, and partnership building stemming from the tangible actions initiated by the United States Coast Guard 7th District, an organization serving a 1.7 million square mile area including Puerto Rico, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, and 34 foreign nations and territories. The plan provides a transferable snapshot that can be minimally adapted and implemented within higher education settings and institutions feeling the increased pressures associated with our changing world. Ultimately, this provides benefit for students served by our higher education

institutions and implications for developing leaders capable of maximizing collective hardiness and a more empathetic approach to serving the organizations and socially vulnerable communities that need it most.

Underlying Conditions & Context

Social Vulnerability. The COVID-19 global pandemic and resulting problems have significantly challenged higher education institutions' ability to maintain services and support student learning. As a gross oversimplification, students are more vulnerable, which increases the demand for services that universities can provide. In an effort to further unpack this idea, it becomes incumbent to more fully explore the idea of vulnerability and how it links to the larger idea of social vulnerability. *Vulnerability* can be defined as the capacity to be wounded (Kates 1985; Dow 1992) or the potential for loss (Cutter, 1996). Despite differences in the conceptualization of vulnerability (Adger et al., 2004; Wu, Yarnal, & Fisher, 2002), two main perspectives have emerged. First, vulnerability is a pre-existing condition and focuses on potential exposure to hazards (Cutter, 2003). A synthesis of existing literature aggregates social vulnerability as a combination of three factors, 1) distribution of hazardous conditions, 2) the human occupancy of the hazard zone, and 3) the degree of loss of life and property resulting from a particular event.

Second, vulnerability suggests that not all individuals and groups exposed to a hazard are equally vulnerable (Wu et al., 2002). Rather, that affected people display patterns of differential loss when faced with exposure to some stress or crisis. This impacts the individual's ability to cope, thus leading to increased vulnerability (Anderson & Woodrow, 1991; Clark et al., 1998; Cutter, 1996; Cutter, 2003; Dow 1992; Watts & Bohle 1993; Wu et al., 2002). Inherently this aligns with a given individual's coping ability. Coping ability has been defined as a combination of resistance (the ability to absorb the damaging impacts of a hazard and continue functioning) and resilience (the ability to

recover from losses quickly) (Clark et al., 1998; Cutter, 1996; Dow; 1992; Wu et al., 2002).

This idea directly applies to students within higher education environments. The economic stress applied to the job market has reduced the options available for high school graduates to consider. Higher education offers an option for these graduates, but due to reduction in estimated family contribution, increased stress levels, domestic abuse, and the lack of socialization due to COVID-19, many of the students entering higher education lack the financial, social, and developmental capacities necessary for success and sustainability with these environments. This problem is further exacerbated when exploring student needs within

...if our populations are struggling across higher education, how can we create more resilient higher education communities capable of withstanding the mitigating factors and adversity leading to increased vulnerability and decreased learning?

Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and Tribal Colleges. Thus, there is a significant problem within higher education settings because students are socially vulnerable. However, the complexity of this problem is extended, as the staff, faculty, and administrators at institutions of higher education are also dealing with challenges to mental health and wellness. This situational complexity begs the question, if our populations are struggling across higher education, how can we create more resilient higher education communities capable of withstanding the mitigating factors and adversity leading to increased vulnerability and decreased learning?

Personal Hardiness. Personal hardiness has been shown to mitigate the effects of social vulnerability and by association can lead to community resilience (Maddi, 2002). Grounded in existentialism (Golomb, 2012; Frankl, 1963; Maddi, 2004), as the ongoing quest for life's meaning and purpose expressed through a constant decision-making process that provides the underpinnings for what people do, hardiness is operationalized as a set of attitudes or beliefs about oneself in interaction with the surrounding world that provides the courage and motivation to navigate adversity and convert it into opportunity (Maddi, 2006; Maddi 2002). More simply, personal hardiness can serve as a pathway to resilience under stress (Bonanno, 2004).

The attitudes or beliefs involved with establishing hardiness and resilience are a combination of commitment, control, and challenge, complimented by hardy action patterns of building social support, problem solving, and effective self-care (Kobasa et al., 1982; Maddi & Kobasa, 1984). The development of these interrelated attitudes assists in managing stressful circumstances by turning them into growth-inducing versus debilitating experiences (Maddi, 2002). People strong in the commitment attitude engage versus withdrawing, seeing adversity as an opportunity to experience something interesting and important (Popa, 2012). People strong in the control attitude believe that with effort, they can influence the situational variables surrounding them rather than seeing themselves as a passive bystander and powerless in the face of circumstances (2012). People strong in the challenge attitude believe that fulfillment is found not in comfort, security, and routine, but rather in the continual growth and wisdom that can be gleaned through the negative and positive experiences of an active life (2012). Further, hardiness is inherent to positive mental health (Ghorbani et al., 2000; Ramanaiah & Sharpe, 1999) and consistent with the

more recent emphasis on positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014).

Research has also revealed support for hardiness as the essence of vigorous mental health and wellness (Maddi, et al., 2002), and concurrently a positive relationship between hardiness and various indexes of performance (Maddi & Hess, 1992; Maddi & Kobasa, 1984; Westman, 1990), conduct (Maddi, et al., 1996), morale (Bartone, 1999; Kuo & Tsai, 1986), and health (Bartone, et al., 1989; Ouellette Kobasa, 1993). People who have the courage (hardiness) to simultaneously favor engagement with others and events (commitment), choose to devote effort to influencing the outcomes (control), and emphasize learning from their experiences (challenge), have more fulfilling, satisfying, resilient, and remarkable lives (Maddi et al., 2002).

Emotional Intelligence. Emotional Intelligence is well-documented in the higher education, student development, and leadership literature, but for the practical purposes of this article, a brief contextualization is merited. Emotional intelligence has four core competencies (Salovey & Mayer, 1990):

1. The ability to accurately perceive, appraise, and express emotion.
2. The ability to access or generate feelings on demand when they can facilitate understanding of oneself and another person.
3. The ability to understand emotions and the knowledge that derives from them.
4. The ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth.

More specifically, self-awareness emerges from these four core emotional competencies as a governing tenet for the development of emotional intelligence. Self-awareness refers to the ability to recognize a feeling as it happens (Goleman, 2005). This ability is paramount for the development of students' interest in service and

leadership and the development of career-readiness. High self-awareness is the foundation from which all other emotional intelligence stems (Weisinger, 1998), and self-awareness is highly correlated with positive social interaction (Lopes et al., 2004). Further, individuals with the capacity for self-awareness and self-monitoring have greater psychological insight and self-understanding (2005), along with increased certainty for their emotional state and how they convey that to the world. This leads to more productive and meaningful lives (2005). In addition, the use of self-awareness and overall emotional intelligence can lead to productive outcomes at the organizational level (Weisinger, 1998). This is further confirmed by the overwhelming majority of employers who feel emotional intelligence, and specifically self-awareness, is critical to success in business (Goleman, 1998).

Emotional intelligence also contributes to more positive social interactions (Bochkova & Meshkova, 2018; Lopes et al., 2004; Lopes et al., 2005). Further, the need for social interaction and its contribution to communities of belonging is well documented (Clark et al., 2018; Holt-Lunstad et al., 2017; Seppala et al., 2013; Waytz et al., 2010). However, the pandemic, associated social distancing requirements, self-isolation, and the reduction of service industry opportunities (e.g., restaurants, social clubs, etc.), have reduced the opportunities for social interaction. This has led to increased anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation, and by association, decreased self-worth (Lange, 2020; Marelli, 2020; Salari, 2020; Twenge & Joiner, 2020). However, it has also led to a reduction in the self and social monitoring that is characteristic of emotionally intelligent individuals. This is further complicated as apathy has seen a recent increase due to the pandemic, increased social media activity, and political polarization (Chaput, 2020; Zhelnina, 2020). These challenges and the diminishing social interactions have the potential to significantly reduce society's collective capacity for self-awareness, empathy,

motivation, self-regulation, and social awareness, which are all fundamental tenets of emotional intelligence, positive social interaction (Lopes, 2004), positive organizational cultures (Hess & Bacigalupo, 2010; Rapisarda, 2002), and higher education persistence (Qualter, et al., 2009; Walsh-Portillo, 2011).

The lack of social interaction is also affecting higher education environments. Currently, a causality dilemma is present where students require levels of emotional intelligence to effectively learn in online environments (Abraham, 2018; Berenson et al., 2008), but the students need the social interactions germane to the face-to-face physical environment to develop the foundational elements of emotional intelligence (Parker et al., 2009; Preeti, 2013). Concurrently, faculty members are also being negatively impacted by the noted challenges. As such, this is leading to faculty members experiencing emotional and mental wellness challenges similar to the students. This compounds the issues facing higher education, as faculty members' emotional intelligence is directly attributable to higher levels of student achievement (Curci et al., 2014; Lillis, 2011; Maguire et al., 2017; Masoumparast, 2016) and the development of students' emotional intelligence (Stedman & Andenoro, 2007).

Emotional Intelligence & Expectation Violation.

Our expectations are also intimately linked to our emotional intelligence (Barling et al., 2000; Jordan & Troth, 2004), and by association are linked to our conceptualization of learning and learning environments. This reveals that learning and achievement can be affected by the students' expectations for teaching. Higher education faculty members are currently challenged in this respect due to the global pandemic. Social distancing and distance learning requirements have considerably decreased the face-to-face interactions that validate students' preferences and expectations for interactive discussion and group-based activities in higher

education environments (Sander, Stevenson, King, & Coates, 2000). Thus, students' expectation violation, psychological contract violations, and the dissonance of what they previously knew higher education to feel and look like, is creating psychologically self-imposed barriers to their learning. This is particularly troubling considering that expectation violation is often connected to the erosion of trust (Afifi & Metts, 1998). In essence, students' perception that higher education has failed to meet their perceived ideal, and the lack of strategic faculty development regarding the navigation, delivery, and cultural challenges of distance learning platforms are creating an unfavorable and unresponsive environment. This has the potential to cause unproductive anxiety and poor performance in our students (De Saintonge, & Dunn, 2001).

Application of Practice

The preceding narrative provides context for the grim prognostications that are happening across higher education environments. However, the rise of innovative multidisciplinary work, translational sciences, and interdisciplinary programs and grant request for proposals (RFPs) provide a model for addressing these challenges. More specifically, we need to look externally to understand how we can promote sustainability internally. Through the exploration of what other industries are doing to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 and the compounding challenges existing in our world, we can begin to develop a framework for continuing to serve student needs, support staff, faculty, and administration, and create an environment of innovation amidst tremendous adversity.

The following presents a conceptual model and practical approach for mitigating the overwhelming pressures facing higher education institutions that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 global pandemic, increased civil unrest, disparity of global polarization, political dichotomization, and the significant economic downturn. The accompanying narrative describing

the model and approaches stemmed from unobtrusive site visits and informal qualitative data collection with United States Coast Guard 7th District in South Florida. The resulting phases provide a transferable, practical, low cost, and highly effective means of managing the noted challenges to higher education sustainability.

Phase 1. Issue Identification. Complex predictive modeling and a vast array of agency and think tank projections can provide a pathway for understanding the future. However, maybe our best chance to predict future challenges lies in the asking people across our organizations “What do you see?” and “How can that impact our ability to achieve our mission and vision?”. When the COVID-19 global pandemic arrived in the United States, the United States Coast Guard (USCG) was well-aware of the challenges it would bring, as an organization that serves both domestic and broad international contexts. However, considering the foreseeable increase in anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation due to social isolation, the USCG 7th District asked their service members what were the significant systemic challenges that they, their families, and friends were facing. Identification of the broad-based the problems facing their personnel, families, and extended communities revealed a more accurate scope of the challenges and afforded the USCG an opportunity to be more strategic in its approach to addressing the challenges. It also cultivated a culture of inclusivity, care, and community. By asking for perspectives at all levels of the organization and then truly listening, the USCG validated their personnel’s self-worth, modeled positive emotional intelligence, and created the foundation for adaptive leadership practice.

Phase 2. Internal Capacity Building. Once the USCG had an understanding for the challenges facing their broad personnel base, they began investing time in the reinforcement of structures that would mitigate

the foreseeable and noted challenges. This came in the form of train-the-trainer programs. Emotional intelligence, counseling, and wellness training extended the capacity of mental health professionals to identify, support, and treat those suffering from increased emotional wellness challenges (e.g., anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation). Further, it instilled a culture allowing for vulnerability through the development of trust and relationship building. USCG Personnel (personal communication, December, 23, 2020; personal communication, December, 29, 2020) shared that to address the negative stigmas often assigned to emotional wellness challenges, the USCG embraced the idea that a “community of support is grounded in the moral courage to find out who is struggling and care for them accordingly as our brothers and sisters in service”. Specifically, a reinvestment and extension of *Applied Suicide Intervention Skill Training (ASIST)* and *SafeTALK* (Stennett, 2016) training led to the identification and treatment of struggling service personnel and actualized a tangible commitment and investment in the USCG’s human capital.

In addition, USCG officers worked directly with supervisors and subordinates to manage workforce demands, creating a more supportive environment across the organization. Consideration was also given to the factors that could potentially lead to the spread of COVID-19, as the USCG provided technological resources including computers to personnel to allow for productive remote working environments. Finally, the USCG made a concerted effort to assist the family units of their personnel by extending childcare options to mitigate school closings, exploring and securing grant funding, and providing emotional wellness sessions to spouses and family members serving as first responders and healthcare professionals. United States Coast Guard Personnel (personal communication, December, 23, 2020) noted that this new culture has ultimately prevented deaths, assisted people in leading

more productive and positive lives, and enhanced overall sustainability as society continues to struggle with the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Phase 3. External Partnership Development.

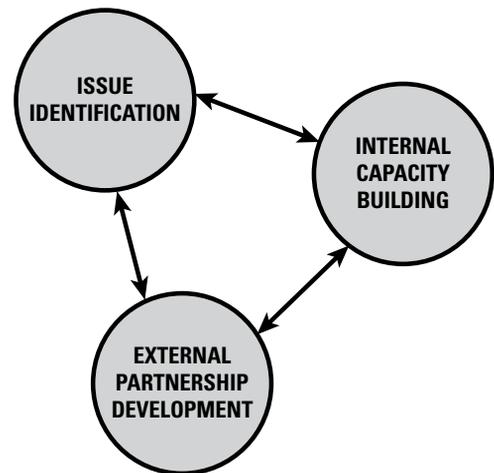
External partnerships were also a critical piece of the process for mitigating the challenges facing the USCG and those that they served. Strategic partnerships with the Center for Disease Control, local municipalities, and healthcare organizations allowed for the receipt and dissemination of critical information. Partnerships with Customs and Boarder Protection, local law enforcement, and the Cruise Ship Industry assisted the USCG in increasing response time and communicating critical information that could potentially prevent harm.

Additionally, as the pandemic merited the need for social isolation and the reduction of service industry options (e.g., restaurants, movie theatres, social clubs, etc.), boating sales increased. This increased the number of novice recreational boaters, and by association the need for the USCG to work with the closely with the Fish & Wildlife Association, local search and rescue groups, and law enforcement to create social restrictions (e.g., limited sandbar usage), promote safety, and respond to emergencies.

The previous three-phase approach is reflected in the following conceptual model (See Figure 1). The model demonstrates the cyclical nature of the implemented plan starting with identification of the issues/problems, investment in internal capacity building, and the development of external strategic partnerships. However, it is critical to note that the arrows of causality point in both directions indicating that constant evaluation and adaptive implementation are essential for mitigating adversity.

Figure 1

Model for Mitigating Vulnerability & Maximizing Sustainability



Recommendations

The identified model reflective of the USCG's approach to addressing the pervasive problems facing our world currently presents a viable option for higher education environments attempting to mitigate vulnerability in students, staff, faculty, and administrators while maximizing overall sustainability. The first phase, *Issue Identification*, provides alignment with the literature, as it promotes self-awareness and personal assessment to gain clarity on the needs facing individuals, organizations, and communities. This allows for the identification of social vulnerability and creates a foundation for addressing it accordingly.

This becomes essential for higher education institutions to consider, as decision-making that affects mission and vision is often centralized in the upper administrative offices of the university environment. However, this can potentially lead to myopic decisions that fail to account for fundamental variables. It is recommended that universities utilize a broad scope of methodologies to collect critical data

for understanding the issues facing their students, staff, faculty, and administration. Questions like “What do you see?” and “How can that impact our ability to achieve our mission and vision?” should become commonplace, as universities facilitate broad-based listening sessions and conduct focus groups. This process extends understanding beyond quantitative and descriptive surveys to qualitative and sequential explanatory methods that provide depth for the issues facing critical university populations and their families. Additionally, this can create value for students, staff, faculty, and administrators that reduces fatigue, increases emotional wellness, and creates communities of inclusion and support across the departments and offices within higher education environments.

The second phase, Internal Capacity, creates a trickle-down effect through train-the-trainer programs that extend capacity of the mental health professionals attempting to identify, support, and treat those suffering from emotional wellness challenges. However, it goes well-beyond this. It creates a foundation for increased and sustainable emotional wellness in the service personnel. The USCG Personnel (personal communication, December, 23, 2020; personal communication, December, 29, 2020) noted that through a specific investment in skill building, the USCG effectively enhances the overall emotional intelligence and personal hardiness of its personnel. Specifically, the increased self-awareness and training of service personnel to identify those in need has the potential to lead to greater overall emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2005; Weisinger, 1998), including increased empathy, motivation, self-regulation, and social awareness for service personnel and those they serve. Further, the training and culture of inclusivity and relationship building has the potential to increase personal hardiness and elevate individuals’ capacity for

commitment, control, and challenge (Maddi, 2002; Popa 2012).

The implementation of this phase within higher education settings has tremendous potential to address social vulnerability, emotional wellness concerns, and promote organizational productivity and student learning. Currently, many faculty and staff lack the emotional intelligence and/or counseling capacity to assist vulnerable students. Additionally, universities are often siloed preventing staff and faculty from knowing what resources may exist across campus. This increases the probability that student concerns will go unnoticed. This is problematic, as the chaos of our world increases, and the emotional wellness of our students

Currently, many faculty and staff lack the emotional intelligence and/or counseling capacity to assist vulnerable students. Additionally, universities are often siloed preventing staff and faculty from knowing what resources may exist across campus.

decreases. However, through the implementation of train-the-trainer programs focused on the development of emotional intelligence and personal hardiness in staff, faculty, and administrators, students will begin to find student-focused environments where they can feel vulnerable and build their own capacity for emotional intelligence and personal hardiness. Further, administrators can begin to build more adaptive practices that leverage the strengths of their faculty and staff, practice shared governance, and promote healthy workload and balance. This modifies what it means to be an educator and expands the definition of what is needed beyond just content knowledge or platform skills.

Finally, the third phase, *External Partnerships Development*, creates a foundation for sustainability and extends the critical work of internal capacity building with the world through strategic partnerships. These strategic partnerships advance the USCG's organizational mission, vision, and commitment to serve. This aligns well with the large majority of universities nationally who have core values and/or mission/vision statements espousing their desire to meaningfully contribute value to our world. Agency and local partnerships would allow universities to work with communities to address challenges such as food scarcity and under-resourced educational environments through community grant projects and programmatic initiatives. Students could engage in the outcomes of these relationships, fostering service and leadership through programs within the community, while gaining intrinsic clarity of purpose and contributing to community sustainability. Ultimately this could elevate their consciousness, promote self-worth, and lead to higher levels of personal hardiness and emotional intelligence.

Conclusion

Adoption of this phased approach within higher education institutions could provide a powerful tool in addressing the pervasive issues stemming from the COVID-19 global pandemic, increased civil unrest, disparity of global polarization, political dichotomization, and the global economic downturn. The proposed model calls for an investment in faculty and staff capacity that builds a decentralized approach to serving those that need it most. More simply, through the development of those that serve, higher education environments can support and develop vulnerable populations more effectively and intentionally. Ultimately, the investment higher education institutions make in their human capital today will inform the institutional impact of the challenges they will face tomorrow. While difficulties and resource limitations will inevitably exist in the future, higher education institutions' ability to be

adaptive and implement integrative frameworks for the development of emotional intelligence, personal hardiness, and subsequently organizational resilience, will determine if they will be successful and sustainable amidst the backdrop of the foreseeable adversity to come.

♦ ♦ ♦

References

- Abraham, J. L. (2018). *The extent to which emotional intelligence, locus of control and self-efficacy contribute to the perception of online learning* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Eastern Michigan University.
- Adger, W.N., Brooks, N., Bentham, G., Agnew, M., & Eriksen, S., (2004). *New indicators of vulnerability and adaptive capacity*. Technical Report 7, Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK.
- Affi, W. A., & Metts, S. (1998). Characteristics and consequences of expectation violations in close relationships. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 15(3), 365-392.
- Alawamleh, M. (2020). COVID-19 and higher education economics. *Journal of Economics and Economic Education Research*, 21(2), 1-2.
- Andenoro, A. C., & Skendall, K. C. (2020). The National Leadership Education Research Agenda 2020–2025: Advancing the State of Leadership Education Scholarship. *Journal of Leadership Studies*, 14(3), 33-38.
- Anderson, M. B., & Woodrow, P. J. (1991). Reducing vulnerability to drought and famine: Developmental approaches to relief. *Disasters*, 15(1), 43-54.
- Barling, J., Slater, F., & Kelloway, E. K. (2000). Transformational leadership and emotional intelligence: An exploratory study. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*. 21(3), 157-161.
- Bartone, P. T. (1999). Hardiness protects against war-related stress in Army Reserve forces. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 51(2), 72.
- Bartone, P. T., Ursano, R. J., Wright, K. M., & Ingraham, L. H. (1989). The impact of a military air disaster on the health of assistance workers. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 177(6), 317-328.
- Baum, H. S. (2012). *The Organization of Hope: Communities Planning Themselves*. SUNY Press.

- Berenson, R., Boyles, G., & Weaver, A. (2008). Emotional intelligence as a predictor of success in online learning. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 9(2), 1-16.
- Bhagat, S., & Kim, D. J. (2020). Higher Education Amidst COVID-19: Challenges and Silver Lining. *Information Systems Management*, 37(4), 366-371.
- Bonanno, G. A. (2004). Loss, trauma, and human resilience: Have we underestimated the human capacity to thrive after extremely aversive events?. *American Psychologist*, 59(1), 20.
- Bochkova, V. N., & Meshkova, N. V. (2018). Emotional intelligence and social interaction: foreign studies. *Journal of Modern Foreign Psychology*, 7(2), 49-59.
- Chaput, W. M. (2020). *Democratic Apathy: Exploring the Roots of Millennial Democratic Fatigue* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Harvard University.
- Clark, G. E., Moser, S. C., Ratick, S. J., Dow, K., Meyer, W. B., Emani, S., Jin, W., Kasperson, J.X., Kasperson, R.E., & Schwarz, H. E. (1998). Assessing the vulnerability of coastal communities to extreme storms: the case of Revere, MA., USA. *Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies for Global Change*, 3(1), 59-82.
- Clark, J. L., Algoe, S. B., & Green, M. C. (2018). Social network sites and well-being: the role of social connection. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 27(1), 32-37.
- Conte, D. A. E. (2000). In loco parentis: Alive and well. *Education*, 121(1), 1-5.
- Curci, A., Lanciano, T., & Soleti, E. (2014). Emotions in the classroom: The role of teachers' emotional intelligence ability in predicting students' achievement. *The American Journal of Psychology*, 127(4), 431-445.
- Cutter, S. L. (2003). The vulnerability of science and the science of vulnerability. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 93(1), 1-12.
- Cutter, S. L. (1996). Vulnerability to environmental hazards. *Progress in Human Geography*, 20(4), 529-539.
- Dow, K. (1992). Exploring differences in our common future (s): the meaning of vulnerability to global environmental change. *Geoforum*, 23(3), 417-436.
- Frankl, V. E. (1963). *Man's search for meaning: Revised and updated*. WW Publisher.
- Ghorbani, N., Watson, P. J., & Morris, R. J. (2000). Personality, stress and mental health: evidence of relationships in a sample of Iranian managers. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 28(4), 647-657.
- Goleman, D. (2005). *Emotional intelligence*. Bantam.
- Goleman, D. (1998). What Makes a Leader? *Harvard Business Review*, 76, 92-105.
- Golomb, J. (2012). *In search of authenticity: Existentialism from Kierkegaard to Camus*. Routledge.
- Grawe, N. D. (2021). How to survive the enrollment bust: Colleges face looming demographic challenges. The pandemic offers clues for overcoming them. *The Chronicle of Higher Education: The Review*. https://www.chronicle.com/article/how-to-navigate-the-demographic-cliff?utm_source=Iterable&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=campaign_1908364_nl_Academe-Today_date_20210119&cid=at&source=ams&sourceId=3167101
- Hess, J. D. & Bacigalupo, A. C. (2010). The emotionally intelligent leader, the dynamics of knowledge-based organizations and the role of emotional intelligence in organizational development. *On the Horizon* 18(3), 222-229.
- Holt-Lunstad, J., Robles, T. F., & Sbarra, D. A. (2017). Advancing social connection as a public health priority in the United States. *American Psychologist*, 72(6), 517.
- Jordan, P. J., & Troth, A. C. (2004). Managing emotions during team problem solving: Emotional intelligence and conflict resolution. *Human Performance*, 17(2), 195-218.
- Kates, R. W. (1985). The interaction of climate and society. *Climate Impact Assessment*, 3, 3-36.
- Kobasa, S. C., Maddi, S. R., & Kahn, S. (1982). Hardiness and health: a prospective study. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 42(1), 168.
- Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (2014). *Turning adversity into opportunity*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Kuo, W. H., & Tsai, Y. (1986). Social networking, hardiness and immigrant's mental health. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 27, 133-149.
- Lange, K. W. (2020). Mental health problems in COVID-19 and the need for reliable data. *Movement and Nutrition in Health and Disease*, 4, 64-69.
- Lillis, M. P. (2011). Faculty emotional intelligence and student-faculty interactions: Implications for student retention. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 13(2), 155-178.
- Lopes, P. N., Brackett, M. A., Nezlek, J. B., Schütz, A., Sellin, I., & Salovey, P. (2004). Emotional intelligence and social interaction. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 30(8), 1018-1034.

- Lopes, P. N., Salovey, P., Côté, S., Beers, M., & Petty, R. E. (2005). Emotion regulation abilities and the quality of social interaction. *Emotion, 5*(1), 113.
- Maddi, S. R. (2006). Hardiness: The courage to grow from stresses. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 1*(3), 160-168.
- Maddi, S. R. (2004). Hardiness: An operationalization of existential courage. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 44*(3), 279-298.
- Maddi, S. R. (2002). The story of hardiness: Twenty years of theorizing, research, and practice. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, 54*(3), 173.
- Maddi, S. R., & Hess, M. J. (1992). Personality hardiness and success in basketball. *International Journal of Sport Psychology, 23*, 360-368.
- Maddi, S. R., Kahn, S., & Maddi, K. L. (1998). The effectiveness of hardiness training. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, 50*(2), 78.
- Maddi, S. R., & Kobasa, S. C. (1984). *Hardy executive*. Dow Jones-Irwin.
- Maddi, S. R., Khoshaba, D. M., Persico, M., Lu, J., Harvey, R., & Bleecker, F. (2002). The personality construct of hardiness: II. Relationships with comprehensive tests of personality and psychopathology. *Journal of Research in Personality, 36*(1), 72-85.
- Maddi, S. R., Wadhwa, P., & Haier, R. J. (1996). Relationship of hardiness to alcohol and drug use in adolescents. *The American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse, 22*(2), 247-257.
- Maguire, R., Egan, A., Hyland, P., & Maguire, P. (2017). Engaging students emotionally: The role of emotional intelligence in predicting cognitive and affective engagement in higher education. *Higher Education Research & Development, 36*(2), 343-357.
- Marelli, S., Castelnovo, A., Somma, A., Castronovo, V., Mombelli, S., Bottoni, D., Leitner, C., Fossati, A., & Ferini-Strambi, L. (2020). Impact of COVID-19 lockdown on sleep quality in university students and administration staff. *Journal of Neurology, 268*, 8-15.
- Masoumparast, S. (2016). The Role of Teachers' Emotional Intelligence and Self-Efficacy in Decreasing Students' Separation Anxiety Disorder. *International Education Studies, 9*(4), 185-194.
- Ouellette Kobasa, S. C. (1993) Inquiries into hardiness. In *Goldberger, L., Breznitz, S. (Eds.), Handbook of stress: theoretical and clinical aspects* (2nd ed. Pp. 77-100). Free Press. .
- Marinoni, G., Van't Land, H., & Jensen, T. (2020). The impact of Covid-19 on higher education around the world. *LAU Global Survey Report*.
- Neuwirth, L. S., Jović, S., & Mukherji, B. R. (2020). Reimagining higher education during and post-COVID-19: Challenges and opportunities. *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education, 0*(0), 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1477971420947738>
- Qualter, P., Whiteley, H., Morley, A., & Dudiak, H. (2009). The role of emotional intelligence in the decision to persist with academic studies in HE. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education, 14*(3), 219-231.
- Park, A., Williams, E., & Zurba, M. (2020). Understanding hope and what it means for the future of conservation. *Biological Conservation, 244*(1), 1-11.
- Parker, J. D. A., Saklofske, D. H., Wood, L. M., & Collin, T. (2009). The role of emotional intelligence in education. In C. Stough, D. H. Saklofske, & J. D. A. Parker (Eds.), *Assessing emotional intelligence: Theory, research, and applications* (pp. 239-255). New York, NY: Springer. https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-0-387-88370-0_13
- Patterson, J. L., Goens, G. A., & Reed, D. E. (2009). *Resilient leadership for turbulent times: A guide to thriving in the face of adversity*. R&L Education.
- Preeti, B. (2013). Role of emotional intelligence for academic achievement in students. *Research Journal of Educational Sciences, 1*(2), 8-12.
- Pimlott, N. (2020). Hope in a global pandemic. *Canadian Family Physician, 66*(5), 312-313.
- Popa, A. B. (2012). Learning about hardiness and servant leadership by accompanying refugees at a United Nations resettlement camp. *Journal of Leadership Studies, 6*(1), 72-78.
- Ramanaiah, N. V., Sharpe, J. P., & Byravan, A. (1999). Hardiness and major personality factors. *Psychological Reports, 84*(2), 497-500.
- Rapisarda, B. A. (2002). The impact of emotional intelligence on work team cohesiveness and performance. **The International Journal of Organizational Analysis, 10**(4). 363-379
- Ristau, S. (2011). People do need people: Social interaction boosts brain health in older age. *Generations, 35*(2), 70-76.
- Sá, M. J., & Serpa, S. (2020). The COVID-19 pandemic as an opportunity to foster the sustainable development of teaching in higher education. *Sustainability, 12*(20), 8525.
- Salari, N., Hosseini-Far, A., Jalali, R., Vaisi-Raygani, A., Rasoulpoor, S., Mohammadi, M., Rasoulpoor, S., & Khaledi-Paveh, B. (2020). Prevalence of stress, anxiety, depression among the general population during the COVID-19 pandemic: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Globalization and Health, 16*(1), 1-11.
- Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. (1990). Emotional intelligence. *Imagination, Cognition and Personality, 9*(3), 185-211.

- Satterwhite, R., Sarid, A., Cunningham, C. M., Goryunova, E., Crandall, H. M., Morrison, J. L., Sheridan, K., & McIntyre Miller, W. (2020). Contextualizing our leadership education approach to complex problem solving: Shifting paradigms and evolving knowledge: Priority 5 of the National Leadership Education Research Agenda 2020–2025. *Journal of Leadership Studies*, 14(3), 63–71.
- Sawalha, I. H. S. (2015). Managing adversity: Understanding some dimensions of organisational resilience. *Management Research Review*, 38(4), 346–366.
- Seligman, M. E., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2014). Positive psychology: An introduction. In *Flow and the foundations of positive psychology* (pp. 279–298). In M. Csikszentmihalyi, & R. Larson, R. (Eds.). *Flow and the foundations of positive psychology* (Vol. 10, pp. 978–94). Dordrecht: Springer.
- Seppala, E., Rossomando, T., & Doty, J. R. (2013). Social connection and compassion: Important predictors of health and well-being. *Social Research: An International Quarterly*, 80(2), 411–430.
- Stedman, N. L. P., & Andenoro, A. C. (2007). Identification of relationships between emotional intelligence skill and critical thinking disposition in undergraduate leadership students. *Journal of Leadership Education*, 6(1), 190–208.
- Stennett, D. (2016, September 19). Applied suicide intervention skills training (ASIST) and SafeTALK. Coast Guard All Hands Archive. <https://allhands.coastguard.dodlive.mil/2016/09/19/applied-suicide-intervention-skills-training-asist-and-safetalk/>
- Twenge, J. M., & Joiner, T. E. (2020). US Census Bureau-assessed prevalence of anxiety and depressive symptoms in 2019 and during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. *Depression and Anxiety*, 37(10), 954–956.
- Walsh-Portillo, J. G. (2011). The role of emotional intelligence in college students' success [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Florida International University.
- Watts, M. J., & Bohle, H. G. (1993). The space of vulnerability: the causal structure of hunger and famine. *Progress in Human Geography*, 17(1), 43–67.
- Waytz, A., & Epley, N. (2012). Social connection enables dehumanization. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 48(1), 70–76.
- Waytz, A., Cacioppo, J., & Epley, N. 2010. Who sees human? The stability and importance of individual differences in anthropomorphism. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 5, 219–232.
- Weisinger, H. (1998). *Emotional intelligence at work*. Jossey-Bass Publishers
- West, L. (2014). Capital matters: Interrogating the sociology of reproduction and the psychosociality of transition and potential transformation in the UK. In: *Finnegan F, Merrill B and Thunborg C (eds) Student Voices on Inequalities in European Higher Education*. Routledge, 39–50.
- Westman, M. (1990). The relationship between stress and performance: The moderating effect of hardiness. *Human Performance*, 3(3), 141–155.
- Wilson, M. S., & Rice, S. S. (2004). Wired to inspire: Leading organizations through adversity. *Leadership in Action: A Publication of the Center for Creative Leadership and Jossey Bass*, 24(2), 3–7.
- Wu, S. Y., Yarnal, B., & Fisher, A. (2002). Vulnerability of coastal communities to sea-level rise: a case study of Cape May County, New Jersey, USA. *Climate Research*, 22(3), 255–270.
- Zheltnina, A. (2020). The Apathy Syndrome: How we are trained not to care about politics. *Social Problems*, 67(2), 358–378.
- Zhu, X., & Liu, J. (2020). Education in and after Covid-19: Immediate responses and long-term visions. *Postdigital Science and Education*, 2(3), 695–699.

FEATURE ARTICLES

Public Leadership with a Moral Purpose: A Phenomenological View

Chaveso Cook, Tufts University

Melissa Shambach, University of Denver

Greta Zukauskaite, Institute for Nonprofit Practice

Emily A. Pate, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Dana H. Born, Harvard University

ABSTRACT

Interest in the features of the development of character, specifically one's capacity for moral purpose and moral leadership, have led to an expanding concern within many higher educational institutions. This paper represents a qualitative analysis of a year-long Fellowship's curricular and co-curricular program focused on intentionally developing moral leadership and moral purpose among other outcomes (self-awareness, cross-cultural competence, community, and social responsibility). This exploration of the features of a tailored curriculum focused on the development surrounding morality points to the role of educational institutions as key settings wherein character develops. The selective population within the Fellowship included a diverse cohort of 25 active duty and veteran service members involved in respective graduate programs in business, law, and/or public policy/administration at Harvard University. A major feature of the Fellowship included several reflective writings and presentations on developmental experiences, moral leadership, and moral purpose. The phenomenological approach presented here discovered several themes that are significant to the understanding of public leadership. Also discussed are the findings for the broader context of moral leadership and purpose and relevant limitations.

Studies of character whose major focus is on its links to leadership should investigate understanding who one is in addition to what one does regarding its practical relevance to those leading in professional settings. Based on their studies of engineering, legal, nursing, medical, and theological education, Colby and Sullivan (2008) proposed a framework for thinking about commonalities in professional preparation across different fields. They describe three apprenticeships of professional preparation that must be provided to emerging professionals in any field. The first is intellectual training, which refers to the knowledge and ways of thinking important to the profession. The second involves learning the complex skills of professional practice in the field. Finally, the third involves formation of professionals whose work and professional identities are grounded in the profession's ethical standards, that is, the normative roles, responsibilities, and purposes of the profession. Colby and Sullivan's (2008) framework derives from literature on the formation of ethical professional identity. The military seeks to give each service member a specific type of ethical professional identity.

When trying to study and define one's ethical professional identity, the researcher must understand how moral and ethical behavior is derived from one's character (Cook & Aman, 2020). Vessels and Huitt (2005) define character as "a multi-faceted psychological and behavioral phenomenon that involves the predictable co-occurrence and inter-connectedness of its many psychological and behavioral components," with the level of one's character being "determined by the consistency and strength with which these components co-occur in response to challenging life events" (p. 4). To make this vague definition pertinent to military leadership there needs to be a moral component,

Chaveso L. Cook is currently a Ph.D. candidate at Tufts University, an active-duty Army officer, and the Executive Director of the nonprofit MilitaryMentors.org. Upon graduation from the United States Military Academy (USMA) his career started in the historic 82nd Airborne Division. After becoming a long serving member of the special operations community, his service spans Iraq, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Niger, Jordan, Qatar, Bahrain, and Kuwait, as well as a staff and faculty stint at USMA. Among his various accomplishments he is proudest of earning the Secretary of the Army's Diversity and Leadership Award, his career field's Major General Robert McClure Award (Bronze) for "professional competence, standards of integrity, and moral character," and two Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medals for sustained community service. He is a member of the American Psychological Association, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs, Team Red White and Blue, and Forbes Ignite. In addition to his undergraduate education he holds master's degrees from the University of Texas-El Paso and Columbia University.

Melissa A. Shambach is a recent graduate from the University of Denver, Josef Korbel School of International Studies, where she studied international security in the Middle East and North Africa. Eager to learn more about the world, she has worked in Jordan, Morocco, and Austria, and traveled to over 25 countries. Melissa has a diverse professional portfolio including working for the public sector, private sector, international NGOs, and higher education. In her current role as an analyst with BMNT, she works to use innovation to solve complex Department of Defense problems. She has worked as a research assistant for two years, and conducted her own independent research in Jordan for her thesis on youth unemployment and entrepreneurship programs. Melissa has a passion for leadership studies and development, spending the last four years in the Pioneer Leadership Program which provides both academic and practical leadership development training.

or in the Aristotelian sense, a morally virtuous component (Aristotle, 1999; Born & Megone, 2019). In other words, character is the habitual manifestation of behavioral and cognitive coaction and the resultant coactions between the morally virtuous self and the normative and non-normative (e.g., unpredictable) facets of the environment. As such, and in agreement with Aristotle, character is a habit developed over the life span in specific environments.

For those who have sought a better understanding about how one discovers, defines, and develops their moral purpose and moral leadership in carefully choreographed environments, this study attempts to provide some insight. It is specifically focused upon one cohort of military individuals and the common factors that inspire them while asking the larger question regarding the applicability of the findings to other dissimilar cohorts. This qualitative research sought

to identify the lived experiences and relevant features of the ecology within a Fellowship at the Harvard Kennedy School (HKS) Center for Public Leadership (CPL) that promoted the moral development of the participants. As the United States Air Force Academy (2019) defines warrior ethos proficiencies that are based on the intellectual development inherent to the profession of arms, one can see the importance of the promotion of moral development specifically around moral courage and purposeful service to others. As such, the primary aim of the qualitative data collection and analyses will be to ground the theoretical models of the Fellowship's curriculum in insights that can be derived only from close observation of the institution's culture and educational practices. This grounding requires not only careful observation and documentation of key aspects of education for character and leadership but also an analysis of the meaning that the various educational and cultural practices had for the observed.

Greta Zukauskaitė is a Lithuanian native who calls various cities in the U.S. and abroad home. Her most recent work experience includes working at nonprofit called Crossroads MA which was grounded in youth leadership development. Her responsibilities centered around social justice curriculum creation, implementation and mentorship. She also recently concluded a Community Fellows program with the Institute of Nonprofit Practice. As a Fellow, she learned with and from a group of emerging nonprofit leaders in the Greater Boston area. Greta is currently excited to get back into the social research field and hopes to continue to uncover truths that will provide guidance to her communities during an age of misinformation. She holds a bachelor's degree in Public Communication from American University and a master's degree in Geography from King's College London. Her most recent accomplishment is embarking on a cross-country road trip while documenting her travels and encounters with the people, places, and adventures along the way. Greta hopes to continue combining her passions for research, photography and visual storytelling in authentic and inspiring ways.

Emily A. Pate is a former Lieutenant Junior Grade in the U.S. Navy and is currently a graduate student at MIT. She commissioned in 2016 after graduating from Harvard College. Upon completion of Navy Intelligence Officer Basic Course, she was assigned to be the intelligence officer for VAW-117, an E-2C/D Hawkeye squadron, based out of Point Mugu, CA. She deployed aboard the USS John C. Stennis for an "around-the-world" adventure and supported strike group operational planning as a mission planning officer. She was also sent to Qatar as the Navy intelligence liaison officer in support of combined operational efforts between her air wing and the U.S. Air Force. Emily received an A.B. in applied mathematics with a specialty in evolutionary biology. As part of the Harvard Kennedy School Institute of Politics Research Assistant Program, she assisted Dana Born in research and a publication regarding organizational effectiveness.

Professional preparation is a specific type of educational model that emphasizes the coactions between individual students and their educational environments (Overton, 2015). Present-day models of leader development (e.g., Berkowitz et al., 2017; Callina & Lerner, 2017) underscore that features of positive character develop through mutually influential and, particularly, mutually beneficial, relations between a specific individual and their specific situational and environmental context. The examination of character attributes and their development-in-context therefore highlights the key role of educational institutions—specifically, higher education institutions with a mission to train leaders of character. The CPL is one such institution.

At the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year, the HKS and its CPL along with Harvard Law School (HLS) and Harvard Business School (HBS), began a new Fellowship program for U.S. military veterans and active duty students. This Fellowship sought to prepare these students to be at the forefront of a new generation of public leaders. Managed by CPL, the Fellowship provides vital tuition support, living stipends, and a comprehensive leadership development

program to a select group of 20 to 25 active duty military and student veterans drawn from HKS, HBS, and HLS. The program and its curriculum build upon what the selected men and women who have served our country represent. CPL crafted the Fellowship to focus on strengthening core competencies central to public leadership, such as promoting strong moral character and ethical decision making, mastering the art of negotiation, and leading effective teams and organizations, among other areas.

Fellows from HKS, HBS, and HLS participated in a year-long co-curricular program intended to inspire, provide concrete opportunities for leadership skill-building, and connect their previous military service to continued civic mindedness. The Fellowship also created opportunities for Fellows to engage the broader Harvard University and Cambridge, MA communities as well as more closely connect both the civilian and military communities therein through the leadership seminar series and service-learning opportunities. It is custom tailored to leverage and develop each Fellow to bring fresh, responsible, and ethical leadership to the United States and to the world.

Dana H. Born is the Faculty Chair, Senior Executive Fellows Program; Faculty Advisor, Black Family Graduate Fellowship; Lecturer in Public Policy at Harvard University; and is a Distinguished Fellow in Moral Leadership with the HOW Institute for Society. A retired Brigadier General, Dana served from 2004-2013 as the 9th Dean of Faculty at the U.S. Air Force Academy. Her military assignments include a variety of duties including the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Royal Australian Air Force, the staff of the Secretary of the Air Force, command, and duty in Afghanistan. She holds degrees from the Air Force Academy, Trinity University, the University of Melbourne, and a Ph.D. from Pennsylvania State University. She received Penn State's Distinguished Alumni Award and an Honorary Doctorate from Simmons College, the Harvard Kennedy School's Innovation in Teaching Award, along with senior military distinctions including the Air Force's Zuckert Award for Outstanding Management Achievement and the Air Force Association's Vandenberg Award. Dr. Born is a past President of both the American Psychological Association (Society for Military Psychology) and the Massachusetts Women's Forum. She serves as an officer, member, or consultant to numerous professional associations and boards including the Air Force Academy Foundation and the Falcon Foundation.

CPL crafted a tailor-made Fellowship to focus on strengthening core competencies central to public leadership, such as promoting strong moral character and ethical decision making, mastering the art of negotiation, and leading effective teams and organizations, among other areas. Fellows studying in the HKS, HBS, and HLS participate in a year-long co-curricular program intended to inspire, provide concrete opportunities for leadership skill-building, and connect their previous military service to continued civic mindedness.

The purpose of this qualitative study is two-fold. First, it is to further understand the processes by which an organization can foster development of Fellows through intentional curricular processes. Second, it is to gain a deeper understanding of the Fellows' experience of their own development. Qualitative research allows the researcher the ability to read, hear, visualize, and potentially even experience phenomena from the perspective of the people or population studied. We will potentially be able to decipher their verbiage, their specific lexicology, and their associative stories/experiences regarding how they express the manifestations of these themes across the areas of moral leadership and purpose. Some specific lines of inquiry for this project were:

- 1) What are the dynamics of peer relations within the Fellows?
- 2) How do Fellows navigate within civilian-military relations?
- 3) What can we learn about their reflections on the definition and development of moral leadership and moral purpose?

Given an extra-curricular program focused intentionally on specific learning outcomes focused community, self-awareness, social responsibility, and cross-cultural competence as well as moral

leadership and moral purpose, our primary research question became "What is the learning experience of a first-year graduate Fellow focused on these intentional learning outcomes?" An additional question was "What meaning did the cohort of Fellows ascribe to their yearlong experience that may be relevant for other audiences?"

Method

In line with the views of Thomas and Magilvy (2011), we became more and more interested in a holistic, close-up view of the many variables of the dynamic phenomena of moral leadership and moral purpose. Of note, the purpose of qualitative research is "not to generalize to other subjects or settings, but to explore deeply a specific phenomenon or experience on which to build further knowledge" (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011, p. 152). To address these ideas and the research aims, we conducted a phenomenological analysis of qualitative data collected as a part of a developmental Fellowship program at the HKS.

Designing the Present Study

The qualitative research technique used in this work was a phenomenological approach. This methodology deals with the manifestation of phenomena themselves, potential hidden meanings, as well as how, why, and where they arise to describe the essence of our lived experiences. Therefore, we will generate hypotheses and theoretical constructs by establishing different concepts from collected data within the social world (Jakobsson et. al., 2005).

Data Collection

The data used for this inquiry consisted of three sets of reflective papers written by members of the Fellowship. The prompts were "*Defining Moral Purpose & Leadership*" in October 2019, "*Your Transformative Experience*" in November 2019, and

“Aftermath: Reflective Understanding” was written between December 2019 and March 2020. These papers encapsulate opinions and experiences of the Fellows, providing us with a window into learning, growth, and development that transpired. To understand and characterize the culture of Fellowship as a developmental process, the aim of the qualitative investigation was to enhance and supplement other similar institutions by providing an ethnographic snapshot of the ways in which the CPL purposefully carries out its developmental programs.

Participants

There were 25 total Fellows. These Fellows were competitively selected in two steps: first by their professional school for the program and second by an independent panel for the specific Fellowship. By school the participants are HBS (3); HLS (4); HKS (13); Dual degree (5 total, HKS/HBS – 3, HBS/HLS – 2). Demographics of the Fellows matched the demographics of the institution, in that the racial/ethnic composition of the sample was 80% male and 20% female and, in turn, 72% White; 12% Latinx; 4% Black; 8% Asian; and 4% Other. Across the military spectrum 64% Veterans, 20% were Reservists, 12% were Active Duty, and 4% were National Guard members. Additionally, the armed service components were represented as 40% Army, 24% Navy, 24% Marine, and 12% Air Force.

Procedures

Data were collected through reflective papers at three time points from summer 2019 to spring 2020. No one received compensation for their research participation. The consent process took place at the end of the Fellowship as papers, reflections, surveys, and other data were collected. The participants were given a detailed email with information of what they could expect, and it was reiterated that they had free choice

to participate in this study as part of the course or “opt out” with no penalty. The act of the participant reading the information and then continuing to undertake the survey was viewed as willingness to participate under free choice and with knowledge of what it was they were participating in. Participants could decline to take part in the process without any consequences at that point or any time therein. It was explained how the confidentiality of the data would be managed and how the data would be stored and protected from that point forward. In summary, at the end of the year, all 25 members of the Fellowship offered consent for their papers from over the year to be analyzed for this study.

Data Analysis

Conducting a Phenomenology

As qualitative research uses an open and flexible design, doing so may seem to stand at odds with the notion of rigor to quantitative/positivist perspectives (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Coming to a single, universal truth is not possible, as each person has their “own personal perspective as seen through the lens of cultural, experiential, environmental, and other contextual influences” (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011, p. 152). Therefore, paying particular attention to the qualitative rigor and model of trustworthiness (e.g., credibility, applicability, consistency, and confirmability) from the moment of study conceptualization is critical (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Interpretation is a very complex process, and while all research is a balance of art and science, qualitative analyses involve making interpretations only after careful consideration (Blumer, 1969). Qualitative analysis, evaluation, and interpretation are “neither terminal nor mechanical” and are always “ongoing, emergent, and unfinished” if one is seeking the rigor required for proper representation of the data but

also for proper interpretation by the outsider (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 276). This process starts with selecting a methodology regarding which qualitative approach one will take. Indeed, when selecting said approach a qualitative researcher knows that regardless of the approach taken, “meaning, interpretation, and representation are deeply intertwined with each other” (Denzin, 1998, p. 322).

A phenomenological approach was used to find the reasons behind the context, process, and outcomes regarding moral purpose and moral leadership. As described by Creswell and Poth (2018), the purpose of a phenomenological study is to describe the common meaning for several individuals regarding a certain concept. It is a study of the lived experiences of persons, from which one draws descriptions of the essence of the experiences rather than solely explaining why they happen (Moustakas, 1994). In other words, a phenomenology does not seek to find causation, correlation, or strict post-phenomena linkages. Rather than finding a homogenous, theory-based sample for variation of or correlation between the experience, through this approach we sought out the shared experience of multiple individuals. This separates a phenomenology from ethnographic, narrative, case study, and grounded theory approaches (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

We used the NVivo and Dedoose programs to look through all the paper transcripts, initiating the process of data reduction, memo writing, and an initial thematic of textual and structural descriptions. The data were deidentified prior to analysis and comprise a representative sample of the Fellows. It is undoubtedly difficult to transcend one’s own interpretations but taking a fresh perspective toward the examination of the Fellows’ experiences was of the utmost importance

to this study (see *Phenomenological Reflection*). The corresponding sections detail the means taken to specify and organize our findings.

Analytic Steps

We drew from the perspectives of Giorgi (2009) and Moustakas (1994) in crafting our analytical approach. As external research assistants for the Fellowship, we each engaged in each step independently, then compared their findings for internal consistency. First, we sought to gain an intuitive, holistic understanding of the data by reading through the raw data multiple times. Second, we identified themes and re-read the papers, coding for notable themes and sub-themes. Third, we came together as a team to compare results and refine the themes and sub themes. Fourth, we analyzed data within each theme and subtheme to identify significant trends in the experiences and attitudes of the Fellows. Fifth, we synthesized the analysis of trends and themes within the data into a cohesive narrative for the purposes of this report.

From these steps we sought patterns that undergirded moral purpose and moral leadership in relation to our three lines of inquiry: *the importance of peer dynamics and peer relations*, *the need to navigate civilian and military relations*, and *the importance of learning about and reflecting on one’s moral purpose and capacity for moral leadership*. Data were collected into different themes and headings, which were confirmed and modified throughout the analyses. We then integrated our analyses, sifting out linkages that exposed explicit patterns.

Dedoose and NVivo were used to revisit the data set to expand upon the initial patterns and charts made to verify these findings. Additionally, we searched for any other relevant references or thoughts shared

by the Fellows that may augment the preliminary findings. This level of verification is crucial to a qualitative approach to ensure that findings presented here make sense, are relevant, and accurately depict what is happening. We also took additional steps to verify and validate our ideas, such as crosstalk in regular research meetings and referring back to preliminary analyses and previously completed reports on the Fellowship. Our analytic process allowed us to continually aggregate information about each category and the potential relationships between categories. The research team met weekly to share independent findings, collectively map out the analysis, and focus the scope of the research.

Phenomenological Reflection

As pointed out by Corbin and Strauss (2015), a qualitative researcher “is as much a part of the research process as the participants and the data they provide” (p. 4). Whereas a few of the authors’ own experiences as research assistants and instructors alongside the Fellows may have biased some views, acknowledging it helped tailor this interpretation. As established by McGill (1966), it is common practice when doing qualitative research to make continual, deliberate efforts avoid observational biases. To wit, observational biases must be overcome in every psychological research method. Speaking to these various influences on our methodological style help “bracket” and “set aside” our personal experiences in order to focus on the experiences of the participants (Giorgi, 2009; van Manen, 2014).

Results

From 64 total reflective papers, over 150 significant statements were extracted. 32 of the most significant statements are presented verbatim here, with a number of references and linkages to other thoughts captured

by the Fellows in their papers. The analysis of the papers and statements was conducted alongside two surveys administered by Fellowship instructors. Data from these sources was synthesized into three categories, herein referenced as themes:

- 1) The importance of peer relations within the Fellowship cohort.
- 2) The challenges of navigating a new civil-military environment.
- 3) The growth in understanding of moral leadership and moral purpose.

A deeper explanation of each of these themes is outlined over the following sections.

Peer Dynamics and Peer Relations

Fellows consistently highlighted the importance of the camaraderie they discovered within the Fellowship. It has been noted that peer relationships continue to have “a strong effect on self-concept, social skills (e.g., conflict resolution, making and maintaining friendships), moral reasoning development, involvement in risk, [etc.]” that will inevitably play out within academic institutions (Berkowitz, 2002, p. 54). These relationships help shape not only intellectual development, but also affective and psychosocial dimensions of development (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Davis and Murrell (1993) proposed that optimum growth occurs when classroom studies relate to other aspects of the student’s daily lives outside the classroom, and peers help shape that development.

The primary benefit of the Fellowship to most members was a space that eased them through a jarring transition - a “bright spot” in their semesters. Some went from the throes of active duty combat service to sitting in a graduate business class surrounded by bankers and hedge fund investors. All Fellows described a contrast

in the two environments and making the conscious effort required to readjust to civilian life.

The Fellowship provided a *touch point, anchor, and family* to the students throughout the semester. In an academic world that is jarringly different from the militaristic one from which most of the Fellows very recently came, the Fellowship provided a retreat into a more familiar area for many members. As one member succinctly put it:

“While disaggregating moral purpose and leadership from the identity of the military officer has been difficult, the Fellowship, and its group of exceptional peers has made it much more manageable. We’ve learned from each other’s experiences, shared stories of triumph, grief, and joy, and become friends. Together, I like to think that we’ve been a source of comfort in a time of transition.”

The primary benefit of the Fellowship to most members was a space that eased them through a jarring transition - a “bright spot” in their semesters. Some went from the throes of active duty combat service to sitting in a graduate business class surrounded by bankers and hedge fund investors.

Fellows also described a disorientation as they sought to “internalize their transition in ways that maintain their identity as a servant leader, but in a new direction.” The Fellowship provided a community of Fellow veterans to help in that transition. Fellows expressed

gratitude to be able to connect via shared experiences and a deep passion for service while learning from each other both in a peer and mentor/mentee capacity. Some described learning to be vulnerable with the other Fellows helped them in other programs outside of the Fellowship as well. By providing a secure place for the Fellows to reflect and strengthen their emotional intelligence through reflective retreats, exercises, small group discussions, and written reflections such as the three papers used in this study, Fellows could leverage a reflective time in their lives to help them connect with peers outside of the Fellowship.

The Fellowship helped orient a group of individuals struggling to establish their identities outside of the military context into a team that together gained an understanding of how to leverage their experiences in their quests to explore a purpose of service “beyond the uniform.” In other words, the development of a leader’s character matters beyond just the leader themselves. This aligns with multiple studies that have shown that

the processes involved in cooperative groups enhances students’ skills in civic engagement and character development, the expansion of which are increasingly seen as an essential mission of higher education and beyond (Colby & Sullivan, 2008; Cook & Aman, 2020; Lerner & Callina, 2014).

Navigating Civil-Military Relations

The Fellowship seeks to bridge the military-civilian divide and enable graduate students to learn from each other’s unique experiences and perspectives. Developing leaders of character within the Fellowship is not solely a concern of Harvard alone, as the Fellowship trains leaders who arguably are continuing their service to the nation. Navigating a diverse civil-military environment in the various Harvard-based graduate programs gave Fellows

a unique opportunity to reflect on their own identities as members of the military and engage with the new perspectives of their colleagues.

Several of the Fellows described how the “military-civilian divide became a very real notion [upon transitioning].” These difficulties not only arose in day to day classroom interactions, but within the Fellows’ own self conceptions. Those who spend extended time in the military often craft their identities around their service, and are used to an environment of reinforced purpose, values, and mission. For example, one Fellow reflected that “West Point and the Army did such a good job at inculcating me with Army values - that my morality, ethics, and beliefs were generally in line with that of the military as an institution.” Fellows frequently described their initial time in the civilian academic world as uncomfortable, uncertain, disorienting, and unconfident. Many wrote about longing for the familiarity and clarity they had had while serving, speaking of wanting to return to service, and experiencing jealousy for those who were still active duty. These sentiments were especially strong when Fellows discussed their concepts of leadership, morality, and purpose. Their previous conceptions of moral leadership and moral purpose that had been clear, familiar, and continually reinforced in their military service, were difficult to grapple with in their new civilian context.

In the classroom Fellows had varied experiences interacting with their civilian classmates, speakers, and professors. While they were able to find like-minded military peers in the Fellowship program, they were often ideologically isolated in their public policy and law classes. Some engaged with those who held different views directly, seeking to understand where they were coming from. These Fellows experienced transformation and learning through this cross-cultural

environment, for both themselves and the colleagues with whom they engaged. One student got coffee with a colleague whom he had vehemently disagreed with in class. After an hour and a half discussion, they found that they differed over whether change best occurred within or from outside an organization, and “how there were tactics from both sides that could be valuable to put into our leadership tool kits for future moral leadership challenges.” Others noted taking on the role of educating peers about the military. Many Fellows recognized how the mix of perspectives and experiences contributed to collective growth in their communities. The Fellowship surely provided the environment and opportunity for the overarching breadth of these interactions, regardless of whether the Fellows would have taken these actions anyway.

Clearly, the discomfort that Fellows faced in navigating their new civilian environment provided crucial opportunities for self-reflection, value examination, and dialogue with those of different backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. Part of the reason for assigning the papers that the Fellows completed was to facilitate these very activities. Rest (1986) noted that changes in one’s beliefs come from “experiences that do not fit one’s earlier conceptions. Cognitive disequilibrium is the condition for development” (p. 32). Moreover, this opportunity for dissonance laid the groundwork for a transformational setting. A transformational setting is the most ideal for the development of one’s morality (Cook & Aman, 2020).

Reflections on Moral Leadership and Moral Purpose

As previously mentioned, the features of a leader’s character have garnered a great degree of research attention. Within this literature there is wide-reaching agreement that character has a moral component that is related to but also distinct from values and personality

attributes (see Berkowitz, 2012 and Nucci, 2017 for similar ideas), and that character is a developmental phenomenon (e.g., Hannah & Avolio, 2011; Lerner & Callina, 2014; Wright & Quick, 2011). Most Fellows defined moral leadership (ML) in universal terms. These included definitions like the *golden rule*, *doing the right thing despite personal cost, and adhering to a strong moral and ethical compass*. This type of leadership was described as most effective when it is constant and consistent. A majority of Fellows also conflated servant leadership or leading by serving with their definition of ML. Most definitions of servant leadership were paired with reference to military rhetoric or influence, like mentioning the values of "Honor, Courage, and Commitment." Some Fellows defined ML as personal and named values that were informed by individual lived experience. Some of these values included but are not limited to empathy, compassion, and selflessness.

Many Fellows described moral purpose (MP) as the "why" behind the choices people make in their lives generally and in leadership roles. It was often framed as the values that are the driving force behind peoples' decisions. One Fellow stated that "moral purpose is a foundational element of moral leadership." A few Fellows shared their personal MPs, one of which was to "defend liberty, protect the innocent, and inspire greatness" which they achieved "through the pillars of courage, excellence, truth, and integrity." Some Fellows included religious and spiritual tenets from Hinduism and Christianity informing their notions of MP, although one Fellow made clear that "regardless of religion or upbringing, a large number of core values are almost universal among leaders."

It is important to note that many Fellows included a mixture of different definitions of ML and MP while some only included one or some. Fellows were also asked to reflect on how their definitions evolved

during the year-long Fellowship. The third reflection essays demonstrated less than half of the Fellows' understanding of ML and MP evolved while others remained comfortable and confident with their starting definitions. One Fellow expressed that contrary to what they thought initially, "morals are not universal and I have realized my black and white approach cannot accurately capture the realities of the challenges we face." They also stated that "becoming a moral leader to me now means investigating and preparing to give weight to values, which requires deep self-awareness and commitment to defend them." Others claimed that their reflections resulted in a completely renewed understanding of moral leadership which "at the heart... is an unwavering commitment to serving others" and "in the context of moral purpose, [they've] gained clarity in what this means for [their] career aspirations and the kind of leader [they] want to be."

Discussion

In essence, the year-long Fellowship experience and curriculum was planned to intentionally meet the Fellows where they were and to provide training, coaching, and mentoring to further develop these effective, public leaders with moral purpose. All programming addressed four intentional curricular and co-curricular themes sessions to: (1) build self-awareness, (2) cross-cultural competence, (3) community, and (4) social responsibility. For this specific veteran's Fellowship experience, we added a fifth additional focus (5) on public leadership with a moral purpose. The extra focus was an acknowledgement these particular active duty and veteran Fellows have vast leadership education, training, and development experience that the CPL could learn from them, adding an important learning outcome target for the year. Indeed, the work presented here assists in future efforts to benefit many.

One quote that resonates with the purpose of this effort is, “if you don’t know where you are going, you will end up somewhere else.” In this Fellowship there was a serious effort to be intentional and disciplined to foster development in the five previously mentioned areas ranging from self-awareness to moral leadership with moral purpose. The intentionality and curricular and co-curricular planning were aligned to hit these targets and ultimately the reflective essays and surveys provided a bevy of material for this phenomenological assessment to be discussed further at this juncture.

First, safe, and perhaps even brave spaces, with community members who have shared similar experiences are essential for self-reflection and vulnerability which can aid during times of transition. It is easy to jump to the assumption that self-awareness is a solo endeavor mainly based upon reflection. Slowing down and taking time to reflect, through both structured and unstructured reflection, must occur for learners to best derive lessons learned (Day et al., 2004). Deep reflection stimulates connections with other experiences and revisiting learning moments inspires this type of stimulation (Cook & Aman, 2020). This is certainly important; however, it is insufficient. It is important to do self-reflective work for self-understanding, yet it is also an important social endeavor. For example, the answer to the following two questions might be very helpful in growing self-awareness: (1) How do you experience me?, and (2) How do you experience yourself because of me? Whereas these may be helpful, there is also a danger that this sharing does not define the individual. Each person’s character and values might be key to a steadying effect that needs to occur as they grow to be more self-aware.

Second, there was a wealth of evidence supporting the importance of discomfort for growth. This is in alignment with Piaget’s (1970) ideas involving the creation of developmental disequilibrium through deliberate and realistic growth activities. “Comfort is the enemy of growth and continued effectiveness,” therefore hardship and challenge are requirements to develop well-rounded leaders (Moxley & Pulley, 2004; Van Velsor & McCauley, 2004, p. 7). Transitions create new opportunities to learn and grow and reflect – or they can be paralyzing for some people. The key is that this is variable for each individual Fellow. Aligning the general framework and focus for the program along with focusing on an individualized

First, safe, and perhaps even brave spaces, with community members who have shared similar experiences are essential for self-reflection and vulnerability which can aid during times of transition.

approach to the Fellows development proved helpful. As such, there is an important balancing act between maximizing challenge and support for our growth that is quite distinctive for each person. Constructing developmental experiences for those who will endure ambiguity and/or settings that will challenge their moral leadership requires a skillful understanding of individual, leader, group, and organizational development (Cook et al., 2020). If we experience too much challenge with too little support this tilt might lead us to paralysis, sometimes accompanied with fear and/or doubt, that might result in an inability to learn and grow. However, too little challenge partnered with grand support we often enjoy often leads us to the false sense of security of performance excellence without the

necessary push for us to grow (commonly referred to as “everybody gets a trophy”). The discomfort referred to by some as the growth zone and tough love is needed although this challenge needs to be accompanied by high support for it to be our “sweet spot” for the growth zone and tough love. Once a strong sense of self has been established through a safe, brave, comforting community, leaders can then understand how they operate in multiple contexts outside of their comfort zones. From there, they begin to understand how they want to shape their environments and lead.

Third, the Fellows reflected that it did not matter whether they were in or out of uniform, be it temporarily or permanently, they were very much the same upstanding, accomplished, experienced, and respected leader – just in a new context. Fresh perspectives and new environments, such as the Fellowship, inevitably build a dynamic, relational developmental system that helps with everything from moral development (Leming, 2001) and prosocial behaviors (Cheung & Lee, 2010), to problem-solving skills (Taylor et al., 2002), and emotional competence (Greenberg et al., 1995). “Wherever I go – I am there” – a person’s values, motivation, and character go where they go, but become more nuanced in new contexts. These sentiments were very much in line with Simon Sinek’s (2011) *Start with Why?* and Dov Siedman’s (2012) *How: Why HOW We Do Anything Means Everything*. It became increasingly evident among the Fellows in this study that having a clear understanding of moral purpose (one’s *why*) transfers to strong moral leadership (one’s *how*). In other words, moral leadership (e.g., their *how*) without moral purpose (e.g. their *why*) is hollow and can possibly be harmful. The discussions that oriented unity centered on civilian–military relations and what many called the “divide.” Yet some of the richest understanding that emerged was the importance of reframing the “either/or” part of the discussion to a

“both/and” outlook. Several of the transition stories proffered in the Fellows’ essays focused on the choices of how to (re)negotiate one’s identity. This came up in many discussions revolving around the question of who am I ... now?

Without the uniform, the rank, and adjusting to an entirely new structure and culture, there became a pull to fit in alongside a coinciding push to “influence and inform.” The challenge each shared was how to respond to someone who has never met a military member. A few refrains within the cohort began to appear. *Do I have to speak for all military? You can take the person out of the military yet can you take the military out of the person? How can I best transition to “both/and?” I have military experience and I am learning and growing in a civilian environment... but what does it all mean?* There certainly is tremendous pressure to make the transition to be more civilian. This transition is a grown zone and an opportunity for a *growth* zone. The community and support of other veterans helped many of the Fellows avoid paralysis or a false sense of security and pushed them towards a sweet spot of growth. Moreover, there was yet another wonderful opportunity for each civilian the Fellows met who had never encountered a member of the military to also enter a shared opportunity for learning. This was a truly dynamic bridge for understanding military-civilian relationships through learning about one another.

Limitation and Future Directions

Whereas the themes and learnings above provide valuable lessons to be learned, they are clearly not generalizable to other populations. This was a very selective cohort of veterans and active duty military attending the same university and experiencing the same Fellowship. Having said that, it is not much different than the limitations of a class of cadets or midshipman at a service academy or a select set of

executives completing a similar executive education, training and/or development program.

A logical next step would be to conduct further analysis and include other qualitative and quantitative measures that were not included in this analysis. Future mixed-methods approaches (potentially through a mix of regression, factor analysis, grounded theory, and/or ethnographic analyses) could delve further into other aspects of demographics (i.e., race, religion, socio-economic background, admissions data, academic major, etc.). It would be intriguing to see how these demographic variables align with other representative samples. Observers must also consider the portion of the survey data that ultimately was self-reported, as self-reported measures are subject to potential bias (e.g., social desirability bias, response bias, response-shift bias, and exaggeration of answers) (Northrup, 1996; Rosenman et al., 2011).

Future research should also consider parsing out additional performance measures to also see if there are any potential predicting, moderating and mediating effects to test the validity of more nuanced quantitative constructs. Research has indicated that the use of mixed-methods (e.g., both qualitative and quantitative) data most likely will lead to increased validity in findings and a deeper, broader understanding of the studied phenomena (Hurmerinta-Peltomaki & Nummela, 2006).

Although this study had a well-defined focus and cohort, there are many potential future directions for this work for other researchers in similar contexts. The findings may prove beneficial while serving as a starting point into taking a deeper look at the human capacity (leader) and social capacity (leadership) relationship to help determine how one defines and measures moral leadership and moral purpose (Day, 2000). Leader

development focuses on individual knowledge, skills, abilities, and other competencies, whereas leadership development focuses on collective social capacities, roles, and processes (Day, 2000). Leader and leadership development are both misunderstood as processes even at the highest levels of the military, as each includes more than just training and operational experiences (LeBouf, 2002). Another potential direction would be to create a parallel study of moral leadership and moral purpose that involves a quasi-experimental design. There were several other Fellowships where moral leadership and moral purpose was not an intentionally focused outcome. A design of this type could answer if there would be any differences between the different cohorts of Fellows.

Conclusion

The scientific understanding of character development has greatly expanded in recent years, whereas the understanding of character measurement is still in its early stages. Given the continued interest in developmental science of the theoretical conceptions of the process of character development (Lerner, 2018), the past two decades have seen an innumerable study of attributes of character development (Murray et al., 2019). Further research into attributes and subcomponents, such as curiosity, creativity, fairness, forgiveness, honesty, and others found by Peterson and Seligman (2004) could help further define measures that would help objectively qualify what being a moral leader with moral purpose ultimately may be.

Going forward, there will continue to be an emphasis on the importance of institutional contexts for promoting this development of the morality of leaders (e.g., Callina et al., 2017, 2018). The qualitative exploration presented here is just one of many that can further illuminate the features of a curricular approach dedicated to character development that points to

the continued role of educational institutions as key settings wherein moral leadership and moral purpose can be optimally developed (Berkowitz, et al., 2017). It is unknown what the rest of the century has in store for America, but it will surely at times be uneasy. America's future leaders must continually develop the professionalism to stand their ground morally and ethically. In doing so, their leadership will buttress our society writ large in the existential effort to "surprise the critics, both domestic and foreign, who predict our decline" (Peters, 1997, p. 4).

♦ ♦ ♦

References

- Aristotle. (1999). *Nicomachean Ethics* (T. H. Irwin, Trans.). Hackett Publishing Company.
- Berkowitz, M. (2002). The science of character education. *Bringing in a New Era of Character Education*, 508, 43-63.
- Berkowitz, M. W., Bier, M. C., & McCauley, B. (2017). Towards a science of character education: Frameworks for identifying and implementing effective practices. *Journal of Character Education*, 13(1), 33-51.
- Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbolic interactionism*. Prentice Hall.
- Born, D. H., Hendrix, W.H. & Hartley, J. (Summer, 2019). Moral Maturity. *Journal of Character and Leadership Development*, 6(2), 151-160.
- Born, D. H. & Megone, C. (Winter, 2019). Character & Leadership: Ancient Wisdom for the 21st Century. *Journal of Character and Leadership Development*, 6(1), 68-87.
- Callina, K. S., & Lerner, R. M. (2017). On the importance of coherence in the study of character development. *Journal of Character Education*, 13(1), 19-27.
- Callina, K. S., Burkhard, B., Schaeffer, J. S., Powers, J., Murray, E. D., Kobylski, G., Ryan, D., Kelly, D., Matthews, M. D., & Lerner, R. M. (2018). Character in context: Character structure among United States Military Academy cadets. *Journal of Moral Education*.
- Callina, K. S., Ryan, D., Murray, E. D., Colby, A., Damon, W., Matthews, M., & Lerner, R. M. (2017). Developing leaders of character at the United States Military Academy: A Relational Developmental Systems Analysis. *Journal of College and Character*, 18(1), 9-27.
- Cheung, C., & Lee, M. (2010). A theoretical model of intentional social action in online social networks. *Journal of Decision Support Systems*, 49(1), 24-30.
- Chickering, A. & Reisser, L. (1993). *Education and identity*. Jossey-Bass.
- Colby, A., & Sullivan, W. M. (2008). Formation of professionalism and purpose: Perspective from the preparation for the professions program. *U. St. Thomas LJ*, 5, 404-427.
- Cook, C., & Aman, A. (2020). A strategy for the development of principled professionals. *AUSA Institute of Land Warfare Paper*, 20-2.
- Cook, C., Webb, C., & Vansickle, J. (2020). Developing and mentoring in-extremis leaders: Lessons learned from special operations. *Air and Space Power Journal*, 67-76.
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2015). *Basics of qualitative research* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. & Poth, C. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry & research design* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Davis, T.M. & Murrell, P.H. (1993). A structural model of perceived academic, personal, and vocational gains related to college student responsibility. *Research in Higher Education*, 34, 267-290.
- Day, D. (2000). Leadership development: A review of context. *Leadership Quarterly*, 11(4) 581-613.
- Day, D., Zaccaro, S., & Halpin, S. (2004). *Leader development for transforming organizations: Growing leaders for tomorrow*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Denzin, N. (1998). The art and politics of interpretation. In D. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 313-371). Sage.
- Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. (1998). The art of interpretation, evaluation, and presentation. In D. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials* (pp. 275-281). Sage.
- Giorgi, A. (2009). *The descriptive phenomenological method in psychology: A modified Husserlian approach*. Duquesne University Press.
- Greenberg, M., Kusche, C., Cook, E., & Quamma, J. (1995). Promoting emotional competence in school-aged children: The effects of the PATHS curriculum. *Development and Psychopathology*, 7, 117-136.
- Hurmerinta-Peltomaki, L., & Nummela, N. (2006). Mixed methods in international business research: a value-added perspective. *Management International Review*, 46, 439-459.

- Jakobsson, S., Horvath, G., & Ahlberg, K. (2005). A grounded theory exploration of the first visit to a cancer clinic—strategies for achieving acceptance. *European Journal of Oncology Nursing, 9*, 248-257.
- LeBocuf, J. (2002). Case No. 3: The 2000 army training and leader development panel. In D. Snider & G. Watkins' (Eds.), *The Future of the Army Profession* (pp. 487–504). McGraw-Hill.
- Leming, J. (2001). Integrating a structured ethical reflection curriculum into high school community service experiences: Impact on students' socio-moral development. *Adolescence, 36*(141), 33-45.
- Lerner, R. M. (2018). Character development: Four facets of virtues. *Child Development Perspectives*.
- Lerner, R. M., & Callina, K. S. (2014). The study of character development: Towards tests of a relational developmental systems model. *Human Development, 57*(6), 322–346.
- Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage.
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Sage.
- Murray, E., Burkhard, B., Schaffer, H., Ryan, D., Farina, A., Cook, C., Powers, J., Matthews, M., & Lerner, R. (2019). Toward a developmental approach to measuring the development of character: Perspectives from Project Arete. *The Journal of Character & Leadership Development, 23-33*.
- Northrup, D. (1996). The problem of the self-report in survey research. *Institute for Social Research, 11*(3).
- Nucci, L. (2017). Character: A multi-faceted developmental system. *Journal of Character Education, 13*(1), 1-16.
- Overton, W. F. (2015). Process and relational developmental systems. In W. F. Overton & P. C. M. Molenaar (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology and developmental science, Volume 1: Theory and Method* (7th ed., pp. 9-62). Editor-in-chief: R. M. Lerner. Wiley.
- Peters, R. (1997). Constant conflict. *Parameters, Summer, 14*.
- Peterson, C., & Seligman, M. (2004). *Character strengths and virtues: A handbook and classification*. Oxford University Press and American Psychological Association.
- Piaget, J. (1970). Piaget's theory. In P.H. Mussen (Ed.) *Carmichael's manual of child psychology* (3rd ed., Vol. 1. pp. 703-723). Wiley.
- Rest, J. (1986). *Moral development: Advances in research and theory*. Praeger.
- Rosenman, R., Tennekoon, V., & Hill, L. (2011). Measuring bias in self-reported data. *International Journal of Behavioral and Healthcare Research, 2*(4), 320-332.
- Seidman, D. (2012). *How: Why HOW we do anything means everything*. John Wiley and Sons.
- Sinek, S. (2011). *Start with why*. Penguin Books.
- Taylor, C., Liang, B., Tracy, A., Williams, L., & Seigle, P. (2002). Gender differences in middle school adjustment, physical fighting, and social skills: Evaluation of a social competency program. *The Journal of Primary Prevention, 23*(2), 259–72.
- Thomas, E., & Magilvy, K. (2011). Qualitative rigor or research validity in qualitative research. *Journal for Specialists in Pediatric Nursing, 16*, 151-155.
- USAF Pamphlet 36-3527. (2019). *The Officer Development System*.
- van Manen, M. (2014). *Phenomenology of practice: Meaning-giving methods in phenomenological research and writing*. Left Coast Press.
- Van Velsor, E., & McCauley, C. (2004). *The Center for Creative Leadership handbook of leadership development*. Jossey-Bass.
- Vessels, G., & Huitt, W. (2005, March). *Moral and character development*. Paper presented at the National Youth at Risk Conference, Savannah, GA.

FEATURE ARTICLES

The Essential Partnership: The Four Core Functions of Military Leadership and the Core Values

Alan Briding, United States Air Force Academy & Air University

ABSTRACT

Junior and mid-level officers and civilian-equivalent ranks in the Air Force well understand the importance of accomplishing the mission and the warrior ethos, as well as taking care of the personnel in the unit. However, many of these leaders demonstrate two military leadership shortcomings: They display a poor understanding of the role and impact of the necessity for good order and discipline, and they have not internalized the primacy of the Core Value of Integrity First. The author proposes four core functions of military leadership to form the foundation for better understanding the tasks military leadership at all ranks must support, and emphasizes the necessity for the Air Force Core Values in making sound leadership decisions and for ensuring that good order and discipline remain the foundation of the American Warrior Ethos.

Dr. A.J. Briding, Colonel (Ret), USAF, graduated from the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) in 1973 with a BS in civil engineering and received an MS in lasers/optics through the Air Force Institute of Technology. His PhD is in public policy and administration, with emphasis on homeland security policy. He has over 7 years of command experience, including command of the airlift wing at Yokota Air Base, Japan, and has flown 4,200 hours as a pilot, instructor pilot, and evaluator pilot in airlift and airdrop missions. Dr. Briding has taught as an assistant professor in the Dept of Physics and in the Department of Military and Strategic Studies at USAFA. He also is an adjunct professor for the Air University's online classes for middle and senior-grade professional officer development and the online masters degree program in military operational art and science.

Military leadership responsibilities formally start when an officer is commissioned, and when enlisted personnel first pin on their noncommissioned officer (NCO) stripes. From that time forward, these leaders will be faced with an increasing array of challenges: assuring mission accomplishment, managing personnel actions, balancing priorities, working efficiently, following policy and other official guidance, and contributing to a positive work environment, to name several. The complexity of leadership can be daunting, especially during the first several formative years. Yet underlying the many variables leaders must sort through such as the culture and characteristics of their unit, the leadership styles that best fit the personality of the leader and his or her operational environment, and the daily demands on the mission and the unit's personnel, are fundamental constants. These are the core functions that military leadership must satisfy, and the Core Values (e.g., Integrity First, Service Before Self, Excellence in all We Do) provide the essential guidance to make the right decisions in the military environment.

In the studies of leadership attributes to include traits and styles, a common assumption is that the tasks incumbent on military leadership are well understood, but is that a safe assumption? The author's experience and observations during seven years of command and from 30 years of active-duty service, from teaching 810 mid-level officers and civilian equivalents in 50 of the Air University's Applied Leadership and Command (ALC) classes, as well as from his studies in leadership, all suggest that assumption is not accurate.

The responsibilities of military leadership are not as obvious as practitioners and observers might assume, although accomplishing the mission and taking care of the unit's people are commonly accepted central tenets. Expressions such as "Mission first, people always" and "Take care of your people, and the mission will take care of itself" are often mentioned to keep the right priorities, but slogans are only superficially useful and can easily be misconstrued. This paper therefore suggests foundational overarching responsibilities of military leadership fall into four essential core functions. As core functions, these should guide every leader's priorities, decisions, and actions irrespective of rank or position, but they often are not clearly understood, especially by junior and mid-grade leaders.

As part of the ALC classes, each student had to interview a current or graduated commander about the toughest situation they faced and how they handled it, and then the student analyzed the commander's approach and decisions. The interviews and analyses in the essays, as well as the class-wide discussions on selected situations from these interviews, generally brought out the importance of accomplishing the mission and supporting the unit's personnel as would be anticipated, but not necessarily in that order of priority. Additionally, they often presented a very limited understanding of the importance of building and maintaining a foundation of good order and discipline in the unit, of the range of Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) infractions, and of the proper use of administrative, rehabilitative, and punitive disciplinary measures, especially when the students were in support units that did not conduct real-world operations.

Classroom discussions on these topics reinforced that the students often did not consider or downplayed the rehabilitative and punitive side of personnel actions that maintain good order and discipline. The great majority of these students also accepted popular private-sector leadership styles whole-cloth in their leadership philosophies, with little if any analysis of how well those philosophies transferred to both the operational and administrative

sides of the military domain. Private-sector leadership styles and principles certainly can inform military leadership and have formed the foundation for much of that, but the restrictions imposed on a leader by the formal chain of command, the stern provisions of the UCMJ, and the ultimate priority of accomplishing the mission, even at severe risk to personnel, all add a dimension that is often alien to the private sector, short of first responders. And each member of the military plays a role in national defense, even if not serving on the front lines.

As leaders work through all the variables in the issues they will face, they must never forget that they and their people are first and foremost in the profession of arms, whether they are deployed on the front lines or playing a supporting role.

That is why a clear statement of the core functions should set the foundation for any military leadership discussions, analyses, and approaches. Ultimately, the responsibility for achieving these core functions lies with the unit commander, but success in each of these falls on all levels of the unit, with leadership at each level putting in place the building blocks that create a strong, reliable, well-performing unit across all of the core functions.

The Constants of Military Leadership

If you break down what it takes to provide for the defense of our nation, there are four core functions that accrue to military leaders:

- ensuring the unit accomplishes its mission,
- maintaining good order and discipline,
- taking care of the unit's people, and
- stewardship of resources.

All other legitimate actions fall under one or more of these four core functions. An essential part of this proposal is that the latter three are in support of, and subordinate to, the first. If military leaders of all ranks understand these functions, then they will have both a firm foundation and essential priorities upon which to base their leadership from the start.

Accomplishing the Mission

Few in the military would argue against the primacy of the mission, even in times when that can impose exceptional risk and sacrifice. The Preamble to the Constitution gives the role of our military in simple and direct terms: to “provide for the common defence.” That mission is our only charter, and all that we do, peacetime or wartime, should directly or indirectly support the mission. As leaders work through all the variables in the issues they will face, they must never forget that they and their people are first and foremost in the profession of arms, whether they are deployed on the front lines or playing a supporting role.

Yet the mission is dependent on the other three core functions, and leaders will face decisions in balancing all four of them for greatest mission effect, considering both the short and long terms. At times, accomplishing the mission clearly will be the dominant theme, but in many situations, leaders will have to balance the benefit/cost ratio of an exclusive mission focus. As an example, would sending an Airman to advanced training and education benefit the Air Force mission more in the long run, and can workarounds accommodate his or her absence and absorb a potential

dip in squadron mission productivity? On stewardship of resources, might an unrestricted mission focus compromise legality or policy concerning the use of funds and equipment, and if so, is there an acceptable alternative approach? Questions like these illustrate the factors leaders might have to consider in the quest for the best overall solutions that still keep the mission as the top priority in the long term.

The Necessity for Good Order and Discipline

“Be Tough. Set your standards high and insist that your people measure up. Have the courage to correct those who fail to do so. In the long run, your people will be happier. Almost certainly morale will be higher, your outfit better, and your people prouder (Wilson, 1976, in Department of the Air Force, p. 299).”

Sustained mission accomplishment depends on good order and discipline, and junior leaders appear to be well aware of the severity of UCMJ crimes such as wrongful use of controlled substances and sexual assault, but the essays and classroom discussions often revealed less understanding in areas unique to the military such as fraternization, failure to obey, unlawful political activities, hazing, and most importantly, supervisory responsibilities and actions. Good order and discipline have provided the foundation for successful militaries for millennia, and in several ways are even more important today. The complexity of American weapons and support systems demands that proper procedure throughout the tip-to-tail warfighting chain is properly followed. The Barksdale Air Force Base (AFB) incident in 2007 illustrates this well, as six nuclear-tipped cruise missiles were inadvertently loaded on a B-52 at Minot AFB and flown to Barksdale AFB, with over a day passing before this serious breach in nuclear surety was discovered

(Grier, 2019). In addition, the power of our weapon platforms demands careful, well-trained, and accurate application. In our democracy and all-volunteer force, contrary public trends and viewpoints can easily subvert the military professionalism that underlies mission success. Congress recognized the importance of this core function by providing a stringent code of law to maintain good order and discipline in the military: the UCMJ. No other government organization has a legal code as strict and demanding as the UCMJ, nor one that is applicable to all personnel 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. There is no time off from being a military member and maintaining the discipline deemed necessary for the proper conduct of our forces, and failure to build a strong foundation of good order and discipline in peacetime operations will make the unit that much less prepared for wartime operations. The oath of office to support and defend the Constitution and serve the country is taken not only by officers and enlisted members, but also by Department of the Air Force civilians (Curtis E. Lemay Center, 2015).

Based on the author’s research, good order and discipline issues provide the majority of problems that commanders consider to be their most challenging. Other issues included difficult or toxic superiors, lack of personnel and other resources to meet mission requirements, personnel tragedies such as accidental deaths and suicides, and complex organizational problem sets. The most numerous problems, however, were with sexual harassment and assault, insubordination, fraternization and other inappropriate conduct, intentional misuse of resources, and alcohol and drug-related incidents. Having to (1) determine the facts as best possible, (2) understand UCMJ standards that may have been violated and the attendant legal requirements a violation invokes, (3) determine mitigating circumstances, (4) determine whether appropriate administrative, rehabilitative and/

or punitive measures are in order, and then (5) present the decision to the member—at times a decision that can stop a career or impose court-martial punishments—is not a sequence of events many commanders relish. Yet without the discipline that provides the foundation for the chain of command, principled and proper decision-making, and military standards of conduct, the consequences of poor order and discipline can range from low unit morale to inability to accomplish the mission, and at times, necessitating exceptional actions to include replacing the commander. It is incumbent on military leadership at all ranks to understand this, to set the example, and to maintain good order and discipline among their subordinates, starting with honest performance feedback and other forms of counseling and mentoring.

One tendency here, especially for younger leaders, is to avoid giving negative feedback and missing the opportunity to correct a trait or performance at an early stage. When that initial feedback is ineffective, the option of proceeding to administrative actions such as Letters of Counseling, Letters of Admonishment, and Letters of Reprimand must be considered. Quite often, timely engagement from officers and NCOs within the unit can prevent or moderate a potentially serious disciplinary issue that otherwise would be significant enough to require handling by the commander. The earlier these are addressed, the more likely the recipient will adjust and the issue will have much less impact on the mission or their career. If the common perception that 90% of a commander's time is spent on 10% of his or her people appears to be applicable in a unit, then the commander should start looking at why subordinate leadership has not handled most of these troublesome issues at their level. A commander could reduce his or her workload if he or she sets clear expectations and mentors subordinates in maintaining the standards

inherent in good order and discipline, developing the ability and trust in subordinate leaders to perform their role in preventing, and turning around problems in their early stages.

As General Wilson's quote above brings out, leaders should keep in mind that the great majority of American military personnel take pride in accomplishing the mission, and prefer the work environment that good order and discipline creates. They also respect leaders who intelligently, fairly, and equitably maintain that environment, which contributes significantly to the morale of the unit, and it should be noted that qualities such as morale can align with two or more of the core functions: 1) morale is a factor in mission accomplishment, good order, and discipline, and 2) taking care of your people.

One of the most common breaches of good order that leaders make is failure to support fully higher-level policies and decisions. Commanders are the Air Force's representative to the unit and should be able to provide the rationale for higher-level policy and decisions that affect their personnel, especially on established policies and processes that may be viewed negatively in the unit (e.g., fitness requirements often generate complaints). Leadership throughout the unit must assume that higher-level policies and decisions were rationally made with factual assessment of relevant factors, many of which would likely be beyond the awareness of subordinate personnel. Rather than question that rationale, leadership should support the policies with the same dedication that the commander would expect from subordinates concerning his or her own decisions.

If a leader finds that a policy or decision is unworkable or counterproductive in the unit, it is his or her duty to up-channel those concerns, backed with supporting

rationale, and preferably with an acceptable alternative that meets the intent of the policy or decision. If there is no acceptable alternative, then a waiver should be requested. If those actions are unsuccessful, then leaders must apply the policy or decision to best effect, taking ownership. All of this assumes that the policy or decision is lawful. There never should be any confusion about the imperative to fully resist unlawful orders.

Taking Care of Your People

America's all-volunteer force is the best in the world and arguably is the primary reason that the U.S. military is so formidable (Dempsey, 2015). Many would suggest that America's lead in military technology is its principal advantage, but maintaining and employing complicated, high-technology weapon systems take exceptional operators and support personnel. Additionally, employing those platforms in joint, multi-domain warfare in complex operational environments, requires not only a high level of professionalism but also a culture of taking personal responsibility and initiative. All of that requires continuous training and exercising, as well as operational leadership from experienced noncommissioned and commissioned officers. A key to this is retention, and the American military takes care of its people and enjoys a return on that investment with mature leadership, improved capability, and high morale (Briding, 2016).

That brings up two dimensions to all levels of leadership, especially at the squadron level. The first is directing, enabling, and motivating personnel, giving them the necessities to focus their work, remove barriers to productivity, and keep morale high—all with mission accomplishment as the ultimate goal. The second is the personal support side of leadership,

providing assistance when an individual Airman needs help, to include engaging base support services.

The military provides exceptional individual and family support, necessitated by the intent to develop and retain personnel who often have to relocate, deploy, and operate under demanding and dangerous conditions while leaving the family behind. From a headquarters perspective, the Air Force's 321,000 military personnel are an essential resource that has to be managed wisely across all specialty codes to meet current and future Air Force manning requirements (AFPC, 2018). From a leadership perspective, the unit is made up of unique individuals that need

We are in the warfighting business, not the rehabilitation business, yet we owe it to our people to determine if rehabilitation is appropriate when discipline issues come up, and provide rehabilitation and support services when those are likely to return an Airman to productive service.

the proper support to do their work; training and education to advance into higher levels of capability and responsibility; career progression based on merit; and as appropriate, individual and family support that keep their personnel positively contributing to the unit.

However, leaders should keep in mind the words of Gen. Ron Fogleman, the 15th Chief of Staff of the Air Force: "The essence of the American military is to fight and win America's wars. We're not a social actions agency, we're not an employment agency" (Fogleman,

2017). We are in the warfighting business, not the rehabilitation business, yet we owe it to our people to determine if rehabilitation is appropriate when discipline issues come up, and provide rehabilitation and support services when those are likely to return an Airman to productive service. As much as the human dimension comes into play at the squadron level, commanders must make final decisions with compassion, but still based on the needs of the Air Force.

Stewardship of Resources

Even without the challenges imposed by limited budgets, leaders at all levels are obligated to ensure personnel, equipment and materiel, and funds are used for their intended purpose and without waste. This puts leadership into a management role, often delegated to others in the unit, but still the ultimate responsibility of the supervisor and commander. With delegation, maintaining responsibility requires oversight, and a significant number of issues fall under improper use of government resources, whether that improper use was unwitting or with intent. Training in the legalities and proper procedures of resource usage can greatly minimize unwitting usage if the importance of that training is emphasized and leadership institutionalizes it, and oversight procedures will dissuade or detect intentional violations.

Oversight does not have to be complicated, and is normally built into unit functions. Squadrons generally have resource advisors that are trained in fiscal requirements and track expenditures; proper use of equipment and materiel periodically can be reviewed by the operations chain; and the First Sergeant, Operations Officer, and senior NCOs should provide timely feedback on personnel management, operational issues, and shortfalls. Commanders must

ensure that effective oversight procedures are in place, that intermediate leadership understands their role in oversight, and that resource stewardship is faithfully

The other dimension of stewardship of resources is innovation, finding ways to more effectively and efficiently conduct the mission and its supporting processes (and a good argument can be made that innovation should be considered as a corollary to mission accomplishment). With limited budgets, clever adversaries, and a complex battlespace, the necessity for innovation to keep America's military dominant across the threat spectrum is a necessary theme, but implementing pragmatic and effective innovation cultures and programs is not a simple task. The downside of a poorly executed program leads to jaded views about the concept of innovation in a structured environment such as the military. What squadron leadership often neglects is that the operational expertise and experience of their personnel, when properly enabled, can significantly improve effectiveness and efficiency in standard operating procedures as well as provide useful applications of off-the-shelf technologies to existing processes, and recommendations may at times lead to breakthrough results. The enemy of innovation is the inertia often found in the middle ranks of leadership, driven by a preference to maintain the more comfortable and predictable status quo.

The companion piece to process innovation in the unit is leveraging diversity to disrupt dogma and groupthink (e.g., 'We always do it that way,' or 'If it's not broken, don't fix it') by encouraging fresh perspectives and ideas for improvement. As stressed by former Air Force Chief of Staff General David Goldfein, "diversity of background, experience, demographics, perspectives, thought and organization" all can play a role (USAF,

2018). It is essential for unit's leadership to encourage new ideas from everyone in the unit, to see that the avenues for suggestions and process improvements are in place, and to duly consider, objectively vet, and properly validate recommendations from subordinates.

The prominence of these four core functions will vary across the units that are spread across the tip-to-tail of the warfighting spectrum, and whether they are in their wartime or peacetime mode. Accomplishing the operational or support mission will remain as top priority regardless, and good order and discipline will be a critical enabler, especially under prolonged stress. It should also be noted that as the military faces budget restrictions, the stewardship of resources function will have a growing impact on operational capability, at times directly affecting readiness.

'Gray-Zone' Leadership and The Air Force Core Values

Balancing the core functions of mission, good order and discipline, taking care of your people, and stewardship of resources can be a complex challenge under the best of circumstances, often putting leaders in a 'gray zone' of making decisions when the conditions do not lead to obvious solutions. When factors such as deployments and high operations tempo overly stress personnel and their families, limited resources inhibit mission accomplishment, and additional duties and training add to the personnel load, leaders will be faced with balancing the core functions for the best overall benefit to the mission of the Air Force, including calling a time-out on the mission when the demand on people and equipment will have more of an adverse effect than pushing mission accomplishment. Gray-zone leadership requires as much accurate information as time and circumstance allow, good analysis and judgment, and a bedrock value system upon which to base sound solutions—a value system that is built to

meet the demands of the core functions. Working in combination with the core functions, the Air Force Core Values provide the values to guide the decision making and personal performance our nation has come to expect.

The core values are: Integrity First, Service Before Self, and Excellence in All We Do. In a recent Pew Research Center Survey, 83% of the Americans interviewed expressed that they have confidence in the military "to act in the best interests of the public" (Shane, 2019). That trust comes from the professionalism of the forces and the mission successes under the most demanding conditions, and is based on the importance of the core values each Service maintains. The Air Force Core Values reflect why public trust is so high. Yet a significant number of junior leaders in the Air Force appear to treat these Core Values more as a mantra than as bedrock values that should shape the top priorities of leadership. As part of the ALC classes, students were asked to give what they considered to be the most important leadership characteristic or trait. Of 810 students, many different leadership attributes were mentioned, but only 23% gave integrity as the top attribute, and six classes did not list integrity at all. In contrast, the Stockdale Group in the College of Naval Warfare surveyed much more seasoned leadership across the military, and found that out of 107 flag officer and Senior Executive Service civilian respondents, integrity was the clear top selection (Ledlow, 2020). This disparity may suggest that the importance of integrity may become more significant and meaningful as leadership decisions carry more weight and violations of integrity have greater impact, and as a result of continued emphasis in intermediate and senior leadership education and training. In the ALC classes taught by the author, he selected for class discussion several of the problems faced by the commanders in the student interviews. As a result of

those discussions, a significant number of students changed their vote on the most important trait to integrity, reinforcing the value of the class discussions about significant examples of lack of integrity in affirming the Integrity First Core Value.

The current Core Values are the product of an evolutionary approach to capture the essence of conduct required in the Air Force, spurred by the scandal caused when U.S. forces apparently acted on their own initiative to bomb North Vietnamese missile sites in 1971-72, contrary to the public rules of engagement (Air Force News, 2010).¹ Responding to this, the Air Force Chief of Staff at the time, General John Ryan, issued a policy letter that included the following:

Integrity--which includes full and accurate disclosure--is the keystone of military service. Integrity in reporting, for example, is the link that connects each flight crew, each specialist, and each administrator to the commander in chief. In any crisis, decisions and risks taken by the highest national authorities depend, in large part, on reported military capabilities and achievements. In the same way, every commander depends on accurate reporting from his forces. Unless he is positive of the integrity of his people, a commander cannot have confidence in his forces. Without integrity, the commander in chief cannot have confidence in us . . . Integrity can be ordered but it can only be achieved by encouragement and example (Tower & Dunsford, 1996).

Eight years later, the Air Force Academy's Dean of the Faculty came up with a set of Core Values centered on integrity, service, and excellence, and in 1994, the Academy refined that into the Core Values the Air Force uses today. In the following year, the Air Force Chief of Staff, General Ronald Fogleman, in partnership with the Secretary of the Air Force, Sheila Widnall, formalized and institutionalized the Core Values across the Air Force, starting with the top generals and delivering it to all personnel through a three-phase implementation plan (Tower & Dunford, 1996). It was clear that the Core Values were intended to be professional values applied in daily activities, not simply a listing of personal values that one might call upon when put into combat. These new Core Values were written as succinct, directive expectations. The focus on a code of conduct for daily operations in peacetime as well as wartime was quite intentional, and during the development and implementation of the new code, exceptionally damaging issues to the Air Force came from lack of integrity and personal interest taking priority over service obligations, some at the top levels of leadership. The lack of proper accountability and discipline imposed following the Black Hawk shot down over Iraq in April of 1994; the Fairchild Air Force Base B-52 crash in June of 1994; the CT-43 crash in Croatia in April, 1996; and the general discharge of Lieutenant Kelly Flinn in May of 1997, among other incidents, all reinforced the pressing need for the integrity of commanders to keep the mission and good order and discipline at the forefront of their decisions. It should be noted that squadron, group, and wing commanders were relieved of their commands over these incidents.

¹ It should be noted that at the time, the 7th Air Force commander, General John Lavelle, was labeled as a rogue officer waging war by his own rules, but information released in 2007 provided evidence that he was following authorization from President Richard Nixon.

As with any other corporate value system, the success or failure of the Core Values depends upon their relevance, the effectiveness of the education programs

to instill them into all personnel, and perhaps most importantly, the constant reinforcement provided by leadership throughout the ranks. Their relevance for the profession of arms is unquestionable, and the leadership factor is provided primarily by commanders and their subordinate leadership setting the right example and holding personnel accountable to those standards.

The Warrior Ethos: Merging Mission Accomplishment, Good Order and Discipline, and the Core Values

Warrior ethos is the embodiment of the warrior spirit: tough mindedness, tireless motivation, an unceasing vigilance, a willingness to sacrifice one's life for the country, if necessary, and a commitment to be the world's premier air, space and cyberspace force (AFI 36-2014, 2019).

The Air Force warrior ethos is the capstone of the American profession of arms. The U.S. Constitution establishes the military mission of national defense and implements civilian control; the UCMJ sets the rigorous standards of conduct expected from military personnel that sets them apart from civilian counterparts; the core functions describe the requirements incumbent upon military leadership to defend the nation and maintain those standards of conduct; the Core Values provide the top priorities that should guide all Air Force personnel in their decisions and actions; and this collective foundation then culminates in the Air Force warrior ethos.

Self-discipline and the courage to put the mission ahead of self-form the essence of the warrior ethos, as the passage above from the Air Force Instruction on

Pre-Commissioning Programs brings out. The Core Value of Service Before Self includes duty and loyalty, and military leaders should consider that the virtue of loyalty to the mission, to the unit, and to its people must be practiced within the context of good order and discipline. In the stress of combat operations, whether conducted in the field or at home station, the discipline necessary to perform to warfighting standards expected of our military must already have been infused into the unit. Loyalty often rises to the prime virtue when lives are at risk, but it should never supersede the necessity to follow the law of armed

As with any other corporate value system, the success or failure of the Core Values depends upon their relevance, the effectiveness of the education programs to instill them into all personnel, and perhaps most importantly, the constant reinforcement provided by leadership throughout the ranks.

combat, nor should it come before the necessity for Integrity First in peacetime operations. Loyalty is the glue that binds a well-performing team, but when an Airman 'looks the other way,' particularly in peacetime operations, the discipline of the unit is corrupted, integrity and professionalism are left behind, and trust is undermined. As difficult as it might be to properly address a comrade that has violated the UCMJ, no matter how minor the infraction might appear, not holding an Airman accountable out of loyalty is a misplacement of values and undercuts the essence of the warrior ethos.

Recommendations for Practical Leadership

The following recommendations are intended to reinforce the concepts of the core functions of military leadership and the importance of the Core Values. A clear understanding of the core functions of military leadership should be the first objective of leadership training starting at the entry level and should be reinforced through continuing professional military education, to anchor leadership training and education in priorities, attributes, styles, and techniques that will follow throughout an Airman's time of service.

Revise Air Force Operational-Level Doctrine, Volume 2, Leadership

The Air Force's doctrine on leadership is encapsulated in this Volume, and it should lay the principles for military leadership across the Total Force. The core functions of leadership should start this volume, whether the core functions as stated in this paper are agreed, or a variation is created.

Chapter 2: Leading Airmen, begins with a definition of leadership and then mentions the following:

The Air Force expects its members to develop leadership skills. The nature and extent of that development depends on the member's status: officer, enlisted, or civilian. The Air Force expects an officer to move quickly through the levels of leadership, from tactical expertise into operational competence.

From this start, the chapter focuses on warfighting proficiency and spirit, certainly commendable and in support of the first core function. It also brings in the importance of understanding the perspective of *Airmindedness*, to include viewing the Air Force's role

as a strategic asset, although this is less a leadership trait and more of an operational perspective. It discusses the leadership transition for officers from tactical expertise to organization-wide operational competence, and the leadership skills that best produce results when working solutions across the organization. An excellent discussion on the Core Values is also provided.

Unfortunately, the only significant reference to good order and discipline is in the subchapter *The Total Force: Officers* (p. 9), and is directed at commanders:

Federal law states commanders in the Air Force are required to be good examples of virtue, honor, patriotism, and subordination; to be vigilant in "inspecting the conduct of all persons who are placed under their command"; to guard against "dissolute and immoral practices" and correct those guilty of them; and to promote and safeguard the morale, well-being, and general welfare of the officers and enlisted personnel under their command.

This begs the question of whether the proper emphasis is provided on this critical core function that all leadership must fully support. A junior or mid-level leader reading this volume would take away the importance of mission and warrior spirit (or ethos), but would have little if any understanding of the importance of good order and discipline. Waiting to present this core function to commander-selects during their indoctrination program leaves the void that has shown up in the ALC essays and discussions. Putting the core functions of military leadership at the start of the chapter on leadership would provide a much better orientation for the reader, and would better frame leadership training and education outcomes.

The author would suggest that the Core Values subchapter forms a good foundation for leaders to understand the Core Values, but true buy-in is better reinforced with concrete examples of what a lack of the Core Values, and especially a lack of integrity, can do to undermine the mission. Actual examples discussed in the ALC classes proved to be more effective in internalization than discussions on why they were important. The case example given in Chapter 2 readily supports the value of Service Before Self in the context of warfighting spirit; additional emphasis from one or two examples that demonstrate the impact from lack of integrity would strengthen this discussion.

Understand the UCMJ and Supervisory Responsibilities

Stress the importance of junior-officers understanding the UCMJ and their supervisory responsibilities that support good order and discipline, starting in commissioning programs and by providing reinforcement throughout officer training programs. Air Force Handbook 1, Airman, details an excellent training path for enlisted personnel as they attain non-commissioned and senior non-commissioned officer status. Its sections on leadership, standards of conduct, and military justice cover traits, styles, and responsibilities of leadership, and the handbook also reviews UCMJ articles, non-judicial punishment, and administrative discipline measures, providing supervisors the means to lead, motivate, and, when necessary, to correct and discipline their subordinates. This comprehensive approach to military leadership gives enlisted leaders the tools to maintain good order and discipline among the enlisted ranks.

The training for newly commissioned and junior officers, however, does not appear to provide a firm understanding of the UCMJ, nor of administrative measures used to correct subordinates. Air Force

Instruction 36-2014, *Personnel Pre-Commissioning Programs*, mentions in the overview that pre-commissioning programs develop officers who “have internalized the Air Force’s core values, live by a high moral code, treat others with mutual respect, and demonstrate a strong sense of ethics (Leader of Character)” (Manasco 2019, p. 3). Yet while its institutional outcomes address ethical leadership, warrior ethos, and taking care of people, the roles of the UCMJ and corrective and disciplinary measures are not mentioned. (Manasco, 2019).

The Air University (AU) Squadron Officer School’s new *LEAD to Prevail* curriculum focuses on interpersonal skills, group and multidisciplinary approaches to problem solving, and leading in the joint warfare domain. Squadron Officer School collaborated with the AU Leader Development Course (LDC) for Squadron Command, and the public affairs statement of the new curriculum mentions the following:

“Our LDC course targets squadron leaders one to three years from command. We do that so our graduates have time to develop and refine the concepts they studied with us,” said Lt. Col Justin Longmire, LDC director. “However, how awesome would it be if future squadron leaders could be working on these concepts and skills for five to 10 years before taking command? How much more prepared will they be when they’re tapped on the shoulder and asked to take on the sacred burden of command? That’s the value in delivering this human domain content earlier in a leader’s career” (Berube, 2020).

However, as with the commissioning institutional competencies, there is no mention of the leadership responsibilities associated with good order and discipline in this description of the curriculum, so

any exposure to the corrective and disciplinary side of managing subordinates does not appear to be part of the formal training for junior officers.

The intent to develop multidimensional leaders to handle complex environments is laudatory, but when the fundamentals of good order and discipline are not presented and reinforced in officer leadership training until approaching squadron command, junior officers in the Air Force will have a poor understanding of the essential foundation of the unit, its good order and discipline, and their essential role in maintaining that foundation.

Conclusion

Understanding the core functions that stop at the commander's desk is essential to laying the groundwork for an effective military unit, and the leadership from the most junior ranks up through the commander have an essential role in the accomplishment of those core functions. Whatever the leadership styles and attributes leaders might use, those preferences must be productive in maintaining these core functions. The mission is critically dependent on maintaining good order and discipline, a core function that is often addressed more in reaction rather than in a proactive approach that better manages emerging issues. Leadership throughout the chain of command must take the high ground to prevent, assess, and firmly, objectively handle personnel issues among their subordinates. All four core functions are a necessary part of the military leadership regardless of the unit and operational context, but the mission itself must take precedence, and the Core Values provide leaders the value system to make the right decisions that keep the core functions on track for the best interest of the Air Force and the nation it serves.

References

- Air Force News (2010). Major General John Daniel Lavelle Biography. <https://www.af.mil/About-Us/Biographics>
- Air Force Personnel Center (2018). Military demographics. <https://www.afpc.af.mil>
- Air University eSchool [Host] (2013-2019). *Applied Leadership and Command* [distance learning course]. Air Command and Staff College Professional Military Education. * Data collected from 810 student papers and discussions during 50 classes.
- Berube, Phil (2020). Squadron Officer School new curriculum challenges students to 'know themselves' first. *Air University Public Affairs*. <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/News/Display/Article/2420142/squadron-officer-school-new-curriculum-challenges-students-to-know-themselves-f/>
- Briding, Alan (2016). Matrix wings: Continuous improvement an operator can love. *Air & Space Power Journal*, 30(3), 9-22. https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Portals/10/ASPJ/journals/Volume-30_Issue-3/F-Briding.pdf
- Dempsey, General Martin (2015). *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America*.
- Department of the Air Force (2019). *Air Force Handbook 1, Airman*.
- Defense & Aerospace Report [Gen Ron Fogleman] (2017, November 9). *Fogleman on why military culture, USAEA Core Values matter* [Video]. YouTube. <https://defaeroreport.com/2017/11/09/fogleman-military-culture-usaf-core-values-matter/>
- Grier, Peter (2019, June 26). Misplaced Nukes. *Air Force Magazine*. <https://www.airforcemag.com/article/misplacednukes/>
- Ledlow, Marcia (2020, April 24). Personal Interview [Phone].
- Manasco, Shon J. (2019, July 15). *Air Force Instruction 36-2014 Personnel Pre-Commissioning Programs*. https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af_a1/publication/afi36-2014/afi36-2014.pdf
- Reason, J. (1997). *Managing the Risks of Organizational Accidents*. Aldersgate.
- Tower, P. & Dunford, D. (1996). Air Force Core Values guru guide. <https://www.gocivilairpatrol.com>
- U.S. Air Force (2018). Air Force diversity and inclusion. Retrieved from <https://www.af.mil>
- U.S. Air Force Curtis E. Lemay Center for Doctrine (2015). Air Force Doctrine Volume II Leadership. <https://www.doctrine.af.mil/Core-Doctrine/Vol-2-Leadership/>

FEATURE ARTICLES

The Importance of Examining Our Perspective: Fostering Development & Enhancing Effectiveness

Justin T. Pendry, University of San Diego

James Dobbs, Center for Creative Leadership

To what degree should leaders trust their perceptions of themselves? To what degree should leaders trust their perceptions of other people—their supervisors, peers, and subordinates? How confident should leaders be in how well their perspective accurately and thoroughly diagnoses a given situation or context? Leader effectiveness and leader development rely on this critical topic—perspective. Our willingness to examine our own perspectives strongly influences our ability to maximize development, achieve goals, enrich connection with others, and make more informed decisions.

Justin T. Pendry is Justin T. Pendry, is currently a doctoral student at the University of San Diego who will defend his dissertation this spring and return to the United States Air Force Academy to work in the Center for Character and Leadership Development (CCLD). He holds two Masters of Arts degrees: MA in counseling and leadership from the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs and MA in international relations from the University of Oklahoma. His research interests include leadership, character development and organizational behavior.

James M. Dobbs, PhD., is an executive coach at the Center for Creative Leadership, organizational consultant, and adjunct faculty at several institutions. Jimmy spent the first part of this professional career as an officer in the United States Air Force where he held several leadership positions and has presented and published numerous works on leadership and leader development. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of San Diego in leadership studies and a Master of Arts degree in counseling and human services from the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs. His research and writing address leadership development, ethics, and organizational theory and behavior.

Perspective is simply a particular way of looking at something or someone. The Latin root meaning is to *look through or perceive*. Perspective transformation refers to the process by which a new experience is assimilated to or informed by past experiences; a personal paradigm for understanding ourselves and our relationships (Mezirow, 1978). Other words used to represent perspective include attitude, approach, outlook, frame of mind, viewpoint and point of view. The term perspective is often used to infer the ability to see the situation or problem in a more accurate or reasonable way.

Why does thinking about our individual perspective matter? First, our perspective is a key component influencing our thoughts, attitude, commitment and ultimately, our actions. Inaccurate perceptions of others can inhibit effective task delegation. Leaders might give tasks to followers who are not prepared for them or withhold tasks from followers who are. Inaccurate or incomplete perceptions of others can cause leaders to retain and promote the wrong people which might cause worthy candidates to leave their direct supervision. This type of mismanagement frustrates followers who will likely recognize their leader's biases and corresponding favoritism. Leaders who misperceive their own leadership abilities create problems as well. Overly confident leaders may not listen adequately to others' ideas, neglect important forms of developmental feedback, make bad decisions, and generally frustrate others with their inflated self-views. Leaders lacking confidence might be too willing to listen to others, miss opportunities for success, and fail to exhibit the type of presence vital for effective leadership.

Second, our willingness to be curious and to open-heartedly seek to understand other's perspectives broadens our aperture of understanding in any context.

As philosopher Marcus Aurelius said, "Everything we hear is an opinion, not a fact. Everything we see is a perspective, not the truth." Building critical examination and refraining from holding tightly the things we know fosters the practice of being a lifelong learner and allows us to hold more informed positions. This concept has evolved into an entire category of psycho-social competency called *perspective taking*, defined as the ability to understand how a situation appears to someone else and the effect on them cognitively and emotionally (Johnson, 1975).

Perceptions and Warrior Ethos

While a strong argument can be made for the power of perspective as an influential component of being an officer of character, how does it relate to having warrior ethos? Warrior ethos is one of the four attributes of officership defined in the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) Officer Development System (ODS). Possessing warrior ethos requires the maturation of core proficiencies founded on *intellectual development* inherent in the Profession of Arms, and the *values development* prescribed by the Air Force Core Values (USAFA, 2020). As outlined in the USAFA Warrior Ethos white paper, the ability to understand both the profession of arms and nature of war are predicated on the ability to see multiple perspectives. As is true for developing competence for any skill, perspective-taking requires intentional practice, reflection and continued repetition.

USAFA is a unique environment within the Air Force with four years solely dedicated to an officer candidate's development. It is the place where these future officers establish habits relating to critical thinking processes, risk-taking, and willingness to push themselves beyond their comfort zone. In doing so, they build a growth-mindset, commit to being lifelong learners and set the foundation continually for excellence in all they do.

Demonstrating excellence requires honing mental and professional skills as well overall effectiveness (USAFA, 2020). With this in mind, consider the following questions:

- If one is unwilling to work on these proficiencies at USAFA, how can we reasonably expect that will change in training or operational environments when the risk is greater?
- If we are unwilling to challenge our perspective now, will it get easier in the future or just become more ingrained?
- If we don't have the moral courage to be vulnerable and have an uncomfortable conversation now, is it reasonable to assume that will change in the future?
- Are the rewards of pursuing proficiency in this area worth the risk?
- Do they warrant our time, effort and consideration?

Recent research centering on cadet commitment indicates intentional reflection on the perspectives we hold is worth further exploration, especially in the context of USAFA.

The mission of USAFA is to educate, train, and inspire men and women to become officers of character motivated to lead the United States Air and Space Forces in service to our nation. The Academy's framework for developing leaders of character is predicated on cadets owning their attitude, effort, commitment and overall role in their development as Leaders of Character (CCLD, 2011). Based on the authors' combined experiences as a cadet, a graduate assistant coach, Air Officer Commanding (AOC), and a faculty member, we feel it is unrealistic to assume all cadets are committed to this endeavor. This is explicitly true when cadets are disenrolled for multiple honor violations or committing a crime.

Yet from a more psychological and behavioral level, cadets have limited available time which forces them to make calculated decisions about how they use their resources, specifically their time. While becoming an officer of character is USAFA's stated mission, it is an intangible that cannot be objectively measured and isn't quantified in cadet overall performance average the way military performance, athletic performance, or academic performance is measured. While most cadets see the benefit of their development as leaders of character, the absence of an objective evaluation tool and associated incentives create an environment where commitment to the mission often fails to be the top priority. Commitment is an instrumental measure for understanding human behavior, a key component of learning organizations, and thus has been one of the most frequently studied organizational constructs. Research findings consistently associate commitment with valuable organizational outcomes including motivation, organizational citizenship behaviors, job performance, job satisfaction, and turnover reduction.

Approach

The *Leader of Character* (CCLD, 2011) framework is so fundamental to the mission of USAFA that we designed the research to better understand these questions: How committed are cadets to their development and to USAFA? What is the range of cadet commitment and what are the factors associated with this variation? The methodology used for this study was an explanatory sequential two-phase design, starting with a quantitative phase to acquire and analyze useful data via survey, followed by qualitative research through semi-structured interviews to explain the quantitative data including typical (or atypical) results, significant results, outlier results, and surprising or confusing results (Creswell & Plano, 2018). Phase one involved a survey with 230 participants. While analysis of that

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics: Cadet Commitment to Their Development as Leaders of Character

Commitment to Developing as Leader of Character	N	Minimum	Maximum	Medium	Std. Deviation
Average Commitment Score	230	1.25	5.00	4.01	0.735

cadet sampling showed a high average commitment level of 4.01 on a 5-point Likert scale, the range of cadet commitment is significant as seen in Table 1.

Phase two consisted of 34 cadet interviews to gain a deeper understanding of cadet commitment as well as how and why certain factors are associated with it. The interview questions were open-ended to allow cadets to highlight which factors they considered significant in how committed cadets are to their development as leaders of character, as well as to the Academy as an institution. All factors provided were coded inductively and something unexpected emerged—over half of the comments about factors affecting cadet commitment were on the topic of perspective. They fell into four interrelated subcategories of personal perspective that can provide insight for reflection and application for the developing leader.

Seeing the Big Picture

Many cadets conveyed how situational interactions increased their awareness and commitment to their development by providing a better understanding of the necessity and significance of USAF operational success and/or by helping them realize how important their development is and its role in operational effectiveness success. A freshman said, “A briefing or meeting that hits you, when your AOC or AMT using it in my life or

future job makes me focus and pay attention;¹ (when) it is applied it helps make me focus.” A sophomore stated it more explicitly, “One of the opportunities that has pushed me most to the mission are interactions with other people. My AOC would bring people in to talk to us and at the airfield officers have been doing coffee hours with those who have more experience than you that really foster development. You can lecture all you want, but it is the experiences that motivate cadets to develop as leaders of character.” Another senior highlighted other situations also fostering this connection, “The Institute for Future Conflict is great². Incorporate it. CCLD panels are great,³ when we bring in the operational (application) and what is going on in real world. That is key.”

While situations present opportunities to make these connections, individuals also play an important role in making this connection. A cadet noted the ability to see the significance of these situations and how their individual actions now affect the future requires maturity, a maturity that many cadets do not have. This maturity is fostered by having goals and

1 Air Officer Commanding (AOC) is a commander of cadets at USAFA and Academy Military Trainer (AMT) are Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) responsible for educating, training and inspiring cadets at USAFA.

2 The Institute for Future Conflict is a research and education entity at USAFA for cadets to examine the changing character and technologies of armed conflict.

3 The Center for Character and Leadership Development (CCLD) is one of the mission elements at USAFA.

the grit to persevere to reach those goals. As one cadet put it, “The end results are worth the pain. Those who realize that are more committed, those who don’t take opportunities and don’t get that idea of end benefit are less committed.” Two seniors conveyed the importance of having clarity in their future job in the Air Force with one of them saying, “I wasn’t sure if there was a job or career for me. Recently I’ve gotten excited about the Space Force. Something that interested me and seeing something I could see myself doing in the future.” The other said, “My motivation has evolved from a whim, to a real career being able to pursue it and develop the right way and with the right people. The Academy gives you plenty of opportunities to do that.” As conveyed by that senior, seeing the big picture and future application enhances our ability to see our current opportunities.

Seeing Opportunities Rather Than Just Challenges

The first part of this perspective is simply the willingness to see past the hindrances in order to see the opportunities USAFA provides and the role the cadets have in seizing them. A sophomore put it this way, “A factor that promotes your development is all of the resources and tons of paths you can take. You would expect we are all cookie cutter, but actually there are so many unique experiences here, you have to take the initiative yourself to determine how you want to get better in developing. For instance, I am a club CIC and I routinely set plans and manage all of the facilities.⁴ I am the only cadet doing that. It is something that develops me. I had to seek that out on my own.” Certain situational examples can help us diagnose how much we focus on the challenges versus the opportunities.

Cadets discussed different situations and how cadets respond to those situations. One common situational example was having poor leadership. Here

⁴ Cadet in Charge (CIC) is the cadet who is the head responsibility of a specific group or club.

are two different freshman responses to this situation, “Permanent party makes cadets cynical,⁵ they play a big negative factor in cadet’s commitment to their own development,” while the other freshman said, “Everything I’ve seen is helping me to develop.” The difference in these perspectives is how they frame the situation; one on what is being done to them (low locus of control), and the other from how they respond (high locus of control). This reinforces another freshman’s comment, “You can respond in one of two ways (to poor leadership)—If this leader can get away with it (being a poor leader) and I give up; others see it and say I won’t be like that and it motivates them.” As a sophomore put it, “I have an active role in it (my development).” Another example provided was how probation (a punishment when a cadet violates a standard) affects cadet commitment. One senior said, “Discipline issues can go either way; if someone has disciplinary issues at any point, I think they can really check out, freshman especially; they get into trouble and think ‘this isn’t following me around’ since they are going to a new squadron in a year, I can afford to have this mentality; I’ve also seen it as a sophomore where they do a total 180, they are a lot more involved in their squadron, more committed to their development.”

What causes the range of responses? We observed two relevant factors in cadet responses: ownership and grit. One senior highlighted the importance of ownership, “That kind of person in general always blames someone (else) and doesn’t seek out opportunities to grow themselves, whereas if you have the mentality maybe I don’t know everything that is going on, maybe there is some interest they have in doing this to me, and I am going to focus on what I can do to develop myself as a person, those people I find grow and try to develop themselves.” There is also an element of grit required. One sophomore came to

⁵ Permanent Party are the military members in charge of cadets.

USAFA to be a doctor, but organic chemistry was too difficult, and she said, “I realized I wasn’t going to get a med school slot and it hindered my desire to learn, grow, and develop myself. I was in this really low state. I guess I was thinking I don’t want to be here, I don’t want to be in the Air Force anymore. USAFA itself hasn’t stopped me from wanting to develop myself.” Over time she was able to see that challenge as an opportunity to embrace other opportunities. Having a growth mindset and persistent willingness to develop requires perseverance and grit. How often do we let the challenges outside of our control influence us rather than focusing the opportunities within our control? Seizing these opportunities seems to be interrelated to a growth mindset.

Embracing a Growth Mindset

Maintaining a growth mindset in a competitive environment like USAFA is challenging. This mindset requires practice at taking risks by going outside of one’s comfort zone. A senior articulated this process well, “As a freshman you don’t want to get called out and are just trying to survive. Some experiences encouraged me to take more chances and not worry about failing in a leadership role. I have a growth mindset now. I’m more willing to take risks outside of my comfort zone—sophomore year, water survival was hard, I passed with a bad grade, but (it was) the 1st time when I was really personally challenged. Basic Cadet Training (BCT) was a team challenge. Being forced to take on an individual challenge and (when I) made it through it was worth it. Airfield has taught me that also... growth mindset.” A sophomore put it this way, “It is a weeding out process. All (cadets) are told they are the best of the best; but not all rise to the occasion. Once tiers are established here many don’t work to that challenge, many end up with a set mindset. It is (based on) personal motivation.”

The spectrum of cadet’s mindsets related to growth and development is wide. One senior put it this way, “Very big range. Not freshman year, but after that it’s all about what you pursue. People who take opportunities, who take any opportunity versus the ‘2.0 and go’ mentality, to graduate with minimum effort. Many are in the middle who sometimes pursue some opportunities but are not as driven. It is possible to slide by with minimal effort.” If it is possible to get by with little effort, then why do some cadets push hard to grow? The simple answer is they see the benefit of pushing themselves to excellence or as a senior put it, “You have to pursue the mission to get anything out of it.”

Focusing on the Collective Team Rather Than Solely Self-Interest

This is arguably the most important perspective to continually self-assess. People come to USAFA for a wide range of reasons, most of which are individually-focused: free education, prestige, to play division one sports, or often to set yourself up later in life. A sophomore outlined the range of cadet focus from the individual to the team, “Definitely a variety. Lots of people are here because they can be, and it benefits them on a less inspirational level. Wide range. Good opportunities.” Taking every opportunity to develop must be interwoven with a commitment to the Air Force Core Values including *Service Before Self*. During BCT, the focus is on building a team, by increasing stress, thus requiring cooperation and teamwork. USAFA defines a leader of character in three ways, two of which are collective-based: *lifting* people to their best possible selves; and *elevating performance* toward a common and noble purpose (CCLD, 2011).

Motivational factors promoting commitment to the collective fall under two main categories: (a) desire

to develop others and make USAFA better; and (b) a sense of service and responsibility to the Air Force and our country. One statement accentuating the former theme, “I’m committed to team/unit success. I came here with that, but service before self has been reinforced more now trying to help others reach their potential.” One statement emphasizing the latter theme, “It doesn’t always feel like it now, but we are the military and serving the greatest nation on earth. The people of our country and my teammates deserve my very best.” Another statement ties these two themes together, “We talked about developing yourself here, but it isn’t just about yourself... they focus so much on the team. If you focus on the team, you will also develop as an individual. That is a key part.” This collective focus ties back into the core mission of USAFA as a cadet articulated, “All in all, it’s producing someone of character who can lead others, that is the main goal and I take that personally. I want someone who is leading me to have integrity and be brought up under stressful circumstances, so they know how to handle things.”

This analysis was focused on cadet responses related to their commitment to their development as leaders of character. However, the same trends were true when examining cadet commitment to USAFA, with 26 of 34 factors coded under perspective. The same four categories existed, but in a slightly different order of prevalence: Seeing the big picture; focus on the collective team; focus on the opportunity versus challenge and having a growth mindset. The 34 cadets interviewed were a stratified random sampling representative of the demographics of the cadet population with an even mix of class year and gender and a representative sampling of race/ethnicity. It is apparent from the analysis of these cadet interviews—perspective is a significant factor in cadet personal development and overall success.

Applications for Enhancing Leadership Effectiveness

Inaccurate or incomplete perceptions can impede individual development and competency. A leader’s inability to critically analyze the perspectives they hold as well as the underlying assumptions and biases frustrate followers, impact culture and hinder group effectiveness. Yet, leaders cannot simply stop perceiving the world in distorted or unhelpful ways. The mind is designed for efficiency which dictates processes for making intuitive judgments about self and others (Kahneman, 2011). These judgments are often roughly accurate, but they can be mildly or substantially misguided as well. Furthermore, many of these processes are deeply entrenched and require intentional development of habitual practice in reflection and intervention. Leaders do not suspend perceptual errors because they have been made aware of them. Nevertheless, understanding these perceptual errors and biases can reduce misperceptions, increase opportunity for connection and enhance effectiveness. Here are a few key points of application for all developing leaders:

- **Be Willing to Consistently Question Your Beliefs and Perspectives.** Individuals are frequently overconfident in their intrapersonal and interpersonal skills. They believe too strongly in the accuracy of their judgments about themselves, others and situational contexts (Owens, Johnson, & Mitchell, 2013). While effectiveness is predicated on some degree of assertiveness and confidence, it must be balanced with genuine humility. We must ask questions. What am I missing? What are my biases preventing me from seeing? Whose voice isn’t being heard or represented? Am I genuinely open to considering insights that challenge my existing

belief? This is not advocating for paralysis by analysis, but rather thoughtful consideration for effective deliberation and decision making.

- **Develop a Growth Mindset.** Leaders should give themselves and others the opportunity to change. A growth mindset can enhance interpersonal effectiveness in fundamental ways. In teaching leadership, we have occasionally heard a false belief that leadership is a fixed skill – one either has it or they don't. One interesting response to this belief is to ask whether the person making this statement is going to believe that leadership is “fixed” when followers request mentoring for their own leadership development. Is the student going to feign a disingenuous belief in a follower's potential? Is the student going to tell such followers that their leadership development is hopeless? These questions should highlight the importance of a leader's authentic support for follower development. To do this, leaders need to believe that change is possible. This process works for self-improvement as well. Believing that one can improve makes leaders more willing to listen to feedback and put more effort into their own leadership and personal development (Dweck, 2006). USAFA's stated mission is to develop leaders of character, but in reality, this exists on two levels. In order to effectively develop leaders of character it takes the humility and willingness to continually develop as leaders of character. Staff and faculty must consistently set the example as lifelong learners seeking to get better daily.
- **Focus in on What is Within Your Control and Take Ownership of It.** Analysis from the cadet interviews for this study emphasized one

fundamental point. The ability to focus your effort on things within your control is directly tied to overall effectiveness. When evaluating a problem be a thumb pointer, not a finger pointer. First ask yourself how can what leadership intervention can I take improve the outcome? When looking at things you are unable to change, change the way you look at them. How can I reframe my thoughts to maintain a positive attitude, stay engaged and influence outcomes?

- **Build a Culture That Celebrates Diversity and Sees Feedback as a Gift.** Even though individuals cannot altogether discontinue their distorted processing of information, they can learn to temper it. There is evidence that people can adjust their snap judgments when they are motivated and cognitively able to do so (Lieberman, Gaunt, Gilbert, & Trope, 2002). For example, all people are susceptible to viewing others in the context of a group-level stereotype, but evidence suggests that individuals can inhibit the application of a stereotype by putting in effort to consider others as individuals (Devine, 1989). The importance of putting in effort to understand others dovetails with the notion of focusing on behavior when evaluating and providing feedback to others. Placing the focus on behavior essentially forces a leader to consider whether the other person truly exhibits behavior in line with the leader's perceptions. We can broaden this sentiment by encouraging leaders to question their beliefs about self and others by asking – what is the evidence? Taking time to focus on whether the evidence matches the belief should allow leaders some opportunity to correct misguided perceptions. This is predicated upon having a network of individuals with a

diverse backgrounds and perspectives, combined with building a culture with trust, open communication and critical feedback.

It is easy for leaders to say that they want followers to tell them the truth. It is much tougher for leaders to actually listen to critical feedback. Leaders might intend to be receptive to criticism, but this intention can become derailed by defensiveness that occurs in response to criticism, particularly criticism from followers who often have less experience and less formal authority. Leaders must practice the art of encouraging constructive criticism so they can get used to responding effectively to it. When leaders encourage and embrace feedback, they build a culture of honesty and transparency. This culture allows for the presentation of wide range of potential solutions, not just the ones that are likely to be endorsed by the leader. Additionally, it fosters the critical analysis necessary for effective decision-making.

Conclusion

When leaders recognize that their perceptions of self, others, and contexts are fallible; it's humbling. This realization provides the opportunity to be intentional and gain a more thorough understanding of ourselves, others, and our environment. Our development and effectiveness as leaders are predicated upon our willingness to continue expanding and evolving our understanding and application of many leadership principles. Leadership principles are not obvious statements that people simply employ. Leadership principles are a dynamic system of skills with competing priorities requiring a great deal of intentional practice. Thus, leadership principles should not function as obvious statements about what good leaders do, where students, who generally view themselves as good leaders, assume they do all these things. On the

contrary, leadership principles are in a sense questions that should provoke personal reflection about how the student can improve her or his skill level and manage these leadership principles when other principles also compete for the leader's time. Perspective-transformation is a mental and professional skill needed for warrior ethos proficiency and the continued pursuit for *Excellence in All We Do*.

Self-examination of our perspectives and how they influence our attitude, effort and actions is not only worthwhile but necessary. How well do I see beyond my personal needs to what is needed for team success? How well am I able to see the opportunities I have despite the existing challenges? How willing am I to take risks and embrace a growth-mindset? How well do I balance focusing on the immediate task and also seeing the big picture? Recognizing the limitations and gaps in our current perspectives should provide aspiring leaders the motivation to reexamine them critically. Admitting one's leadership shortcomings is hard, but it provides opportunity to expand interpersonal skills and enhance our development. Those who wish to improve their leadership effectiveness should regularly reexamine their perspectives with an open mind and critical eye.

♦ ♦ ♦

References

- Center for Character and Leadership Development (CCLD). (2011). *Developing leaders of character at the United States Air Force Academy: A conceptual framework*. United States Air Force Academy, Center for Character and Leadership Development. <https://caccapl.blob.core.usgovcloudapi.net/web/character-development-project/repository/developing-leaders-of-character-conceptual-framework.pdf>
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Sage Publishing.

- Devine, P. G. (1989). Stereotypes and prejudice: Their automatic and controlled components. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 56(1), 5-18.
- Johnson, D. W. (1975). Cooperativeness and social perspective taking. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 31(2), 241-244. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0076285>
- Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking, fast and slow*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Lieberman, M. D., Gaunt, R., Gilbert, D. T., & Trope, Y. (2002). Reflection and reflexion: A social cognitive neuroscience approach to attributional inference. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 34, 199-249.
- Mezirow, J. (1978). Perspective Transformation. *Adult Education*, 28(2), 100-110. <https://doi.org/10.1177/074171367802800202>
- Owens, B. P., Johnson, M. D., & Mitchell, T.R. (2013). Expressed humility in organizations: Implications for performance, teams, and leadership. *Organization Science*, 24(5), 1517-1538
- United States Air Force Academy (2020). Warrior Ethos as Airmen and Citizens. Retrieved December 14, 2020, from <https://www.usafa.edu/app/uploads/Warrior-Ethos-White-Paper-approved.pdf>

FEATURE ARTICLES

Why Physical Training Must Hold a Prominent Place in the Future of Training at the Air Force Academy

William DiRubbio, Cadet Second Class

Introduction

In his paper *Accelerate Change or Lose*, Chief of Staff of the Air Force General Charles Q. Brown, Jr. (2020) writes on the importance of change. “Today we operate in a dynamic environment with factors that have us taking various actions to continue the mission... if we don’t change – if we fail to adapt – we risk losing the certainty with which we have defended our national interests for decades” (p. 2). One such thing which will not change is the mission of the U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA), which is “To educate, train, and inspire men and women to become officers of character motivated to lead the United States Air and Space Forces in service to our Nation.” What has changed, though, is how we train these men and women.

Training has an interesting and polarizing connotation to cadets. Some will deem it the worst thing to ever happen to them, and the same number of people will respond the exact opposite; someone will note that they love their Training Officer (TO) and another can retort that they will forever hate their TO. At least, in

Cadet Second Class William DiRubbio (USAFA, Class of 2022) is the Cadet First Sergeant of Cadet Squadron 37. Prior to assuming this role, he served as the Group 4 Upgrades NCOIC; before that, he served as the Obstacle Course Superintendent during the class of 2024’s Basic Cadet Training. Cadet DiRubbio is currently majoring in Military and Strategic Studies with a minor in Nuclear Weapons and Strategy at the Air Force Academy. When he is not investigating the challenges of shaping military strategy to counter emerging threats, Cadet DiRubbio works with the Institute for Future Conflict, introducing the future fight conversation to his fellow cadets. Following graduation Cadet DiRubbio hopes to continue his studies towards a Master’s Degree in Strategic Studies and attend pilot training.

years past that was what training was. Today, in 2021 training is no longer; rather, it is *upgrades*. In the last year and a half, the Academy's Cadet Wing has been undergoing a drastic change in training, and an even more challenging attempt to change the training culture. Without a doubt the introduction of COVID into the equation has played a role in the less-than-optimal rollout of this different approach to training; yet COVID is but one factor. As the Academy continues toward institutionalizing the changes made in the last 18 months – and looking towards the future as Gen Brown directs – the Cadet Wing would be remiss to not also peer into the past – to review how the institution trained cadets before, and find the value in those methods. This review, I believe, would be both timely and of immense value for all parties involved.

I have had the opportunity to experience this shift in training (both practical and cultural) as a cadet rising through the ranks. A member of the class of (2022), I have experienced 4-degree¹ training before the shift, adapted immensely in how to train as a 3-degree, and now as a 2-degree, I am working to understand and thrive in the current upgrades system of development. The purpose of this article is not to bash this new system, nor is it to blindly praise the ways of old. Rather, it is to provide a view on how training could be accomplished at this institution, and more importantly, to start a conversation for all to join. This task - reviewing and introducing a training system - is daunting, and it is one which has no right answer nor can be accomplished by one person. By the end of this article, I hope to have given the reader a new perspective and hopefully a small appreciation for the experience of a cadet in this ever-changing time of accelerated

change. More importantly, though, I hope that the reader will become passionate enough to respond and join in the dialogue.

The Importance of Training

The purpose of training at USAFA in years past has arguably been twofold: developing fourth-class cadets and providing members of the upper three classes with leadership opportunities. Yet the importance of training expands past this. The training experience which USAFA offers binds all graduates, old and new. It may cause some to say “back when it was hard...”, but all graduates and cadets recognize that having an extensive training experience is a core component of the Academy experience. A USAFA fourth-class cadet will have the honor of experiencing an extremely difficult nine months until Recognition², and then a relatively easier remaining time. The value of this can be debated, but from a fraternity of graduates' perspective, it creates a common bond that separates us from our fellow brothers and sisters at the other service academies and their training systems. Fostering a fraternity is not exclusive to just the graduate community either; it is extremely important within the cadet ranks as well. Encountering and overcoming challenges – forging a bond under fire – has provided many cadets with the most valuable friendships and lessons attainable.

On the topic of Recognition, it is no secret that its value and place in contemporary training is a topic of hot debate. Yet with all of the arguments made, there remains a point which is scarcely discussed: the boost that it provides to *the esprit de corps* among cadets. As a four-degree, it was one of the only times in which all of the upper three-classes came together with such passion. The fraternity of men and women coming together

1 The Air Force Academy employs a four-class development system, with each class representing a different level of experience. Fourth-class cadets are freshmen, third-class sophomores, second-class juniors, and first-class seniors. Informally cadets can be referred to as “4/3/2 degrees” or “firsties” rather than first-class cadets.

2 Recognition is a 60-hour culminating event for fourth-class cadets. With the upper-three classes acting as cadre, the four-degrees face intense challenges designed to test physical and mental fortitude, as well as teamwork and leadership skills.

with one goal in mind; considering how quickly people become enveloped in their own tasks following four-degree year is extremely impressive. This is not exclusive to just the upper classmen either. As a four-degree you learn early that you cannot thrive as a cadet, and subsequently as a military member alone; you need to work together to accomplish goals. Recognition is the culmination of that lesson for cadets. Coupled with the weeks preceding, Recognition means a lot to the four-degree as it is not only the graduation toward becoming an upperclassmen, but it is also for many, the last time that everyone will work together on such a scale. This bonding is something which has arguably been lost in the chaos of a COVID-environment, wherein virtual work and various lockdowns have meant not leaving one's small room or truly interacting with people outside your roommate. This is especially of worry for the class of 2024, who had little to no opportunities for interaction with fellow four-degrees during Basic Cadet Training (BCT) and still continuing throughout their first semester. Due to the difficult decision to have the majority of their classes be virtual, the invaluable in-person classroom experience of meeting others has been lost.

When cadets and graduates are asked the question "Why did you stay at the Academy?" very few do not answer with "the people." It speaks to the incredible bond that is developed among cadets through their training, experiences, and leaning on one another. Yet the esprit de corps seems to be declining in the few years in which I have been a cadet. The introduction of COVID led to half of the Spring 2020 semester being uprooted, removing many invaluable bonding opportunities such as Recognition, Ring Dance³, and

³ Ring Dance is one of the most important events in a cadet's career. Occurring at the end of two-degree year, cadets will receive their class rings and be permitted to begin wearing one. The event also represents a transition toward becoming first-class cadets, as Graduation is the following week.

Graduation. Yet COVID was only one reason for the decline. Among the Cadet Wing, there was a feeling of lost purpose due to the sudden shutdown and uprooting of the training system. In hindsight, the decision to review and revise training was necessary, but it also created new issues. Cadets generally felt that a common bond – a part of their identity – had been stripped due to the change in training. The new system put in place during the Fall 2020 semester has done an adequate job in recreating this bond but there are more things, which extend past the scope of this article, to fully accomplish the task.

A note should be made regarding the word choice of training. When the decision was made to change the title of training to "upgrades many, myself included, laughed at the thought. The purpose behind the name change was to differentiate the methodologies: training can carry with it an unfavorable connotation considering the negative outcomes that have arose in the past (e.g., training violations, people feeling unfairly targeted and unwelcome, etc.). The argument was that the term training is a more apt definition for the "development of a specific skill" while we should be looking to be upgrading or "developing a breadth of skills". A word can mean different things to different people, and it is no different in this instance. The USAFA training which I experienced was never meant to develop certain skills, but instead a way of life. It focused on difficult training, encouraging stressful situations that forced one to push themselves. It taught me respect, developed pride in my heritage as an Airman and Academy cadet, and compelled cooperation with everyone, even those with whom you did not like or did not have anything in common with. It did not matter that it was called training versus other words such as upgrades or development. Instead of worrying about the word choice, the content behind that word is much

more important. This content is the true focus the discussions and forums had.

How Does Warrior Ethos Fit into the Equation?

The term *warrior ethos* has become quite the buzzword, or at least it has been one while I have been a cadet. It is used to describe more physically demanding education classes such as boxing, water survival, and combatives; or training events which involve rucking, land navigation, or challenges perceived as the more Army-like tasks. Yet this does not come close to doing the term justice. While true that these activities require tapping into one's personal warrior ethos, it is equally focused on honor, accountability, and excellence.

The official Academy definition for warrior ethos bridges the gap in understanding: "Warrior ethos is the embodiment of the warrior spirit: tough mindedness, tireless motivation, an unceasing vigilance, a willingness to sacrifice one's life for the country, if necessary, and a commitment to be the world's premier air, space and cyberspace force" (AFI 36-2014, 2019). Physical fitness is one – but arguably the most effective – method to demonstrate the ethos. It is this that should maintain prominence within the training curriculum. While its current place in training should be appreciated, in my opinion it remains ineffective at accomplishing its task for fourth-class cadets. If anything, the training situation forced upperclassmen to tap into the warrior spirit. They navigated through the unknown with a tough mind, tackled problems with tireless motivation, and found a way to make some training valuable to all four classes. These individuals should be applauded for their work.

Upperclassmen remain but one half of the equation, though. Across the Cadet Wing, a perceived consensus has arisen that accountability and teamwork at the

fourth-class level is at a low point. Typically, this is a point made for all new classes, with upperclassmen declaring "Class of XXXX is the worst class to come through here or they have it so easy." Arguably, though, this year has been different. A lack of attention to detail, a lack of accountability, a lack of teamwork, a lack of care for a select few—all these points and more came to the forefront of discussions with fellow cadets. Upperclassmen are not themselves free from the blame. Care for the rules and accountability have been of great issue over the last couple of years for a multitude of reasons. Yet there remains the cause which upperclassmen dedicate themselves to when training, which is to make the next class better. If a regression occurs among the new class, there must be an issue present.

That issue is that the warrior ethos is not focused on enough in the Cadet Wing. Coursework, teams and clubs, and personal time quickly becomes the focus during the academic year. Elements of the warrior spirit do have to be embodying for these tasks, but cadets do not think of them in that manner. Perhaps this requires cadets to gain that perspective. Or, warrior ethos needs to once again be one of - if not the top - concerns for training. There is a perceived correlation for some in the Cadet Wing between a lack of difficult physical training sessions and the lack of accountability; whether causation is present has yet to be determined. However, this should invite study by all parties, rather than shying away from the topic.

Personally, much was gained from the physical training sessions wherein I had to tap into the warrior spirit to accomplish my tasks. One of the most valuable experiences in my life was from this. During BCT, I was too slow and did not meet a time hack. As a result, I had to watch as my classmates performed physical training (PT) to make up for my mistake. The purpose was not

hazing, but to demonstrate that personal mistakes will cause consequences for others, not necessarily just oneself. This negative attention toward my classmates caused me to embody the warrior spirit, ensuring that I was performing at 100% while keeping myself and others accountable. Experiences like these and others such as “earning back” locks for locked drawers left open, are no longer present, and, in my opinion, the Cadet Wing is being hurt as a result.

The Way Forward

I do not mean to be only doom and gloom, as there is much hope for the future of training at the Air Force Academy. The foundation laid in the fall 2020 semester will prove invaluable for the future of this institution. Speaking with upperclassmen revealed that some found value in the new upgrades system. Accomplishing one of the Commandant’s primary goals, there were no training violations egregious enough to reach the group or her level. But there remains a lot of work to be done. This past semester as a Group Upgrades Non-Commissioned Officer In Charge (NCOIC)⁴ I had the opportunity to work closely with the Academy Military Training Instructors (AMTIs)⁵. In one meeting with fourth-class cadets, a question was posed regarding our thoughts on how the 2020 BCT was conducted. The AMTI responded that he and his fellow MTIs entered BCT expecting to have to instruct the cadet cadre

to reduce the intensity of the physical fitness placed on the basic cadets. Yet they found that for the great majority of cadre there was much hesitation to utilize physical fitness; having served as the Obstacle Course Superintendent, I concurred. The general consensus was that physical fitness as a tool in the cadre’s toolbox was highly situational and overall not effective (i.e., 90 seconds of work, then at least 30 minutes to an hour of rest). This manner of cadre being theoretically bound to an extreme set of rules was overall not sustainable,

That issue is that the warrior ethos is not focused on enough in the Cadet Wing. Coursework, teams and clubs, and personal time quickly becomes the focus during the academic year. Elements of the warrior spirit do have to be embodying for these tasks, but cadets do not think of them in that manner.

and hurt the physical development of the class of 2024⁶. Further, there was a general fear over receiving disciplinary action for a perceived training violation, even if one had not occurred. To this end, a continuing development of trust between cadets and permanent party (remembering that it is a two-way street) regarding physical training must be a priority.

Conclusion

Not only this, based on the previous discussion I would like to offer several points.

⁴ A junior level position, the Group Upgrades NCOIC (along with the Officer) oversees the training progress of the 10 squadrons in their group. The role also involves working closely with both Wing-level cadet leadership and Group-level Officers and Senior Non-Commissioned Officers (SNCOs).

⁵ Military Training Instructors (MTIs) are enlisted personnel who develop and teach the next generation of enlisted airmen through Basic Military Training at Lackland AFB. AMTIs denotes those MTIs who are stationed at the Air Force Academy. Their purpose is to make recommendations to the Training Division and provide their unique perspective as professional trainers to cadets.

⁶ Exiting BCT the class had achieved the highest average Aerobic Fitness Test (AFT) scores ever and the lowest average Physical Fitness Test (PFT) scores in history. While impressive, during the Academic Year the PFT accounts for 50% of the Physical Education Average and the AFT 15%.

Start thinking of different “purposes” for training.

For instance, one of the major complaints of the manner in which training was performed two years ago was that it was “preparation for the 20th century fight” and that it’s incorrect to not provide a “why.” What this argues, though, is that in preparing for the 21st century fight we can assume that the “fog of war” has suddenly disappeared, or that all of the information will be known prior to a decision—a reality which we all know is impossible. Instead, fourth-class cadets should be able to experience training sessions with no knowledge of its purpose. During the debriefing, it should then be explained to the four-degrees that the purpose of the session was to execute tasks without a known purpose nor perfect information. As a personal anecdote, last semester I moved rooms five times between coming back for the summer and moving between the hotels and the Academy. In one such move, my squadron mates and I had 36 hours’ notice. At the time we had lived in the area which quickly became filled by residents of Q&I⁷. It was a matter of when, not if, we would have to move again.

Sharing this anecdote is important as I fell back on the training I received during 4-degree year to be better prepared. Just as I had two years prior, I was working in an environment of uncertainty and sometimes struggle. Having experienced it before, I was able to make the mental shift to thrive in the midst of the dynamic times. By not giving 4-degrees this opportunity, to essentially grant them perfect information from the beginning, it robs them of this important learning opportunity. Further, it inspires them when in leadership positions to provide more information when possible, empathizing with others when going through a time of uncertainty. There is

⁷ Quarantine and Isolation. The location within the Sijan Tower dormitory where COVID positive, symptomatic and contact traced cadets are moved for monitoring and to stop the spread of COVID-19.

a time and a place for everything, including tough physical training sessions. With proper planning and oversight shared with the appropriate individuals (e.g., Air Officer Commanding-AOC/Academy Military Trainer-AMT, senior squadron cadet leadership, cadet points of contact for the training session), these sessions should absolutely be permitted to occur. A concern will arise regarding whether training violations would happen, and in a developmental training environment, they likely could. But these should be treated as learning moments for all involved, and more intrusive rules from higher levels should not be introduced. This provides upperclassmen leadership opportunities and lessons that they otherwise would not have received.

Stop refusing to change. This message is for myself and my fellow cadets. While we may have been apprehensive at first with the new direction that training has taken, this does not excuse our responsibility to adapt to the new system. As one 2019 USAFA graduate told my basic training flight, “Change is good. Transition is hard.” We need to find the valuable within the system and focus on that. After graduation we will be joining an institution that is much harder to change, and much more stuck in its ways. Focusing on the good will mean that we can make the shift from an unmotivated acceptance of the new system to a motivated one. This does not mean blind acceptance of the status quo nor of all changes. The appropriate amount of frustration can demonstrate the importance of something, but the key is finding the appropriate amount. We need to come to a better understanding that once concerns have been voiced and heard, it is our responsibility to make the best of the situation at hand.

Continue to push for a 4-class training system.

While the phrase has become a buzzword and a source of discontent, it remains a great idea in concept. What needs work, in this author’s opinion, is the execution.

This requires genuine buy-in from upper classmen, and influencing that a 4-class system is important and beneficial. There are skills and lessons that need to be taught at an early point in one's time in uniform, and others that will be best utilized and understood in subsequent years. As much as I did not enjoy it, learning how to deal with a bureaucracy has been extremely beneficial and has shaped my understanding of how to effectively approach change within an organization.

“Accelerate Change or Lose.” All U.S. Airmen and Guardians recognize the importance of those four words. It represents posturing toward the future fight, and moving past the battles that have dominated the geopolitical landscape for the last 20 years. For the Air Force Academy, though, too rapid and drastic of a change risks losing a crucial element of the cadet experience. We risk losing out on the challenges which physical fitness-based training presents, the bonds forged, and the stories born. A balanced approach, recognizing the future yet honoring the past, is the best manner toward building a training system that accomplishes all which is important to the cadet, the graduate community, and the services that await us after graduation.

♦ ♦ ♦

References

Brown, C. Q., Jr. (2020). Accelerate Change or Lose. *US Air Force*. <https://www.airforcemag.com/app/uploads/2020/09/CSAF-22-Strategic-Approach-Accelerate-Change-or-Lose-31-Aug-2020.pdf>

Air Force Instruction 36-2014 (2019). *Pre-Commissioning Programs*. https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af_a1/publication/afi36-2014/afi36-2014.pdf

FEATURE ARTICLES

Talking and Listening to Build a Stronger Military: Cosmopolitan Communication as an Essential Skill of Military Leader Development

Jacqueline Whitt, U.S. Army War College

Susan Steen, Air University

ABSTRACT

The United States military is a highly respected national institution. Military personnel are called to represent and defend American values and build American identity, but these ideas are not fixed. In fact, the question of what it means to be “American,” is contested ground, and the experience of what it means to be “American” varies based on race, gender, and many other categories of demographic difference. In the wake of significant and growing political division and unrest, senior American military leaders have called on the force to engage in hard conversations about these topics. However, without a roadmap for guiding such largely subjective and often emotionally charged discussions, the results could yield unintended consequences. This paper offers a theoretical and practical toolkit for engaging in such conversations, drawing from the Coordinated Management of Meaning theory and its particular application in Cosmopolitan Communication approaches and perspectives. The authors argue that by engaging in this communicative work, military leaders can acquire necessary skills and insights to potentially build a stronger, more inclusive and ultimately more effective military.

Introduction

Imagine this scene: Airmen are deployed in August 2017, and they are trying their best to keep up with the news at home while focusing on the mission at hand. Partisan divisions in the United States over a variety of issues have dominated the news, but conversations within the Air Force are subdued and difficult due to the professional norm of remaining apolitical and nonpartisan. The group of airmen doesn't really know what to make of the controversy about Confederate statues or the Black Lives Matter movement, but like many Americans, they cannot really articulate why. The airmen know things are not as they should be, yet they are unsure how to talk about what they see. As news coverage of the killing of Heather Heyer, and injury of 19 counter-protestors at a "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, VA, reaches their unit, one of the airmen is particularly perplexed and disturbed.

Following his return to the United States, the airman finds himself at an Air Force-sponsored conference on military cultural competence and, at the end of a presentation, he gathers the courage to tell his story and to ask his question. This white airman asks for help in making sense of the events in Charlottesville, which seem far removed from the ideals he believes U.S. military service is supposed to represent and protect. The country he sees on the news feels very different from the country he thought he knew, and nobody in his unit seemed to know how to talk to each other about it. He sums up his concerns by saying, "This isn't us . . . this is not who we are . . . this isn't America."

But across the auditorium, a black female airman's raised eyebrow, sideways glance, and sigh suggest a different perspective. Her body language says: "It may not be your America, but it seems pretty much in line with mine." The presenters, catching her expression, pause before praising the first airman's courage in raising difficult questions about how to interpret and talk about this traumatic event. They go on to say that while most airmen, and probably most in the audience, would agree that the Charlottesville events represented a tragic episode, there may be diverse

Dr. Jacqueline E. Whitt is the Dwight D. Eisenhower Chair of National Security and Associate Professor of Strategy at the US Army War College. She holds a PhD in military history from UNC Chapel Hill and writes about the social and cultural history of the post-1945 US military, focusing on issues of race, religion, gender, and sexuality. She is the author of *Bringing God to Men: American Military Chaplains and the Vietnam War* (UNC 2014) and co-author of the second edition of *Grunts: The American Combat Soldier in Vietnam* (Routledge 2020). She is also the Editor-in-Chief of *WAR ROOM*, the online journal of the US Army War College.

Dr. Susan Steen is the Assistant Professor of Cross-Cultural Communication at the U.S. Air Force Culture and Language Center (AFCLC). She earned her Ph.D. in Communication from The University of Southern Mississippi in 2007 and held a variety of positions in the field of international education prior to joining AFCLC in 2015. Dr. Steen's scholarship involves intercultural, interpersonal, and organizational communication, and most recently has focused on the use of Cosmopolitan Communication in bridging conflict and promoting intercultural effectiveness. She is the lead author of "Incorporating Cosmopolitan Communication into Diverse Teaching and Training Contexts: Considerations from our work with Military Students and Veterans" in the *Handbook of Communication Training* (Routledge, 2018).

viewpoints on whether they constitute a departure from American history.

In that auditorium, this brief exchange opened up a whole range of questions, important for American military personnel to reflect upon and talk about: What does it mean to be an American? Whose experiences and perspectives are accepted as normative? What do different ideas about American identity and values mean when it is time for American service members to deploy in service of the state? Why does it matter that American service members understand and acknowledge the complexity within their own society as long as they are competent and well trained, effectively carrying out orders in service of broader national security objectives?

These are more than rhetorical or philosophical questions. Our collective responses to these questions should shape training and education within the American armed forces, and military leaders must be equipped to facilitate the difficult conversations that might help answer such questions. While engaging in hard conversations may induce some level of discomfort in the short term, navigating and leading them, will result in a stronger military in the long term.

American service members need a sophisticated understanding of American history, identity, society, and culture, and its inherent tensions and complexities. The United States military is a national institution, so the organization should reflect national interests and values. But there may be competing interpretations about what these are, and about what it means to be an American. Military personnel at every level should be aware of these differences, and senior military leaders, commanders, senior noncommissioned officers, mentors, and educators in military-academic

institutions should devote serious attention and resources to helping American soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines understand and confront them. Leading such conversations has the potential to strengthen the American warrior ethos by expecting and modeling perspective taking, empathetic leadership, and moral courage. Such ongoing mentoring, leader development, and education, if done well, may ultimately strengthen the health and effectiveness of military units.

In this article, we suggest that American military leaders have a duty to help all service members recognize and acknowledge the diverse experiences and perspectives among their ranks. Such diversity has long been a part of espoused American identity and values and enables the American military to operate effectively as a national institution. To help leaders meet the challenge of leading a diverse organization in the twenty-first century, we propose an approach for developing this kind of awareness based upon the practical theory of Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) and its intellectual relative, Cosmopolitan Communication.

Whose Values? Whose Interests? Whose Experiences?

The need for leaders who are capable of cultivating and managing diverse perspectives on complex social issues, especially those surrounding diversity, equity, and inclusion, is perhaps more pressing now than ever. In the last few years, the United States has been rocked by a series of events—from protests, to police violence, the #MeToo movement, to a violent assault at the U.S. Capitol—that seem to demand interpretation, explanation, justice, and reconciliation. The military has not been immune from the effects of these deep fissures, but military organizations and leaders have sometimes had difficulty confronting these issues

directly because they are fundamentally *political* ones, and dealing with them directly may challenge service members' deeply-held assumptions and norms that the military should be an apolitical institution in the United States.

In a few short months in 2020, military leaders from every service called on service members and civilian employees to engage in critical self-reflection, listening, conversation, and action to ensure the American military is modeling, as well as defending, American values. Senior leaders in the Army, including Secretary of the Army Ryan McCarthy, Chief of Staff of the Army General James McConville, and Sergeant Major of the Army Michael Grinston wrote: "To Army leaders of all ranks, listen to your people, but don't wait for them to come to you. Go to them. Ask the uncomfortable questions. Lead with compassion and humility, and create an environment in which people feel comfortable expressing grievances" (2020, para. 3). In June 2020, General David Goldfein, then Chief of Staff of the Air Force, urged Air Force members to read then Chief Master Sergeant Kaleth Wright's Op-Ed, WHO AM I, and issued a call to commanders: "Discussing our different life experiences and viewpoints can be tough, uncomfortable, and therefore often avoided. But we have been presented a crisis. We can no longer walk by this problem" (2020, para. 3).

As powerful as these statements are, an underlying assumption seems to be that the nation's identity, values, and interests are widely known and agreed upon, their meanings fixed, self-evident, and uncontested. We suggest they are anything but. Rather, they are dynamic and evolving ideas that have rhetorical, cultural, and political power. From a social constructionist perspective, we might say that there are values espoused, and there are values enacted;

these are not always one and the same. The American government and American citizens ask American service members to protect and defend the nation, to uphold national values, and to serve and sacrifice in support of these objectives. In return, the country—its citizens, leaders, and institutions—owes it to service members serious conversations about what these core values and ideas mean. The imperative for this work seems clear, as the country is in the midst of engaging serious and difficult conversations about the interplay of race, sexuality, religion, region, class, gender, and immigration on American national identity. Engaging in these conversations will require moral courage, resilience, and fortitude—essential to the warrior ethos the country seeks to develop in its service members. They will not be easy, and some of them may reveal systemic and difficult problems that must be remedied. Leaders who embrace the contemporary warrior ethos will not shy away from the challenge.

Understanding (and Embracing) Complexity

Service members come from all over the United States, and they bring with them a range of knowledge and perspectives, and a host of life experiences. Increasingly, among newly enlisted or commissioned military members, these perspectives include a narrower and narrower representation of the diversity of the American nation in terms of region, the legacy of family service, and socio-economic status (CFR, 2020). At the same time, the American military of the twenty-first century is as diverse as it ever has been in terms of race and ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and other surface measures of diversity (Parker et al., 2017).

The idea that the United States military might be an important institution for building and defining

a uniquely American identity is not new. The United States military, from the American Revolution on, has been a powerful nationalizing force. The Continental Army was a key symbol in uniting rebels from different colonies into an American fighting force, which could become the foundation for a new nation (Royster, 2011). In *Americans All*, an examination of the integration of foreign-born soldiers in the American Army of World War I, Nancy Gentile Ford argues that the military, as an institution, created space for celebrating both American nationalist and ethnic identities (Gentile Ford, 2001). Thomas Brusino argues that the experience of the Second World War “caused a dramatic shift from intolerance to tolerance in white ethnic and religious relations in America.” (2010, p. 3). Ron Krebs convincingly argues that increased access to the rights and obligations of citizenship is at least partly won through successful military service (2006). All of this together means that military service *itself* has been a recognized pathway, historically, for Americans to form a collective identity. We suggest that, at this critical juncture, if concrete and specific discussions—about this identity, about defining America’s most cherished values, about recent events that might challenge assumptions and lead to disparate viewpoints and opinions—are not held intentionally, American military leaders may miss an opportunity to contribute constructively to a national debate on these important matters.

Consider, for instance, how Americans understand *freedom* and *democracy*—two ideas that most Americans would agree are central to American national identity. From the earliest days when European settler colonists established themselves in North America, freedom was a watchword for some, while being denied to others. Democracy has likewise been a messy endeavor. The Articles of Confederation,

ratified in 1781, were scrapped just six years later. Drafting the U.S. Constitution involved contentious debates by delegates on issues including representation and slavery. The problem of slavery would eventually rend the country, resulting in secession and war. Jim Crow laws created racial injustices whose legacies remain well into the twenty-first century. Women were not franchised until 1919 (and then, only white women), and their freedom of movement and bodily autonomy have been limited by law and custom, which often have required a husband’s or father’s permission to access certain rights. Access to voting, fundamental to democratic participation, is still uneven across racial groups in the United States, with Black Americans routinely waiting longer to cast a vote than white Americans and non-white groups having lower voter registration rates than white Americans (Chen et al., 2019; Soloman et al., 2019; Minnis and Shah, 2020). The experience of American democracy and American freedom—and consequently our interpretations of and the stories we tell about them—is unequal and differentiated, especially by race, ethnicity, gender, and citizenship status.

Moving Toward a “Cosmopolitan” Solution

One way military leaders and educators might support service members and the civilians who work alongside them is to address divergent perspectives and experiences about complex social issues through the inclusion of Cosmopolitan Communication approaches and techniques in our teaching and training. The Cosmopolitan Communication model (Pearce, 1989) offers ways to consider difference among people and perspectives while simultaneously acknowledging commonality—holding these in tension, and thus in balance, with one another. It involves creating capacity for recognizing and respecting diverse worldviews and

offers some strategies for managing potentially difficult interactions across a range of social contexts. Good leaders cultivate teams, and teams are most effective when they share purpose, and value and trust each other. Cosmopolitan Communication principles offer leaders one way to acknowledge diverse perspectives and strengthen communication in their teams.

Cosmopolitan Communication derives from the Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) Theory (Pearce & Cronen, 1980), which views communication as a primary force in creating social reality, not simply a means of transmitting information between sender and receiver. CMM focuses on the *process* of communication and considers its *forms* as important to meaning-making as the informational content in any given message. It is a practical theory whose approaches and heuristics have been usefully applied to public discourse involving polemic issues and polarized positions. Its utility is due, in part, to CMM's social constructionist view of communicating as shaping social reality, which denotes a certain agency in how individuals make meaning, engage in communicative practice, and manage difficult conversations. Steen, Mackenzie & Buechner (2018) argue that CMM is "a particularly useful concept to be taught to populations where diversity and complexity of experience—and potential for conflicting worldviews—are considerations" (p. 402). As the preferred form of communication identified by CMM Theory, Cosmopolitan Communication offers helpful ways to approach difference and embodies strategies for more effective interaction among diverse perspectives, peoples, and cultures.

Three qualities key to understanding Cosmopolitan Communication are coherence, coordination, and mystery. In interaction, people engage simultaneously

in coordination (of collective action); experiencing *coherence* (collective sense-making and interpretation); and dealing with the presence and effects of *mystery*, or things that cannot be predicted, such as what one could have otherwise said and done - stories left untold, unanticipated interpretations, different stories that might have been used to make sense of an interaction. A leader must balance these elements to help the group create shared meaning while getting things done and being alert for the unexpected or emergent.

According to Pearce (2004), there are certain responsibilities inherent to the development of Cosmopolitan Communication. The first of these is to stop thinking about communication in terms of messages, channels, and receivers, and to instead think in terms of patterns, systems and relationships. Next is to have a third-party perspective or to recognize one's own stories as merely one set among many; to treat others' stories with interest and respect; and to examine situations from the perspectives of others, as well as one's own. Making this kind of change comes with personal development, or a shift in the way the leader looks at the world.

Moving from "Us and Them" to "All of Us"

Pearce described communication in multicultural societies and contexts as developing upwards through four levels, or forms: monocultural, ethnocentric, modernistic, and cosmopolitan (1989). The primary difference among these forms is the way that "others," and their sense-making resources and practices, are regarded and treated (Parrish-Sprowl, 2014; Penman & Jensen, 2019). Practically, these forms determine how members of a given society behave toward and interact with others. "Are they treated "as 'native' or non-native, or 'like us', or 'not like us?'" (Penman & Jensen, 2019,

p. 61). For example, within a particular cultural group, members might assume that other members of the group think and act much like they do, thereby treating them like “us.” Defining other people as being “like us” means identifying with a common set of values, practices, and stories, which enables fairly standard interpretations of events and circumstances.

Are one’s own ways seen as the best (or perhaps the only) ways to make sense of the world; or are others’ ways, truths, and stories given legitimacy and validity?

But this assumption of similarity does not always hold up, as this paper’s initial anecdote demonstrated. The consequence of such misidentification is that a group may use the same words to signify different things, and/or hold different interpretations of historical and contemporary events that are never brought to the surface because of an assumption of shared identity and interpretation. These failed assumptions of likeness leave important differences related to identity and self-awareness just under the surface, primed to induce miscommunication, misunderstanding, and mistrust amongst people who must (in the case of our military personnel), work together to accomplish vital missions. This is one reason we argue that it is important to recognize and acknowledge different perspectives on issues related to American identity, values, and diversity in American society.

The second distinction among the communication forms lies in how others’ sense-making resources (e.g., their worldviews, perspectives, assumptions, values, beliefs) are regarded. Are one’s own resources and

practices considered inviolate, as truth, as fact—while others’ are viewed as foolish or false? Are one’s own ways seen as the best (or perhaps the only) ways to make sense of the world; or are others’ ways, truths, and stories given legitimacy and validity?

Creating More Common Ground: Another Look at Charlottesville

This article opened with the scenario of an airman asking hard questions as he tried to make sense of the traumatic events of Charlottesville. Applying Cosmopolitan Communication framing, we will next consider how this approach may help to reconcile conflicting perceptions. We might begin by asking ourselves how others’ interpretations of Charlottesville’s events; divergent experiences of different individuals and groups in American society; and disparate perspectives about what it means to be American may be acknowledged as authentic, even if these differ from our own? Through each form or level described below, we will see how the responses to such questions evolve.

The *monocultural* pattern of communication embodies a perspective in which all are considered “local natives.” There is only one group (us), and one set of stories, interpretations, and practices. Everyone is considered to be more or less the same, and there is little or no awareness of the possibility of difference. A person with a monocultural worldview sees his or her world as the world and assumes that others in this world are just like him or her, with the same story. There is only one world, one truth, and one “us.” A person who comes from a monocultural perspective would likely reject outright the notion that that the violence at the demonstrations was in any way representative of America or Americans, dismissing it as an aberration. Such a view would not recognize a different

interpretation of the episode as an unfortunate legacy from a troubled history of white supremacy whose reach still haunts us today. In trying to make sense of how the Charlottesville events could occur and finding it difficult to reconcile with the America that he loves and serves, but recognizing that something larger is at play he can't put his finger on, the airman is demonstrating a shift from a monocultural perspective to one that acknowledges a different possibility, a different interpretation of events.

The next level of communication within Pearce's framework is the ethnocentric form. Herein there is an awareness of difference, with sharp distinctions drawn between "us" and "them," "our" ways and "their" ways. People may share tight bonds with those in their own group and eschew interaction with those who are different, drawing clear boundaries between insiders and outsiders. The ethnocentric perspective regards others' stories, beliefs, and practices with skepticism or suspicion, viewing them as threatening or undermining locals' own, and thus as inferior or wrong.

An ethnocentric approach to the discussion of the Charlottesville violence might concede: "Yes, there are different voices and perspectives on this matter. Some might suggest that what occurred in Charlottesville, while dreadful, is not inconsistent with their understanding of the American story—the good, the bad, and the ugly. But I believe that event is a deviation. It doesn't fit our American narrative, and it is not who we are. People who believe otherwise do not understand how America works or what it truly means to be American. They are wrong, and these competing interpretations are part of the problem we face in our country."

The *modernistic* perspective recognizes an array of stories, interpretations, and practices, and considers

most to have intrinsic merit and value as long as they involve some kind of 'Western progress' motif. Parrish-Sprowl (2014, p. 301) suggests in that the "absence of any preferred set of stories, combined with the ever-changing set of stories based on progress, leaves those enmeshed in modernity form without a sense of place and exhausted . . . with no effort to preserve or protect" local stories and practices. In other words, in recognizing everyone else's stories and ways as ok, but not privileging their own group's, people are left with no glue to bind them together, which presents a problem for cohesion—for the development of group identity, values, and customs.

A modernistic interpretation of the Charlottesville events might go something like this: "There are so many stories about the Charlottesville protests and violence. Some of these resonate with some groups, while different stories are meaningful to other groups. Why bother trying to determine which stories make more sense? Let's not worry about making collective meaning about what is going on; we can simply all carry on with our own understanding."

Cosmopolitan Communication, on the other hand, acknowledges and values the ways that people, their perspectives, and their sense-making resources are at once similar and different. It takes into account group differences but does not consider being different as being inferior, and deliberately shades the boundaries between "us" and "them" (indeed, within this framework, everyone is both "us" and "them.") According to Penman and Jensen (2019), the Cosmopolitan form strains the taxonomy set up by the two dimensions of how others are treated and how their resources are regarded, because it "simultaneously treats others as natives and not-natives" and treats their stories and resources with respect without sacrificing insiders' cherished values and ways, thus embodying

a “both/and logic that is possible because of the recognition that all cultures are socially constructed in communication” (p.66). Competing perspectives are therefore not problematic; members of a group can value their own perspectives, stories, and interpretation of events while simultaneously recognizing others’ as valid, legitimate, and important to them, without having to agree or disagree, approve or disapprove.

In considering Charlottesville’s tragic events and the ensuing aftermath, a Cosmopolitan approach might sound like this: “I believe that the America showcased in the Charlottesville protests is not the America I know and love. But I recognize that others may have a very different interpretation of this event—one that may be painful for me to hear and even harder for me to believe. It is an alternative perspective that suggests the America depicted in Charlottesville is not an aberration or anomaly—it was far from the first time (and unlikely to be the last time) that racially-motivated hatred and violence have marked public interactions. I may not like this perspective, but I acknowledge that it is real to others, and that their perspective matters. Maybe I can ask some questions to understand better what they are trying to say.”

Cosmopolitan Communication and Leadership

As we have just seen, a Cosmopolitan Communication perspective creates a space in which reaching a single agreed-upon interpretation is not the goal. Rather, the space created by Cosmopolitan Communication enables a recognition of both common ground and departure points, and requires an on-going, deliberate process of engaging with and respecting others, and their divergent points of view. The Cosmopolitan form does not necessarily end in agreement or compromise, but holds in tension (and thus, in balance) different ways of looking at the world.

Such a space may be difficult to imagine in a military context, where uniformity, conformity, hierarchy, collective identity, and othering are baked into the culture and perhaps even the purpose of the institution. Putting on the uniform is supposed to elide difference and erase individual identity—in uniform, an individual represents the embodiment of both the state’s power and its values. On the opposite side, the enemy is literally and figuratively, “othered.” The enemy cannot be like us. Military culture is therefore primed toward ethnocentric forms of communication, but it does not have to be that way. We argue in some cases it may be effective for building resilience and cohesion for military leaders to cultivate a cosmopolitan approach toward communication, which emphasizes the *coordination* of meaning over coherence. This task is not simple, and in a military environment, such an approach might even be seen as radical. It is, however, worth the effort, because leaders who have the skills to hold space for and facilitate these conversations will enable important systemic and cultural change.

Cultivating Cosmopolitan Communication Perspectives

We do not suggest that incorporating Cosmopolitan Communication perspectives into military organizations will resolve challenges that are as old as the country’s founding. Cosmopolitan Communication is not the right tool, for example, for confronting disinformation in the ranks. But it can help where experiences and interpretations are at the center of disagreements. In such cases, we argue that developing this leadership capacity can help the American military improve cohesiveness, and thereby, readiness and operational effectiveness. Specifically, leaders should model these concepts to help service members with the process of recognizing and valuing the diverse perspectives and experiences of those

servicing alongside them. It is a tool for acknowledging difference while also recognizing common ground.

Leaders must take responsibility for facilitating these important and difficult conversations and can equip themselves with tools to enable and encourage their peers and subordinates to cultivate a Cosmopolitan Communication perspective. Classroom settings, from commissioning sources such as Professional Military Education (PME) and Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) education, offers opportunities to explicitly model and teach Cosmopolitan Communication techniques and principles. In such settings case studies, critical incident methodologies, and circular questioning (Steen et al., 2018) are all potential techniques. Of these approaches, circular (or systemic) questioning offers perhaps the most useful tool for engaging in informal or semi-structured conversations, such as might also occur outside a classroom setting within established groups such as military units. Therefore, we focus here on that technique by examining how it might be applied in the initial scenario.

Circular questioning represents a significant advance in the development of leadership skills for working with differing perspectives and heading off potential conflict within units. Chen (2014) describes systemic (or circular) questioning as a “powerful tool for demonstrating connections and revealing relationships within and between groups, organizations, and communities” (p. 173). Circular questioning emphasizes that points of difference are constructed in relational context as opposed to focusing on “facts;” thus, the technique is “ideally suited to the sorts of social issues that divide communities and groups” (Chen, 2014, p. 173). It has been successfully used in contexts ranging

from family therapy, to debriefing among healthcare teams, to community dialogue involving contentious issues (for an extended example of the latter, see Spano, 2001; Chen, 2004) and has likewise been employed in educational settings to help students explore their own assumptions and positions on various topics, and to

... we argue that developing this leadership capacity can help the American military improve cohesiveness, and thereby, readiness and operational effectiveness.

identify commonalities among different value systems or common ground on controversial subjects (Steen et al., 2018). While circular questioning is not itself neutral or value-free, it is an accessible method that can help participants better understand different levels of context, and engage in reframing of their own and others’ stories in meaningful ways (Rossmann, 1995).

Circular Questioning and Charlottesville

Reflecting back to our initial scenario of the airman struggling to reconcile Charlottesville’s events with the America he believes in, and another airman’s perspective on the events as not incompatible with her own understanding of the American experience, we might engage a circular (or systemic) questioning approach to carefully elicit further discussion among the group. We could ask descriptive questions to prompt others to share their perspectives and experiences on the events in Charlottesville and help ascertain what they know and believe about not only this episode, but also the larger history of race and racial discrimination in America. For example, by asking participants in the conversation to describe what they observed, we might uncover

different perspectives by thinking about the words we use to describe who was there and what happened. Do our audience members imagine protestors and counter-protesters, demonstrators, innocent bystanders, white supremacists, activists, or agitators? Was it a march, a rally, a demonstration, a protest, a riot, a mob? How does our language reflect our experience and shape our perspectives? We could likewise ask participants how they would describe Charlottesville's events in terms of its historical nature—that is, is it divergent from or consistent with their understanding of American history. We could further ask them to imagine who else might describe it as the former, or the latter.

Additionally, we could use reflective questions to engage a historical perspective on the issue and expand the timeline and/or the context, enabling creation of common ground among the participants. For example, we might ask audience members to consider how they would interpret and explain the significance of the events in Charlottesville had they occurred in 1880 vs. now, and what has changed/not changed in the time since. Or we could ask them to reflect upon how we might perceive and describe these events had they occurred in a different country, instead of the United States. In our experience, using circular questions such as these can facilitate perspective-taking, depersonalize positions, and prevent conflict between people from diverse backgrounds from spiraling out of control, thus enabling groups to construct shared perspectives (although not necessarily agreement) by encouraging participants to “draw connections between their personal stories and their position, and between their own and others’ voices” (Chen, 2014, p. 175) in meaningful ways.

In addition to the examples we have already provided of Cosmopolitan Communication dynamics and circular questioning, Penman and Jensen (2019) suggest a number of other ways to strengthen cosmopolitan

perspectives and build skills to bridge differences. Some of these include:

- developing genuine curiosity about others’ stories,
- considering biases as starting points for understanding, rather than “end points to be defended or protected from exploration”,
- deep, holistic listening (being fully present, listening for what is said and unsaid, and listening for meanings that are larger than what is occurring in any one episode or incident), and
- dialogic skills that feature the capacity to hold in tension one’s own valued traditions, beliefs and practices while enacting an openness and appreciation for others’ (p. 70).

Developing these skillsets is an important element of professional development for military leaders to empower them to engage in and lead meaningful exchanges and conversations about important, but controversial and challenging, subjects. Familiarization with Cosmopolitan Communication principles may be especially useful in officer commissioning sources, PME, and in NCO education. This cadre of leaders can then incorporate these techniques into the conversations, professional development, and training in military units.

Avoiding Mixed Signals in Leadership Communication

Before we go further, it is important to note that CMM and Cosmopolitan Communication do not require that discriminatory or bigoted viewpoints are positions that must be accepted or integrated. At the same time, they mitigate against the social pressure to label other perspectives as such, which often effectively shuts down conversation. Instead, we suggest that Cosmopolitan Communication perspectives could create openings to help others reconstruct their own interpretations and stories through engaging strategies such as systemic

questioning, helping participants “reflect on their social standing in the community and create a sense of ‘grouping’ so they can see and hear the complex process by which differences, inequalities, power, and privilege are socially created in interaction” (Chen, 2014, p. 175). Cosmopolitan Communication perspectives therefore offer ways to acknowledge and account for divergent perspectives while continuing the engagement of difficult conversations.

While the broader social project may include ongoing dialogue between different groups and viewpoints, there is the prospect of real harm in asking people from underrepresented and minoritized groups to work alongside others who may hold discriminatory or bigoted views in the name of continuing hard conversations. Adopting Cosmopolitan Communication approaches is not a magic bullet, but these tools offer a framework for engaging in the hard conversations that leaders are calling for. It asks military leaders and military members to work through these moments of discomfort and disagreement rather than striving to eliminate the source of the discomfort altogether. Even so, the military, given its particular mission and requirements, may need to draw some red lines for expressing views or supporting organizations that are antithetical or hostile to its values or to the United States and its government.

We agree with military senior leaders that hard conversations are necessary, but hard conversations alone are insufficient to create and sustain lasting organizational cultural change. Hard conversations are worthwhile, but leaders must be careful to avoid two traps: one, that the burden of these hard conversations falls disproportionately on minoritized members of the community and second, that leaders mistakenly believe that conversation is sufficient to remedy historical and contemporary inequities due to race, gender, ethnicity,

religion, sexual orientation, region, language, or a host of other characteristics.

The Dangers of Feeling Unheard - A Call to Inclusive Leadership

Jada Johnson, a black woman currently serving in the US Navy, has written pointedly about these challenges from her own perspective and experience. In response to previous, less sophisticated efforts to build bridges and discuss issues of race and gender, Johnson reminds readers that such conversations are often unequally burdensome, given significant power differentials within the service. She writes, “What happens when I tell the truth about the racism I have experienced in the Navy? I’ll tell you: it does not go well” (2020, para. 8). She lists a litany of responses that she has experienced based on such encounters including defensiveness, dismissiveness, denial, and antagonism. All of these are indicators of the pervasiveness of monocultural and ethnocentric viewpoints. When the burden is on individual service members—and often those who are in positions of relatively less power—and conversations are not skillfully facilitated, the results can be harmful rather than helpful.

Johnson calls these burdensome conversations, coffee conversations, from the practice of someone reaching out, to informally talk over coffee, just one-on-one. The initiator assumes “that such discussions take place on neutral ground, where equal conditions exist, and where each person can share their experiences and thoughts openly and freely in an environment that is presumably free from the very racism we are discussing” (2020, para. 9). But coffee conversations are often not experienced in that way. Instead, these types of conversations center on, and reinforce, the majority perspective on the topic of discussion, rather than the lived experiences of the minoritized group. As Johnson points out, this imbalance leads to further divisiveness

and fuels a sense of not belonging or resentment that can undermine morale and cohesiveness.

Conclusions - Cosmopolitan Communication as a 21st Century Leadership Imperative

Building successful teams is at the heart of military effectiveness and readiness (Goodwin et al., 2018). The literature, particularly from the corporate world, suggests that more diverse teams can produce better results when difference is embraced and purposefully leveraged. At the same time, diverse teams may experience more friction and less social cohesion than homogenous ones (Rock et al., 2016; Selvadurai & Dasgupta, 2016). Without a proactive effort to create a sense of common purpose, diverse teams may not feel as comfortable as homogenous ones, and trust and empathy may be harder to develop. The key is that diverse teams must be carefully managed, trust built over time, and empathy developed, so the team can reap the rewards of diversity (Shemla & Wegge, 2019; Boisjoly et al., 2006). Indeed, building teams is a fundamental task for military leaders, who have always been called to create unity and reinforce common purpose amidst competing narratives, especially since the emergence of the all-volunteer force. What we are suggesting and offering is a set of conceptual tools and strategies for doing so in the current environment.

With the importance of communication and trust to effective team-building, especially among high-performing teams, clearly identified (Hakanen, Hakkinen & Soudunsaari, 2015; Katzenbach & Smith, 1993; Erdem & Ozen, 2003), we further see benefits for individuals using cosmopolitan communication strategies to engage in hard conversations. The work of facilitating these conversations using the tools of Cosmopolitan Communication means that the burden for such conversations, and subsequent action, is on

the group and its leader—not on any one individual. Individuals are expected to speak for themselves, rather than to speak for their imagined group. Furthermore, understanding oneself as part of a community, with a common purpose and identity, is essential for mental health and resilience (Seng et al., 2012; Cacioppo et al., 2011; Williams et al., 2016; Yamada et al., 2013). Military members who do not feel fully integrated into the group, who perceive their experiences as being atypical or outside the norm, may suffer stress and anxiety related to their minoritized position.

Conversations based in the principles of Cosmopolitan Communication center the experiences of all involved and demand careful listening. The movement towards a cosmopolitan sensibility is not a simple matter, and it does not occur overnight. It involves deliberate and sometimes uncomfortable engagement of different worldviews, cultivating mindsets and skillsets that involve respect for difference and perspective-taking—which does not necessarily imply agreement with or approval of others' positions, but rather the ability to hear them as valid and meaningful to them. These processes, of course, are not new to military contexts. In fact, military leaders who are familiar with the concepts of red-teaming, wargaming, and intelligence analysis of adversaries may have some of the mindset and mental habits already required. The work of hard conversations, requires leaders to focus this effort internally to draw from the wisdom of different experiences and perspectives within their own teams. Framing such conversations as essential to the development of a professional identity and warrior ethos, rather than as tangential to the military's mission, is also important to create trust and buy-in from all members of an organization.

As Penman and Jensen (2019) point out, the development of cosmopolitan capacities requires hard

work “made harder because the skills necessary for being cosmopolitan are not part of a normal school curriculum, they are not encouraged or cultivated as part of the process of becoming adults and they are not supported by the mainstream cultural values of a Western way of life” (p. 69). Nonetheless, the attempt to instill such perspectives and skills is a worthwhile one for military communities and organizations, one that we believe will result in a strengthened, more cohesive military and ultimately, we hope, a more perfect union.

♦ ♦ ♦

References

- Bruscino, T. A. (2014). *A Nation Forged in War: How World War II taught Americans to get along*. The University of Tennessee Press.
- Boisjoly, J., Duncan, G. J., Kremer, M., Levy, D. M., & Eccles, J. (2006). Empathy or antipathy? The impact of diversity. *American Economic Review*, 96(5), 1890-1905.
- Cacioppo, J. T., Reis, H. T., & Zautra, A. J. (2011). Social resilience: The value of social fitness with an application to the military. *American Psychologist*, 66(1), 43.
- Chen, M. K., Haggag, K., Pope, D., & Rohla, R. (2019). Racial Disparities in Voting Wait Times: Evidence from Smartphone Data. National Bureau of Economic Affairs, 1-29.
- Chen, V. (2014). Transforming power through systemic questioning in dialogue: A perspective from the coordinated management of meaning. In S. Littlejohn & S. McNamee (Eds.), *The Coordinated Management of Meaning: A Festschrift in honor of W. Barnett Pearce*. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. pp. 163-181.
- Chen, V. (2004). The possibility of critical dialogue in the theory of CMM. *Human Systems: The Journal of Systemic Consultation & Management*, 15(3), pp. 179-192.
- Council of Foreign Relations (2020, July 13). Demographics of the U.S. Military. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/demographics-us-military>
- Erdem, F. & Ozen, J. (2003). Cognitive and affective dimensions of trust in developing team performance. *Team Performance Management: An International Journal*, 9 (5-6), pp. 131-135.
- Gentile-Ford, N. (2009). *Americans All! Foreign-born Soldiers in World War I*. Texas A & M Univ Pr.
- Goldfein, D. L. (2020, June 03). Commentary: Unrest in America. <https://www.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/2206408/commentary-unrest-in-america/>
- Goodwin, G. F., Blacksmith, N., & Coats, M. R. (2018). The science of teams in the military: Contributions from over 60 years of research. *American Psychologist*, 73(4), 322-333.
- Grinston, M. A., McConville, J. C., & McCarthy, R. D. (2020, June 03). A message to the Army community about civil unrest. <https://www.army.mil/article/236157>
- Hakanen, M., Hakkinen, M & Soudunsaari, A. (2015). Trust in building high-performing teams: A conceptual approach. *Electronic Journal of Business Ethics and Organization Studies*, 20(2) pp. 43-53.
- Johnson, J. (2020, July). We Don't Need Conversations, We Need Systemic Change. *USNI Proceedings*, 146(7). <https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2020/july/we-dont-need-conversations-we-need-systemic-change>
- Katzenbach, J. & Smith, D. (1993). *The Wisdom of Teams*. McKinsey & Company.
- Krebs, D. R. (2006). *Fighting for rights: Military service and the politics of citizenship*. Cornell University Press.
- Minnis, T. A., & Shah, N. (2020). Voter Registration in Today's Democracy: Barriers and Opportunities. *Human Rights Magazine*, 45 (1).
- Parker, K., Cilluffo, A., & Stepler, R. (2017, April 13). 6 facts about the U.S. military's changing demographics. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/04/13/6-facts-about-the-u-s-military-and-its-changing-demographics/>
- Parrish-Sprowl, J. (2014). *Making change that matters: A story of social transformation and CMM*. In S. Littlejohn & S. McNamee (Eds.), *The Coordinated Management of Meaning: A Festschrift in honor of W. Barnett Pearce*. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. pp. 291-311.
- Pearce, W. B. (2004). *The Coordinated Management of Meaning*. In W.B. Gudykunst (Ed.), *Theorizing About Intercultural Communication*. Sage.
- Pearce, W. B. (1989). *Communication and the Human Condition*. Southern Illinois University Press.
- Pearce, W. B. & Cronen, V. (1980). *Communication, Action, and Meaning*. Praeger.
- Penman, R. & Jensen, A. (2019). *Making Better Social Worlds: Inspirations from the Theory of the Coordinated Management of Meaning*. CMM Institute Press.

Rock, D., Grant, H., & Grey, J. (2016, September 22). Diverse Teams Feel Less Comfortable — and That's Why They Perform Better. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2016/09/diverse-teams-feel-less-comfortable-and-thats-why-they-perform-better>

Royster, C. (1979). *A revolutionary people at war: The Continental Army and American Character, 1775-1783*. University of North Carolina Press.

Rossmann, L. (1995). What if we asked circular questions instead of “rhetorical questions?”: Possibilities for the classroom and daily interactions [Paper presentation]. Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association, San Antonio, TX. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED391191.pdf>

Selvadurai, S., & Dasgupta, A. (2016). Culturally Diverse Teams and Social Interaction Influence on Team Effectiveness in Small and Medium Enterprises in the ICT Sector in Malaysia. *Millennial Asia*, 7(1), 42-62.

Seng, J. S., Lopez, W. D., Sperlich, M., Hamama, L., & Meldrum, C. D. (2012). Marginalized identities, discrimination burden, and mental health: Empirical exploration of an interpersonal-level approach to modeling intersectionality. *Social Science & Medicine*, 75(12), 2437-2445.

Shemla, M., & Wegge, J. (2019). Managing diverse teams by enhancing team identification: The mediating role of perceived diversity. *Human Relations*, 72(4), 755–777.

Solomon, D., Maxwell, C., & Castro, A. (2019). *Systematic Inequality and American Democracy*. Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/race/reports/2019/08/07/473003/systematic-inequality-american-democracy/>

Spano, S. (2001). *Public Dialogue and Participatory Democracy: The Cupertino Community Project*. Hampton Press.

Steen, S., Mackenzie, L., & Buechner, B. (2018). Incorporating Cosmopolitan Communication into Diverse Teaching and Training Contexts: Considerations from Our Work with Military Students and Veterans. In J.D. Wallace & D. Becker, (Eds.), *The Handbook of Communication Training: A Best Practices Framework for Assessing and Developing Competence*. Routledge. pp. 401-413.

Williams, J., Brown, J. M., Bray, R. M., Anderson Goodell, E. M., Rae Olmsted, K., & Adler, A. B. (2016). Unit cohesion, resilience, and mental health of soldiers in basic combat training. *Military Psychology*, 28(4), 241-250.

Wright, K. (2020). Who Am I? Joint Base San Antonio News. <https://www.jbsa.mil/News/News/Article/2206339/commentary-who-am-i/>

Yamada, A. M., Atuel, H. R., & Weiss, E. L. (2013). Military culture and multicultural diversity among military service members: Implications for mental health providers. In *Handbook of Multicultural Mental Health* (pp. 389-410). Academic Press.

BOOK REVIEW

A Review of Selected Works of James MacGregor Burns

James MacGregor Burns. *Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox*. New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1956.

James MacGregor Burns. *Roosevelt: The Soldier of Freedom*. New York: Harcourt Brace & Jovanovich, 1970.

James MacGregor Burns. *Leadership*. New York: HarperCollins, 1978.

James MacGregor. *Transforming Leadership: A New Pursuit of Happiness*. New York: Grove Press, 2003.

Review By: Stephen Randolph

The concepts of “transactional” and “transformative” leadership are fundamental to modern leadership theory, to the extent that we can tend to forget that they were inventions of a certain place, time, and perspective. That intellectual structure was developed by James MacGregor Burns, operating on the borderlands of history, political science, and psychology to analyze the basis and the employment of leadership.

Burns focused on that theme throughout his extraordinarily prolific and prolonged career, extending from the early 1950s until his death in 2014. He spent most of his career as a faculty member at Williams College, in Massachusetts. Formally, he was a political scientist, always interested in the structure of power and the organization of government; but he approached his work through the prism of history, always grounding his analysis on the solid ground of historical fact. Asked once how he reconciled the two disciplines, he responded that “You have to do both, but history is more fun.” (Burns interview, *American Heritage*, p. 3.)

It was a remarkably productive approach, though it called on an almost unbelievable capacity for study and analysis on Burns’ part. In the summaries that follow, we will trace Burns’ approach through four of his most significant works, taken sequentially to evaluate first his historical work, and then his theoretical work on leadership. This

path will take us through his two-volume biography of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, for which he was awarded a Pulitzer Prize in 1971, and then the two works in which he developed and presented his theories of leadership: *Leadership*, published in 1978, and *Transforming Leadership*, published in 2003. These volumes were among the twenty-six works he published during his long and prolific career.

Not to bury the lead: all four of these books have distinctive and significant value. The Roosevelt volumes each deal with epic periods in U.S. history--the first volume examining FDR's leadership during the Great Depression, the second providing a close-up account of war leadership and alliance decision making in the most complex and costly war in U.S. history. Based on his immersion in Roosevelt and his contemporaries, Burns followed with his ground-breaking book *Leadership*, setting the basis for our current approach to assessing and executing leadership. His companion volume, *Transforming Leadership*, provided leadership portraits and assessments of leaders across their variations in time and space. There was great conceptual consistency in Burns' work across his half-century of scholarship.

Burns and the Roosevelt Saga

Burns served as a combat photographer with the Army in the Pacific theater in WWII, embarking on his academic career on his return from the war. He began his work on Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1952 and was among the first scholars to have access to Roosevelt's papers.

From the beginning Burns had a specific aim point in mind. He was writing a "political biography," focusing on Roosevelt as political leader: his growth, his decisions, the compromises he made, the ideals he sought, the political structure in which he operated. Burns had an abiding interest in the formal and informal structures of American politics, and there could be no better way to explore those structures than

by examining perhaps the most successful and most adept politician in American history, as he operated through depression, a global war, and the creation of a new international order. It was necessary, as Burns noted, to include Roosevelt's private life, "because a great politician's career remorselessly sucks everything into its vortex—including his family and even his dog." (Burns, *Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox*, p.ix) But the focus of Burns' work was consistent, maintaining Roosevelt in the center of attention and aiming at the explanation for his decisions and actions.

Burns titled the first volume of the Roosevelt biography *Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox*, framing his narrative around Nicolo Machiavelli's maxim: "A prince...must imitate the lion and the fox, for the lion cannot protect himself from traps, and the fox cannot defend himself from wolves. One must therefore be a fox to recognize traps, and a lion to frighten wolves... Therefore, a prudent ruler ought not to keep faith when by so doing it would be against his interest, and when the reasons which made him bind himself no longer exist." (Burns, *Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox*, epigraph) To translate this into today's environment: in the maelstrom of politics, when should the leader hold out for principles, and when should he lay up power for future use? When do you take the lead, and when do you step back? That dilemma faced Roosevelt through every major issue of his presidency.

The heart of *The Lion and the Fox* lies in Roosevelt's leadership during the Great Depression—his style and strategies, and perhaps most of all, his remarkable growth as he assumed his responsibilities as President. No one familiar with his earlier career could have expected the drive and the energy that Roosevelt demonstrated in his first days in the White House. It is a remarkable history for modern readers: the ad hoc approach to policy making that Roosevelt embraced, his willingness to experiment, the sense that any movement is better than stagnation. As Roosevelt

argued during the 1932 campaign, “The country needs and, unless I mistake its temper, the country demands bold, persistent experimentation. It is common sense to take a method and try it: if it fails, admit it frankly and try another.” (Burns, *Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox*, p.133)

His administrative strategy remained stable throughout his presidency, and it was one that nobody today would embrace as a model. Given a problem, Roosevelt typically would create two rival power centers within the bureaucracy addressing the issue, ignoring the sort of clean management structure so valued in modern organizations. This strategy was inefficient and often led to rancor and confusion; but it also made sure that Roosevelt kept his options open, that he had the deciding voice in any major decision, and that he would be kept informed—if no other way than through complaints from the warring factions. It was typical of his general approach to power—mediating among the competing interests, and tolerating a great deal of administrative inefficiency, and even rancor, within his inner circle. As Burns summarized, “Roosevelt was less a great creative leader than a skillful manipulator and a brilliant interpreter...He was always a superb tactician, and sometimes a courageous leader, but he failed to achieve that combination of tactical skill and strategic planning that represents the acme of political leadership.” (Burns, *Roosevelt: Soldier of Freedom*, p. 404)

For modern readers, the chapters addressing FDR’s first term from 1933-1937 carry the most power. It was almost a romantic period in American history, at least for the first few years, as partisan politics gave way to a sense of national urgency, with Roosevelt viewing the White House as brokering agreements among the normal economic and political antagonists. The situation Roosevelt encountered when he began his term exactly suited his style and his preference for experimentation, a willingness to experiment

and adapt as might prove necessary. The progress of the New Deal is a fascinating story, filled with fascinating characters.

For Burns, though, the second term from 1937-1941 carried the greater interest. It was in that period that Roosevelt sought to change the structure of the U.S. government, the Democratic party, and the national alignment of political power. Despite all his energy and experimentation, Roosevelt found himself stymied by the structure of government, unable to take measures urgently needed to sustain the economic recovery. As has occurred in other eras, the Supreme Court was profoundly conservative, closely bound to tradition and to limiting the role of government. Likewise, the Senate proved to be an obstacle to Roosevelt’s attempt to re-create the relationship between management and labor in the economy.

Even his own party, notionally under his leadership, was unsatisfactory in this time of crisis. Many Democratic leaders were lackluster in their support for his programs, and the party as a whole was feeble and unorganized. Throughout his second term Roosevelt attempted to alter these power relationships, beginning with his attempt to pack the Supreme Court, and ending with a half-hearted effort to reform and energize his party. There were some common elements in these attempts: they were all poorly planned, and they all failed. As Burns pointed out, it was a good example both of Roosevelt’s keen ability to define a problem, and of his usual unwillingness to commit to a specific plan to address the problem. He was a gifted improviser, and had a powerful moral compass, but invariably showed little patience or skill in long-range planning.

That period saw the rise of Hitler and the militarization of Japan. Gradually Roosevelt was forced to extend his attention from the domestic issues of recovery and face the complexities of an increasingly hazardous international scene—which were reflected

in the conflicting demands of the isolationists and the interventionists on the home front. As always, Roosevelt oscillated between the role of the fox, avoiding confrontation with the isolationists, and the lion, calling on the nation's power, first with aid to Great Britain, then increasingly broadening America's role in the conflict. From the beginning, for Roosevelt this conflict was more than simply a struggle for power—it was a moral crusade, a cause outlined by the Atlantic Charter months before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

Burns' second volume on Roosevelt, *Roosevelt: The Soldier of Freedom*, picks up the story at that point. It is an extraordinary account, maintaining its elegance and power fifty years after its publication. Burns' account of the problems facing the world's leaders as war approached is vivid and complete. There is no better account of the evolving strategic situation as the war progressed or of the complexity of war leadership. Given his interest in leadership, Burns was especially effective in measuring and presenting the summits in which Roosevelt encountered his peers—Winston Churchill and Josef Stalin.

It is of great interest to read Burns' description of the American people at war. His portrait of the nation does not present the idyllic scenes of memory; bitter political conflict continued, and the general populace was slow to orient toward the conflict. But Roosevelt proved himself a great war leader, able to mobilize the nation in the great cause of victory. In doing so, he seized the opportunity to achieve more in social programs than he had during the depths of the Depression.

Burns and Leadership Theory and Practice

Burns published his classic study *Leadership* in 1978, seven years after winning the Pulitzer Prize for his biography of Roosevelt at war. It was his lifetime goal to develop a unified theory of leadership, applicable

in all cultures and organizations. He had set the foundation for his study of leadership in ten earlier works, all aimed in one way or another at leadership in the American political context. In the course of those works he had studied political leaders, the legislative process, and America's political structure. He used every corner of this great intellectual storehouse in constructing *Leadership*.

His protracted and deep immersion into leadership explains the most remarkable characteristic of this work: its scope and comprehensiveness. Normally with this sort of challenge to long-standing doctrine, the initial responses are limited in scope, chipping away at questionable aspects of the prevailing doctrine. That was emphatically not the case with Professor Burns. Coming right out of the chute, he presented his newly derived conceptual structure and his core definitions and typology of leadership, with case studies to support his analysis. He examined leadership in its political, social, and psychological aspects, and he worked out his theory in a closely argued and carefully structured book. He was not one to leave any questions open; his construction of his thesis and the evidence is thorough and systematic.

The essence of Burns' theory was his belief that traditional definitions and assessments of leadership had focused only on the leaders as primary actors. That focus had eliminated from view a second major player: the followers. He conceived of leader-follower relationships as ideally active and mutual, based on the values and motivations and goals of both leaders and followers, and enabling both leaders and followers to meet their needs in a common enterprise. This perspective raised the followers from passive participants, to active members of a common enterprise. More important, it pointed to leadership as a means of lifting both the leader and those led to achieve their greater self.

Burns identified two general structures of leadership: “transactional” leadership, based on the politics of exchange—comparatively low-risk and low-gain—and “transforming” leadership, in which the interaction between leaders and followers raises both to a higher level of achievement and morality. Over time, “transformational” has replaced “transforming” in the terminology of leadership study, but this construct remains basic to the study of leadership. Five decades since its publication, *Leadership* still stands as the conceptual foundation for the study of leadership.

Burns emphasized that leadership matters at all levels, from the family and community to the heights of political power, but his focus and interest is overwhelmingly on political leaders and their followers. It is at that level that leadership acts for the benefit or the disadvantage of whole nations, and that is Burns’ dominant interest. He had a strong bias in favor of transformative leadership and focused most of his attention and analysis on that model of leadership.

The work was enthusiastically welcomed on its publication. There was a well-justified sense of a global failure of leadership in that time of the late 1970s, and Burns’ book arrived with the right theme and timing to gain a highly favorable reception. Reviewers were generally delighted with the book, and with the possibilities it opened up for further development. All considered the work an important advance, but all had suggestions for further work. The most significant comments focused on the bias toward transformational leadership that was such a centerpiece of Burns’ work. His selection of Mao and Mahatma Gandhi as his models for transformational leadership both came into question. But the more serious discussions addressed the relationship between the two models of leadership that Burns had proposed.

Most of those reading this review will agree that in the course of most lives, transactional leadership

is by a vast distance the most common leadership experience, far more common than transformational opportunities. That is generally the routine leadership style in bureaucracies, usually demanding competence but not genius to succeed. This is a less risky leadership strategy than transformational leadership, but it has its own demands and risks that deserved more attention in this overview of leadership.

Moreover, there is in Burns’ view a deep divide between the two modes of leadership that in practice may not exist. In nearly all cases, a leader will have some aspects of transformation ongoing, as needed for the organization; but transactional negotiations are a perennial aspect of leadership in modern organizations. As Lt Cmdr J.P. Morse commented in the *Naval War College Review* in 1979, “The gulf between the transactional and transforming leader is too great. There seems to be no middle ground. Few people in positions of leadership can remain in these transactional or transforming molds forever...The gray areas in between, ‘contingency leadership’ if you will, is where I believe most leaders spend most of their time, with frequent migrations to both extremes.” (Morse, *Naval War College Review*, March-April 1979)

Franklin Roosevelt’s experience as President bears out that conclusion. There were times when his passion and the environment aroused him to heights of moral and political power, truly acting the part of the lion. But even in those times, his ability to gain support for his policies demanded exhaustive and frustrating transactional negotiations—with Congress, with his inner circle, with the government, with his allies. It was his tactical facility in working through the politics of these moments that secured FDR’s position at the height of the American pantheon.

It is odd but true that Burns did not use any of the vast experience of the U.S. military to examine the role and strategies of leadership, especially given his own

combat experience during WWII. He had certainly seen enough of the military to understand the core emphasis that institution places on leadership, and the wide divergence in leadership styles that can be found among the military establishment.

These criticisms notwithstanding, at this moment there are leaders all around us conducting transformational leadership, demanded in these unprecedented times. Medical professionals across the country and the world have risen above their former routine to address the needs of their patients and their nations. Teachers have grappled with the complexities of digital instruction. Families have recast themselves to withstand the rigors of the time. These inspirational individuals might never consider themselves as transformational leaders, but they meet that definition and will carry this experience through their lives.

Twenty-five years after his game-changing publication of *Leadership*, Burns published a follow-on volume, *Transforming Leadership*. It was an opportunity for him to reflect back on his achievement in *Leadership*, and to note where the field had advanced and where it had stagnated. It has the feel of a conversation between people who have known each other a long time, who have exchanged all their stories again and again, enjoying them every time. But Burns took the opportunity to extend his earlier work conceptually, explicitly tying leadership to values and continuing to work toward his lifetime goal of creating a unified theory of leadership. Looking back at his work on Roosevelt in that period, Burns acknowledged that he might have graded Roosevelt too harshly in his biographies—for example, failing to note Roosevelt's transformational leadership during the New Deal, and again during his failed attempt to reconstruct the U.S. political system during his second term.

The four books outlined above represent only a small portion of Burns' massive production over a long career. Burns was wise enough to understand that there

would probably never be a single theory of leadership that would cover all uses in all environments. It was that same wisdom, though, that enabled him to reshape our perspectives on leadership, and that makes his work still worth study, decades after its publication. No reader will agree with him on all counts. But all will encounter new ways of thinking about leadership, new connections in considering leadership, and an endless series of perspectives and examples through which to view this critical aspect of modern life.

Questions for Further Thought:

- How far does the choice of leadership strategy rest with the leader, and how much with the environment?
- How do the skills demanded of a leader differ between transformational leadership and transactional leadership? How do the risks differ between the two strategies?
- Roosevelt led the United States for twelve of the most turbulent years in the nation's history. How does one maintain the stamina and energy to face up to a challenge of this magnitude?

• • •

References

- Beschloss, M. R. & Cronin, T. E. *Essays in Honor of James MacGregor Burns*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1989.
- Burns, J. M. Interview with Bernard A. Weisberger. *American Heritage*, Volume 33, Issue 1 (December 1981).
- Morse, J.P. (1979) "Leadership," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 32: No. 3, Article 15.

BOOK REVIEW

A Review of "Mindset: the New Psychology of Success"

Carol Dweck, Ph.D., New York, NY: Penguin Random House LLC (2016 Updated Version)

Review By: Steven Lipinski, Lt Col, USAF

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Charles Q. Brown, Jr's strategic approach, entitled *Accelerate Change or Lose*, is a call to action as well as a guide for change needed to confront our service's next generation of challenges. Success will require nurturing a culture that rewards improvement and innovation. For this, we will need to display values consistent with a growth mindset outlined in *Mindset* (2006) by Dr. Carol Dweck.

Carol Dweck, Ph.D., the Lewis and Virginia Eaton Professor of Psychology at Stanford University, argues we all operate within fixed and growth mindsets. When operating in a fixed mindset, we place significance on natural ability and believe competencies are concrete. If we adopt a growth mindset, however, we value human development through the cultivation of our abilities.

Mindset is thoroughly researched and written in an approachable story-telling manner, leaving the reader at ease with the offerings from this prominent researcher. Dweck, who relies on recent research from the fields of Psychology and Education, dedicates most of the work to illustrating fixed and growth mindsets through the lens of accomplished figures. Her examples come from areas as diverse as sports, education, and business; though she touches on personal relationships and mixes in personal anecdotes as well. And while the background and achievements of Dweck's subjects vary, several themes emerge.

Someone with a fixed mindset believes abilities are static and improvement is unnecessary. Additionally, labels predict results and must be guarded; for example, a person labeled smart will avoid failure to maintain the facade of invincibility. They also blame others for poor results and rarely ask for input. One of Dweck's favorite fixed-mindset subjects is former tennis star John McEnroe, and she is unsparing when taking him to task for a lack of personal responsibility. McEnroe was notorious for his on-court temper tantrums directed at others when matches weren't going his way.

Individuals with a growth mindset, however, are more likely to value personal development, seek honest and constructive feedback, and approach life's challenges as pathways to improvement. A section on growth mindset leaders in business links the cultures of personal development built by former CEOs Jack Welch (GE), Lou Gerstner (IBM), and Anne Mulcahy (Xerox) with their firms' long-term organizational success. These examples, along with a discussion on organizational mindsets in the updated text, should prove useful to leaders seeking increased levels of trust and innovation in their organizations.

The final chapter helps answer the question of changing mindsets. Dweck introduces the reader to several fictional dilemmas, and compares fixed and growth mindset responses. A welcome update in 2016 includes a conceptual journey toward a growth mindset, helping to address some common misunderstandings in the field after publishing the first edition. Finally, Dweck argues we all have both mindsets. Switching them is neither easy, nor permanent, and everyone (including the author herself) experiences setbacks.

Mindset is a welcome addition to the literature addressing the question of whether great leaders are born or made. If we believe the former, our robust resourcing of leadership development is better used on other challenges. If we believe the latter, however, growth mindsets could be a pathway for young leaders to realize their true potential. Or as Dweck puts it, "Create an organization that prizes the development of ability--and watch the leaders emerge" (p. 142).

Leader developers would benefit from many of Dweck's recommendations, and fostering a growth mindset requires discipline. Avoid using labels such as "smart" or "natural leader," as they plant beliefs in fixed traits and can inhibit future development. Praise effort and growth of ability instead of talent as they relate to outcomes, and reward the process of trying differing

strategies to achieve success. The hard work one puts in to understanding math concepts, for example, is what leads to growth and achievement, not the test score itself. Finally, reward reasonable risk-taking and begin viewing failure as a doorway to growth, not as a limit of a person's potential.

We ought to contemplate this last item at length given General Brown's strategic approach. We have been challenged to develop a generation of innovative leaders, but that is achievable only with hard work and support for sensible risk-taking. It would be wise to embrace these growth mindset principles across our service; otherwise, we will fail in our mission to compete in today's rapidly competitive defense environment.

• • •

BOOK REVIEW

A Review of "Loonshots: How to Nurture the Crazy Ideas that Win Wars, Cure Diseases, and Transform Industries"

Safi Bahcall, St. Martin's Press (2019)

Review By: David Mays, Lt Col, PhD

Loonshots, by Safi Bahcall, is a thought-provoking book that discusses his ideas on group behavior, both in the civilian and military fields, and the challenges of nurturing radical breakthroughs in teams. His book focuses on what he calls *loonshots*, which are breakthroughs in discoveries that are widely dismissed due to the nature of the idea and the champion of the idea is written off as crazy or irrational.

Safi Bahcall, a Harvard graduate with a PhD from Stanford is a second-generation physicist and a biotech entrepreneur. Bahcall worked several years as a consultant and afterwards he co-founded a biotechnology company that developed new drugs for cancer. For his work on *Loonshots*, Bahcall drew upon the science of phase transitions to show why teams, companies, and military organizations will suddenly change from embracing wild new ideas to rejecting them.

Bahcall said "The most important breakthroughs rarely follow blaring trumpets and a red carpet, with central authorities offering overflowing pots of tools and money. They are surprisingly fragile. They pass through long dark tunnels of skepticism and uncertainty, crushed or neglected, their champions often dismissed as crazy-or just plain dismissed" (p. 7).

In writing the book, Bahcall recounts several big projects in history that were at first widely ignored. The first example was the idea of the radar for use by the military. Two young enthusiasts who were working on a ham-radio accidentally figured out how a radar works and it was the earliest known proposal of radar to use on the battlefield.

Their idea quickly ran out of steam and funding dried up for the project, and it was years later before it was resurrected, completed, and became one of the most important technological advances in terms of warfare. This breakthrough was a radically new idea but fell through as a loonshot.

Bahcall describes two main types of loonshots, the *P-type* loonshot and the *S-type* loonshot. The P-type loonshot is described as a breakthrough in a particular new idea involving a product, such as a new engine that is faster, stronger, and allows an airplane to travel a further distance than the current engine. The P-type loonshot is the newest and greatest of the product that is available or soon to be available.

Bahcall explains the P-type loonshot in his book in relation to the downfall of Pan American Airways. Pan American Airways was once among the largest companies in America led by Juan Trippe. Trippe wanted the most advanced jet engines available and larger jets to go further and carry more passengers. Trippe wanted the P-type loonshot and he was able to grow his company into one of the most successful companies for many years. The deregulation of the airline industry and the start-up of S-type loonshots eventually brought down Pan American Airways.

The other type of loonshot described by Bahcall is the S-type loonshot. This loonshot is best described as a change in strategy. A change in strategy versus change in product can make vast improvements to your business or military processes without major investments into products that may or may not work. An example used by Bahcall was the downfall of IBM by losing the S-type loonshot. IBM was a successful company grossing \$13 billion in sales in 1981, however the old hardware lost its supremacy to other companies like Microsoft and Intel due to an S-type loonshot involving software and what the customer wanted, not the brand on the box.

Bahcall described other successes and failures in his book such as the ups and downs of Steve Jobs with Apple and Pixar companies, not to mention the failed companies he lead. The success or survival of American Airlines because of an S-type loonshot, the race to the nuclear weapon, the battles in Xerox, and how empires are made or lost are due to loonshots. Bahcall describes another theory called the *Moses Trap*, described by him as “when ideas advance only at the pleasure of a holy leader--rather than the balanced exchange of ideas and feedback between soldiers in the field and creatives at the bench selecting loonshots on merit—that is exactly when team and companies get trapped” (p. 93). The importance of loonshots in winning wars and how great ideas from your teams can get shot down, is the difference between company success and company failure. Bahcall swiftly describes his main points:

1. The most important breakthroughs come from loonshots, widely dismissed ideas whose champions are often written off as crazy.
2. Large groups of people are needed to translate those breakthroughs into technologies that win wars, products that save lives, or strategies that change industries.
3. Applying the science of phased transitions to the behavior of teams, companies, or any group with a mission provides practical rules for nurturing loonshots faster and better. (p. 2)

Bahcall’s book is very useful to leaders at all stages/ phases of their career and to organizations that work to innovate or strive to improve their products and strategy. Comparing his loonshots to the military field we can see slight innovations in processes and products over time, always looking for those P-type and S-type loonshots to pop up. This book will help civilian and military leaders look for the loonshots in their organizations and hopefully provide these loonshots an opportunity to flourish.

♦ ♦ ♦

PROFILE IN LEADERSHIP

Brigadier General David N.W. Grant and the Birth of the Flight Nurse

Amanda Hess, United States Air Force Academy

In September of 1944, after intense fighting against the Japanese in Palau, 24 wounded soldiers were loaded onto a C-47 to be evacuated to Guadalcanal for medical treatment. The war-weary soldiers were turned over to U.S. Army 1Lt Mary L. Hawkins, a flight nurse in the 828 Medical Air Evacuation Squadron (MAES), who would be in charge of the patients until their disembarkation. Running low on fuel, the C-47 made an emergency landing on the small island of Bellona in the Solomon Islands southwest of Guadalcanal. During the landing, a propeller tore through the fuselage of the plane causing a piece of a wooden litter pole to slash the trachea of one of the men. Jumping into action, Hawkins directed the evacuation of the disabled aircraft and rushed to treat the badly wounded soldier. Hawkins administered morphine before fashioning suction and breathing devices using simple medical supplies from her kit and the tubes from a Mae West life preserver. Using these make-shift devices, Hawkins, assisted by an enlisted medical technician, was able to keep the soldier's air passage clear of blood for 19 hours while they awaited rescue. Because of her leadership, ingenuity and quick-thinking, all of Hawkins' patients survived the ordeal, and Hawkins was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

A month later, in October of 1944, U.S. Army 1Lt Adela Lutz of the 802 MAES was on a mission to evacuate 15 patients from the German border to Istres when the aircraft she was serving on encountered a storm and crashed. Lutz was killed along with her patients; it was her 196th aeromedical evacuation mission. Over the course of her 11 months as a flight nurse, Lutz had evacuated nearly 3,500 casualties and had become one of the most highly decorated women to serve in World War II. For her courage, dedication, and extraordinary leadership, she received the Air Medal with four Oak Leaf Clusters, a Purple Heart, and posthumously, the Distinguished Flying Cross.

These two remarkable professionals were part of a new mission being undertaken by the newly created U.S. Army Air Forces. The mass evacuation of battlefield casualties using transport aircraft manned by specially-trained flight nurses had begun less than two years earlier, but in that short amount of time, had become one of the most successful advancements in military medicine. Between 1942 and the end of the war, over a thousand flight nurses and nearly that many enlisted medical technicians were trained at the new School of Air Evacuation at Bowman Field, Kentucky. Eighteen Medical Air Evacuation Squadrons were formed with the mission of evacuating wounded personnel from combat zones across the globe to hospitals in the rear or back to the continental United States. Each flight was staffed by a flight nurse and enlisted medical technician team to provide care while en route.

The flight nurses would work in unheated, unpressurized, and extremely loud aircraft that, because they were used to fly in materiel before being converted to receive the wounded, were unable to fly under the markings and protection afforded to medical transport vessels by the Geneva Convention. Because of this lack of protection, all flight nurses were volunteers. At the end of the war, almost half a million casualties had been transported for definitive care away from combat zones. The low fatality rate among evacuees, about two per every 100,000 wounded soldiers, reflected the nurses' unique training in aviation medicine and their capacity for independent thinking and quick action.

The mission of aeromedical evacuation and the creation of the flight nurse specialty, which proved so successful in World War II, and which we, in 2021, have come to acknowledge as a strategic part of any war effort, did not enjoy an easy road into existence. There were institutional and technical roadblocks that threatened to end this innovation before it ever had a chance to mature. Flight nursing and aeromedical evacuation needed an advocate and an organizer to overcome these obstacles. They found that person in U.S. Army Brigadier General David Norvell Walker Grant.

Background

The idea of using aircraft to move injured or ill persons was promulgated shortly after the Wright brothers made their historic first flight in 1903 and was developed internationally throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Prior to the onset of hostilities in World War II, the German Luftwaffe proved the value of aeromedical evacuation during the Spanish Civil War. While the United States medical and aviation communities were taking note of this development, there was little interest in pursuing mass aeromedical evacuation in the U.S. military due to a blend of technical, cultural, and organizational factors. In fact, according to Lt Colonel Richard L. Meiling of the U.S. Army Medical Corps, many military authorities still thought it was

“dangerous, impracticable, medically unsound, and militarily impossible” (Meiling, 1944, p. 93) even after the U.S. entered World War II.

Likewise, the interest in using nurses aboard aircraft was well established before the opening of World War II. In the early 1930s, Lauretta M. Schimmoler, a female pilot, predicted a future need of nurses to serve aboard military aircraft and founded the Aerial Nurse Corps of America (ANCOA). ANCOA was a civilian organization comprised of highly-trained nurses that Ms. Schimmoler intended to serve as flight nurses in the U.S. Army when needed. Receiving no acceptance and border-line hostility by the American Red Cross, the only volunteer organization authorized to render aid to the Medical Department of the Army, Ms. Schimmoler began reaching out directly to army personnel she thought would be interested in her flight nurse organization. She was disappointed by Major General Henry H. Arnold, then Acting Chief of the Army Air Corps, when he dispassionately directed her back to the Red Cross.

Undaunted by the lack of interest by the Red Cross and the U.S. Army Air Corps, Ms. Schimmoler persistently pressed for the inclusion of ANCOA nurses in the national defense structure during times of war. Yet Army leadership continued to show a sincere lack of interest in creating a special unit of nurses trained in aerial evacuation and in-flight care of wounded servicemen. Ms. Schimmoler's ideas, however, attracted the notice of Maj Grant.

General Grant, Aerial Medivac, and the Advent of Flight Nurses

Already a well-established Army medical professional, Grant was drawn to the emerging specialty of aviation medicine, and in 1929, he applied to the School of Aviation Medicine to become a flight surgeon. While serving as a flight surgeon at Randolph Field, Grant's professionalism and competence garnered the attention

and esteem of the Surgeon General's office. In 1936, he was ordered to attend the Air Corps Tactical School (ACTS) at Maxwell Field, Alabama, the first flight surgeon to do so.

The ACTS in the 1930s was a flurry of activity developing the concepts of the military application of air power. As a flight surgeon, Grant was already keenly aware of the unique requirements of aviation medicine and was developing a strong affinity to the Air Corps. His exposure to the proponents of an independent Air Force at ACTS likely influenced his later belief in an independent air force medical service. It is obvious by his thesis, titled "The Value of the Autogiro in Military Medicine" that by the time he graduated from ACTS, Grant was envisioning the mass evacuation of battlefield casualties by air, although at the time, he was uncertain that such a mission would be realized.

Fortuitously, Grant was moving toward a role in which he would be able to combine his personal experience with aviation medicine, his interest in aeromedical evacuation, and the growing body of knowledge regarding Luftwaffe successes. He would act as a champion for the Army medical community to develop a plan for the aerial evacuation of wounded servicemen. In August 1939, now Lieutenant Colonel Grant, who had earned a reputation for being a forceful and skilled administrator, was sent to Washington D.C. to assume the post of assistant to the Chief of the Medical Division in the Office of the Air Corps.

Due to the illness of his boss, Grant would end up serving as the acting chief immediately upon his arrival. He found himself in a situation where tensions over the growing autonomy of the Air Corps had been brewing for months, with the Army Surgeon General endeavoring to assume command of the Air Corps Medical Division. Grant's effectiveness in staving off repeated attempts to centralize the Army's medical services and appreciation of the needs of the Air Corps

earned him the respect of General Arnold. Arnold's support of Grant would serve him well as he strove to expand the roles and responsibilities of the Air Corps Medical Division and strengthen its autonomy. The conflict over organization and command, which stemmed from the growing separation between the Army and the Army Air Corps would be a recurring theme throughout the war and strain Grant's relationship with two subsequent Surgeon Generals.

In the spring of 1941, Grant began to press harder for the creation of an organized aeromedical evacuation system. With the authority question still unsettled, he would have to submit his proposed evacuation plan to the Surgeon General, now Major General James C. Magee. The plan was set aside with no action taken for almost nine months. Armed with his new title of Air Surgeon, Grant went around the Surgeon General and took a copy of his plan directly to the War Department. The Surgeon General was incensed that Grant had bypassed proper channels and demanded that General Arnold reprimand him. Arnold responded by confirming that, going forward, the Air Surgeon would report directly to him and not to the Surgeon General. This episode is but one example of Grant's willingness to go outside established channels when he felt the mission was not being served. The creation of the Army Air Forces (AAF) in 1941, Arnold's trust and backing of Grant, and the 1942 reorganization of the War Department, which gave the responsibility for aeromedical evacuation to the AAF, finally opened up the possibility for the introduction of a comprehensive plan for evacuation—a plan that due to Grant's inclusive leadership, would include an expansive opportunity for women.

The Medical Air Evacuation Squadrons, later renamed Medical Air Evacuation Transport Squadrons, included a role for female Flight Nurses. This role reflected the recognition that nurses were the most highly-trained medical professionals next to

doctors, and that due to unique physiological issues that could affect an ill or injured body while in flight, America's wounded deserved their specialized care.

Given the tyranny of distance in the Pacific Theater, intra-theater evacuation by air had already begun out of necessity. With this capability already established, the most critical step was to institute effective training programs. Grant took a personal interest in preparing the course of study for the nurses at the School of Air Evacuation, which was opened in October of 1942. In addition to military training, the flight nurses' education included courses in physiology, tactics of air evacuation, logistics, arctic and tropical medicine, and field sanitation and hygiene.

As the first class of flight nurses was entering the school, Grant was working to prove to those in Washington that still had doubts, that inter-theater evacuation was feasible and that flight nursing was a key element. A mission, kept secret from the Surgeon General's office, was underway.

It would be as formidable a test as one could readily imagine. The first flight nurse, U.S. Army 2Lt Elsie S. Ott, was not yet a flight nurse when handed her first mission. The Army nurse had never even been on a plane when she was tasked in January of 1943 to transport five injured and ill men from her station hospital in Karachi, India, to Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, D.C. Ott had less than 24 hours to prepare, and with no flight surgeon to brief her, she was on her own to get the job done. She grabbed what medical supplies she thought would be needed and set off. The trip lasted seven days, spanned 11,000 miles, and stopped in 11 locations before reaching Washington, D.C.

Ott provided almost around-the-clock care to her patients, even paying out-of-pocket for patient's lodging and meals when they were needed. Although

she was so fatigued at the end of her trip that she had to check her dog tag to find out what her name was, all of her patients went on to make full recoveries.

The mission was an unmitigated success. It demonstrated that aeromedical evacuation could save lives and lessen the burden of hospitals in forward areas, while generating publicity that inspired scores of nurses to apply to be flight nurses. For this mission, Ott became the first woman to be awarded the Air Medal. Less than a month later, Grant would tell the first graduating class of flight nurses "Your graduation in the first class of nurses from the first organized course in air evacuation, marks the beginning of a new chapter in the history of nursing." (Link & Coleman, 1955, p. 371)

The flight nurses who followed lived the Flight Nurses Creed, written by Grant himself: "I will summon every resource to prevent the triumph of death over life." (Barger, 2013, p. 57) Flight nurses served in every corner of the globe, working in tandem with pilots and air crews in every aspect of the mission—from configuring aircraft, to inflight management of the patients. Flight surgeons and Air Corps officers placed increasing trust in the flight nurses throughout the war, and often relied on them to fulfill the flight surgeon's duties when needed.

In spite of their successes, aeromedical evacuation and flight nursing were hampered by institutional as well as gender bias by traditional officers, and their full potential remained unrealized at the end of the War. A fundamental lack of understanding and an aversion to putting women into harm's way kept flight nurses, in the Pacific and China-Burma-India theaters particularly, from flying into combat zones and even on certain routes of evacuation. Additionally, a lack of education in the value of air evacuation to theater commanders and a lack of acceptance of air assets as more than supplemental parts of the Army mission, occasionally

led to a reluctance to use the air over traditional means of evacuation. These issues, coupled with coordination and communication issues, and a low-priority rating given to patients by some theater commanders, created damaging delays, additional exposure and injury to the wounded, and wasted flying hours for the MAES. One flight nurse, in August of 1944, made over a hundred flights yet only received patients on roughly 30% of them. The reluctance to accept this capability not only reduced the effectiveness of evacuation and wasted the specialized skill of the flight nurse, it undoubtedly cost American servicemen their lives.

The nature of global conflict necessitated the creation of the flight nurse specialty. In a sense, development of this capability was inevitable, though it could be slowed by bureaucratic wrangling. However dreary and frustrating the bureaucratic battles over autonomy of the Air Surgeon's office, they were essential in enabling Grant to move ahead with his plans to create an effective air evacuation capability early in the war, including a pivotal role for female nurses.

Grant worked tirelessly to see the development and continued growth of the medical air evacuation program, and after the war, spoke candidly yet humbly of its successes, heaping praise on his staff and on the members of the MAES. He retired in 1946, having institutionalized the Air Evacuation mission, and laid the foundation of an independent medical service that would come into its own after the establishment of the Air Force in 1949. Likewise, flight nursing was further developed in the Korean and Vietnam Wars, and has become a highly specialized sub-field of the nursing profession in the military and civilian spheres alike. Flight nurses continue to, in Grant's words, "set the very skies ablaze with life and promise for the sick, injured, and wounded" (Barger, 2013, p. 57).

Questions for Reflection:

- General Grant and the Surgeon General both had responsibilities for the evacuation of Army personnel yet struggled to overcome the burgeoning inter-service rivalry to implement a comprehensive plan of evacuation and teach ground commanders the value of air evacuation, thus lessening its overall effectiveness. What can this teach us about leadership in planning joint operations today?
- Until 1942, General Grant lacked the explicit authority to execute the air evacuation mission that he felt would best serve U.S. servicemen and women, and took his 1941 proposal directly to the War Department. Additionally, he would go outside of normal procurement chains when deployed AAF medical units were in need of supplies. How would you assess Grant's readiness to operate outside formal channels?
- Flight Nurses were a key element in the success of the air evacuation mission, yet were often discontented when they felt their contributions were being limited due to policies relating to their gender. What would you do if you feel your impact is being hindered by leaders who have biased ideas regarding gender and/or race?

♦ ♦ ♦

References

- Barger, J. (2013) *Beyond The Call of Duty: Army Flight Nursing in World War II*. The Kent State University Press.
- Link, M. & Coleman, H. (1955) *Medical Support of The Army Air Forces in World War II*. U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Meiling, R. (1944) Air Evacuation (1944) *The Journal of Aviation Medicine*, April. 93-97.

Further Reading On The Subject

- Barger, J. (1984) Rivalry for the Sky: A Prelude to the Development of the Flight Nurse Program in the US Army Air Forces. *Aviation Space Environmental Medicine*, 56(1) 73-78.
- Barger, J. (1986) Strategic Aeromedical Evacuation: The Inaugural Flight. *Aviation Space Environmental Medicine*, 57(6) 613-616.
- Julian, T. (2015) *A History of Aeromedical Evacuation in the U.S. Air Force*. U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Sarnecky, M. (1999) *A History of the U.S. Army Nurse Corps*. The University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Skinner, R. (1983) The Making of the Air Surgeon: The Early Life and Career of David N.W. Grant. *Aviation Space Environment Medicine*, 54(1) 75-82.

REFLECTIONS:



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.



UNITED STATES
AIR FORCE ACADEMY

CENTER FOR CHARACTER & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

JCLD@usafa.edu



[@USAFA_CCLD](https://twitter.com/USAFA_CCLD)

ISSN 2372-9404 (print)

ISSN 2372-9481 (online)