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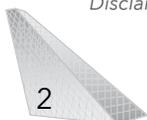
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FROM THE EDITOR

WHO YOU ARE



Douglas Lindsay, Editor in Chief, JCLD, PhD

A fundamental premise in leadership development is the need to have a basic awareness of who you are. This is often referred to as how you show up. Whether you are an accomplished leader or just starting out, you must understand how you are showing up into leadership situations. How you are showing up is determined by who you are as a person. Simply stated, who you really are, is how you are going to lead. This understanding of who you are is critical because it is your developmental entry point. It is the foundation upon which leader development effort(s) will be built. As all effective leaders know, your leadership stems from who you are. If you try to lead from a place that is different than who you are, it is misaligned, inauthentic, and your followers will recognize that inconsistency. This may seem like a rather simplistic line of reasoning, and it really is. As with many things related to leadership, the approach is rather straightforward, but the challenge is in the application. That is why people often refer to the art and science of leadership. The science (or knowledge) is relatively straightforward. There are things that we know that effective leaders do. They communicate effectively. They know how to make decisions. They empower their teams. They recognize the value that all members bring to the team. The list goes on. We know what effective leaders do and what skills leaders need. So, why then, do we have so many ineffective leaders? It is in the other part that is referenced above, the art. It is actually taking that knowledge and correctly applying it in the right way, at the right time, in the right situation. That, as all leaders know, is less straightforward.

The reason that the application is difficult is that there are myriad factors that play into the leadership dynamic. Some of these are under the control of the leader and some are not. In total, there are factors at play from the leader, the followers, and the situation in which the leadership will be enacted. Each of these will have a different impact on the leader and their leadership. If we understand that the primary role of the leader is to organize and shape those influences to enable the team to effectively accomplish the task at hand, then we need to consider what they actually have influence on. With respect to the leader, they own that entirely. From the follower's perspective, while they may not have selected those on their team, they certainly have great influence on how they interact with

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.



and equip the members of the team. For the situation, they additionally have an impact on how they prepare their team to effectively act in the situation. From a developmental standpoint, while we can influence all three of those areas, the key leverage area is the leader themselves. Again, this is not complex reasoning. However, how we go about that development is crucial. With hundreds of billions of dollars spent annually on training and development across various industries, one would think that we have closed the gap of ineffective leadership. Unfortunately, that is not always the case.

Back to the original thought of helping the leader understand who they are and what they stand for, that gives us an entry point for development. The benefit of this approach is that it applies equally to beginning leaders as well as very senior strategic leaders. This is due to the fact that leader development is ongoing and does not stop once you reach a particular level. All effective leaders understand that it is a journey and a journey without an end point. When that is paired with an understanding of who we are, it creates a developmental trajectory that is beneficial not only for the individual leader, but the entire organization. Starting with an understanding of who we are, we know our strengths and weaknesses. With that information, then we can start to layer on developmental efforts that are aimed at improving the weaknesses and enhancing the strengths. It is a continuous cycle of assess, understand, develop, and apply.

From a developmental standpoint, that is great news. That means if we understand ourselves, then we can begin to understand how we can further enhance our growth as a leader. However, it is not enough to just understand that process, the organization needs to be set up to support such a developmental approach. Many people recognize this importance, but few organizations truly value it. It is why many developmental efforts fail.

You see many organizations with:

- A one size fits all approach where everyone does the same developmental opportunities.
- An inoculation (one time) approach versus a developmental (over time) approach.
- Annual training versus tailored development.
- Using the budget to determine what can be afforded versus what is truly needed.
- Failing to understand the role of the organization's culture toward development and growth.
- Failing to support the individual after the developmental intervention.
- Failure to use data to inform developmental efforts.
- Not tying the developmental programs to the strategic goals of the organization.
- Viewing development as the individual's responsibility versus the organization's opportunity.
- Lack of support for development by senior leaders

You will notice from the above list that in order for development to be valued and successful, it needs to be part of the organization's DNA. It needs to be part of "the way we do things around here." While many excuses can be given for why that isn't the case, the bottom line is that world class organizations find a way to make it happen.

The United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) is such an institution. It starts with the mission (the DNA) of the Academy: The mission of the of the United States Air Force Academy is to educate, train, and inspire men and women to become leaders of character, motivated to lead the Department of the Air Force in service to our nation. To that end, the Academy is dealing with new leaders who are at the beginning of their leadership development journey. While they have likely had some leadership experiences prior to attending the Academy,



much of their development as leaders will occur during the 47-months that they attend the Academy. This is not uncommon, as many organizations have individuals who “grow up” in the company, and are shaped and socialized by the organization and people around them. The key for the Academy is the understanding of the importance of developing leaders of character so that they can accomplish their mission. In order to do that, the Academy has a vast system in place to support that development. In addition to that system, programs, courses, and processes, the foundation for the Academy’s individual development of leaders is the Leader of Character Framework¹. The framework focuses on the elements of *Living Honorably*, *Lifting Others* to their best possible selves, and *Elevating Performance* toward a common and noble purpose. This is done by creating intentional developmental experiences that helps junior leaders own their development, engage in purposeful experiences, and then giving them ample time to practice their leadership. Through this process, cadets learn about themselves and how they are showing up in their leadership experiences. Put another way, they know who they are, so they can learn and understand how they lead.

In This Issue

A primary reason that we devote the annual Fall issue of the JCLD to conversations with leaders is to bring into reality what was just talked about. It is an opportunity to take a deeper dive with a leader on what has impacted them, what their journey was like, and the decisions they made about their own development—all in their own words. One of the consistent themes that you will notice across all of the conversations is the continued focus on development from all of these leaders. In this issue, you will find conversations with leaders across many different domains (military, academic, business, sports, etc.). By examining leaders from different domains, it allows readers to see what opportunities and experiences shaped each leader.

While there are certainly some differences based on context, you will also recognize many common themes such as the importance of reading for development, reframing negative experiences, and knowing your people. These conversations give us rare insight into the thought processes of very successful leaders.

The first conversation is with new USAFA Superintendent Lieutenant General Richard Clark (USAFA 1986). In this conversation with the USAFA Center for Character and Leadership Development Director, Colonel Kim Campbell (USAFA 1997), Gen Clark talks about his journey through the Air Force that culminates in his current role as the Superintendent. He discusses the importance of finding your purpose and how that impacts us as leaders. In addition, he outlines why character is important to leadership. It is an engaging conversation that sheds insight into his perspective on leadership and what he wants to accomplish at USAFA.

The second conversation is taken from a 2020 Summer Seminar that was hosted by the Institute for Future Conflict titled, “The Profession of Arms and the 4th Industrial Revolution.” In the conversation moderated by C1C Michael Greisman and C2C Conley Waters, current Chief of Staff of the Air Force, General Charles Brown, former Chief of Staff of the Air Force, General David Goldfein (USAFA 1983), and former Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, Chief Master Sergeant Kaleth Wright; discuss diversity, demography, and leadership of the 21st Century. These senior Air Force leaders share their own personal experiences as well as the impact of current events. They candidly share about diversity, race, and areas for growth in the Air Force. The perspectives of these Air Force senior leaders gives insight into how they are addressing complex challenges affecting the force and how we can address them moving forward.

Following the Chief’s conversation, we have a discussion with the Senior Enlisted Advisor to the

¹ <https://jcli.scholasticahq.com/article/13606-developing-leaders-of-character>



Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (SEAC), USAF Chief Master Sergeant Ramón Colón-López. In this rare opportunity, SEAC Colón-López discusses his journey and the importance of being able to add value. He talks about his own personal development and what he does to continue developing as a leader. As the SEAC, he shares about his role and what the military can do to continue to develop leaders. As the senior enlisted representative in the Armed Forces, his insights and perspectives are valuable for all who want to develop as a leader.

The final military conversation is moderated by Senior Master Sergeant Ecatarina Garcia and is with the newest Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, Chief Master Sergeant Joanne Bass. In the conversation, Chief Bass discusses the importance of culture and having an opportunity to serve. In addition, Chief Bass shares her perspective of current events and how they shape the Air Force. We also get a glimpse of her own development and how she keeps growing as a leader.

The next conversation is from the domain of higher education and is with the Professor of Character Education at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, Dr. Marvin Berkowitz. Dr. Berkowitz shares his perspective on the importance of character. He talks about his journey and how he has impacted and invested in character education and development. Dr. Berkowitz is a leader in the field of character education and is having an impact on schools across the country through the PRIMED Model that he helped develop. This conversation shines light on how important character education is not just for developing leaders.

Continuing with higher education, we have a conversation with current President of Charleston Southern University and Major General (Retired), Dr. Dondi Costin (USAFA 1986). Dr. Costin talks about his development as a leader and the role that faith plays in his development. He recounts some stories from his journey that shine light on how he was impacted

by not only those around him, but his steadfast belief system. Regardless of your particular beliefs, all can gain a greater understanding of leader development and how a belief in something larger than yourself can have a powerful impact.

We finish up the higher education domain with a conversation Brigadier General (Retired) Dr. Bernard Banks (USMA 1987) who is the Associate Dean for Leadership Development and Inclusion at the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University. Through sharing some pivotal moments throughout his career, Dr. Banks discusses how, as leaders, we often need to reframe events so that we can grow from them. These events, while seemingly negative at the time, can have a huge impact on our development as leaders. Dr. Banks also shares how he integrates leadership and inclusion across all aspects of Northwestern University. It is a great conversation around overcoming obstacles, development, and making a difference.

We can also learn a lot about leadership through the domain of sports. We were fortunate to have a conversation with former National Champion football coach of Oklahoma University and former coach of the XFL Dallas Renegades, Bob Stoops. In this enlightening conversation, Coach Stoops talks about his experience developing teams and how to create a winning culture. Through his “No Excuses” philosophy, he talks about how the leader can create culture within organizations. While we all encounter setbacks, it is how we respond to those setbacks that matters.

The next two conversations come from the domain of business. The first is with the Vice President of Global Leadership and Development for Walmart, Mr. James Cameron. Mr. Cameron discusses his journey from British military officer to Walmart Vice President by sharing some of his leadership experiences along the way. Through the conversation, he talks about how he set up leadership programs at Walmart at all levels and



how the company approaches leader development. As a global giant in the retail space, he talks about some of the challenges that they face and how they address them through the development of their leaders.

The second business conversation is with Jay Caiafa (USAFA 1999) who is the Chief Operating Officer of The Americas at InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG). Mr. Caiafa discusses how his organization is adapting to the current challenges and how they have used it to highlight and support their people in the organization. As one of the industries hit hardest as a result of COVID, Mr. Caiafa talks about their approach and how they took care of and valued their people in the mist of the crisis. He also discusses the impact that USAFA had on him and how he is has grown as a leader over the years.

Our final conversation is with the President and CEO of the Air Force Academy Foundation (AFAF) and the Association of Graduates (AOG), Lieutenant General (Retired), Mike Gould (USAFA 1976). In this engaging conversation, Gen Gould reflects on his time at the Academy, his career, and his time with the AFAF/AOG. He describes several pivotal points along his career and shares how he developed as a leader. Gen Gould talks about why it is important for graduates to stay connected and the value that the AFAF and AOG have to USAFA. This conversation is a great read for leaders to understand the importance of character and philanthropy. It is through the generous support of the AFAF that the JCLD is possible.

Book Reviews

All successful leaders mention the role that reading plays in their own development. In fact, the common saying is that “Leaders are readers.” In every issue of the JCLD, we want to expose readers to several books that could assist you in your own developmental journey. For this issue, we have reviews of three books for you to consider. The first is a review by Dr. Douglas Kennedy

on the book *Master of the Air: William Tunner and the Success of Military Airlift* by Robert Slayton. The second review is by Dr. Mark Grotelueschen on the book *Hunter Liggett: A Soldier’s General* by Michael Shay. The final review is by Capt Tony Huang (USAF) on *Emotional Intelligence 2.0* by Travis Bradbury and Jean Greaves. Each of these books are worthy of putting into your reading rotation.

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 leader. For this issue, Dr. Stephen Randolph (Center for Character and Leadership Development Rokke-Fox Chair; USAFA 1974) and Dr. John Abbatiello (Center for Character and Leadership Development, Chief, Research & Scholarship Division; USAFA 1987) explore the career of U.S. Army Lieutenant General Lewis H. Brereton. Their Profile in Leadership is titled “When to Listen to Your Subordinates and When Not to Listen,” focuses on several examples from Gen Brereton’s career when he had the opportunity to take the advice of his subordinates. The implications in the examples are discussed with respect to leadership. The eloquent review does a great job of highlighting some key moments in this Brereton’s career through WW I and WW II.

Looking Ahead

The February 2021 issue of the JCLD will align with the theme from the National Character and Leadership Symposium². This year’s theme will be Warrior Ethos as Airmen & Citizens. What we mean by 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,

² <https://www.usafa.edu/character/national-character-leadership-symposium-ncls>



if necessary, and a commitment to be the world's premier air, space and cyberspace force." Warrior ethos is also one of the four attributes of officership as defined by the USAFA Officer Development System (ODS). The warrior ethos proficiencies that follow comprise a structure that is based on the intellectual development inherent to the Profession of Arms, and the values development prescribed by the Air Force Core Values³. Specifically, USAFA wants graduates that can, 1) Analyze and Value the Profession of Arms; 2) Demonstrate Integrity as Related to Moral Courage; 3) Demonstrate Service before Self as Related to Physical Courage; and 4) Demonstrate Excellence in All We Do as Related to Discipline. While this theme is focused toward USAFA and future military leaders (Airmen), the components that make up Warrior Ethos are informed and developed by many different disciplines and domains. Therefore, submission for articles are encouraged from all domains. This breadth of knowledge helps inform all of us about the topic of Warrior Ethos.

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@usafa.edu or jclld@usafa.edu with your ideas.

³ To learn more about Warrior Ethos, please go to: <https://www.usafa.edu/academics/outcomes/>

MILITARY

DIVERSITY, DEMOGRAPHY AND LEADERSHIP OF THE 21ST CENTURY



Charles Brown, General, USAF

David Goldfein, General (Ret), USAF

Kaleth Wright, CMSgt (Ret), USAF

Interviewed By: Cadet First Class Michael Greisman & Cadet Second Class Conley Walters

Greisman: Thank you all for the opportunity to have this conversation about some very important topics. At the Academy, we talk a lot about the importance of diversity and how it is necessary to have different backgrounds and perspectives. We find ourselves at an interesting point in our country regarding racial inequality. How can we continue to have these productive conversations around diversity and inclusion?

Goldfein: I'll give you a quick perspective, and then would like to defer to General Brown as the incoming Chief of Staff. There is a reason that I have stated over the years that diversity, inclusion, and equal opportunity in the Air Force is a war fighting imperative. I believe that because the global security environment is not getting better and I have not seen it getting calmer. Tensions have been getting higher and there are a number of issues at play. We, as the United States Air Force, are part of an institution that provides stability in that world. The problems that we face are wicked hard and the only way we can come up with creative solutions that our nation requires is to ensure

General Charles Q. Brown, Jr. is the Chief of Staff of the Air Force. As Chief, he served as the senior uniformed Air Force officer who was responsible for the organization, training, and equipping of over 600,000 active duty, Guard, Reserve, and civilian forces serving around the world. As a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff he functioned as a military adviser to the Secretary of Defense, National Security Council and the President. Gen Brown was commissioned in 1984 as a distinguished graduate of the ROTC program at Texas Tech University. He has served in a variety of positions at the squadron and wing levels, including multiple command positions. Gen Brown is a command pilot with more than 2,900 flying hours, including 130 in combat. <https://www.af.mil/About-Us/Biographies/Display/Article/108485/general-charles-q-brown-jr/>



that we have a diverse leadership team and a diverse force that can take all of those backgrounds and experiences and apply them to that problem set at hand and not look at the problems in the same way. There are things that I see based on my life experiences that will be significantly different than General Brown or Chief Wright. We all see problems through different lenses and can come up with far more creative solutions. We do hard things well and we can only do those hard things well if we have a diverse team to be able to think through those. But, I would like to turn it over to General Brown.

Brown: Thank you. I appreciate the opportunity to talk to you today. One of the things that I think about and this is something I said in testimony, and is something that you will hear me say time and time again as Chief, is that we need to create an environment where we all can reach our full potential. That is what a diverse team is all about. We can't have any part of the team feel like they can reach their full potential because of discrimination, people looking over their shoulder or prejudging them based on their background without even knowing them...you can't judge a book by its cover. That is a challenge that we have as we walk into different environments whether it is the color of your skin, gender, height, weight, all of these things where folks start to judge you before you have even opened your mouth or got to work. We have to create the environment where folks can come in and reach that full potential. A key part of this is being able to listen and understand. We all come in with our own perspectives and our

perspectives may not be the right answer. So, we have to really be willing to listen. When I meet with the other Air Chiefs, they always say, "You have the biggest Air Force. We want to hear what you have to say." But, I want to hear what they have to say. There are a lot of things that you can learn from other folks who are not like you like from a smaller Air Force, a different Air Force, or have different political dynamics. That is the part of the dialogue that has to happen to understand. Then, you can really figure out what other's strengths are and not filter before you get the answer because you may have some preconceived notions of how they are going to come across based on past experience. You may have dealt with other folks, but we are not all the same. Even people within the same group, we all have different life experiences that impact how we think and how we can contribute.

Wright: I think what is important for any leader, but especially young leaders, is to first accept that there is a problem with lack of diversity and inequality within our Air Force. I am not convinced that all leaders believe it because maybe they haven't seen it or they just don't want to believe it. That is the first thing that we have to accept is that there is an issue that needs to be addressed. Second, I would say is that every person has to take some level of responsibility for creating diverse organizations. Not everyone is in the position to hire or fire someone, but we are all in the position to learn about other cultures. We are all in the position to do things like encourage someone of a diverse background to apply

General David L. Goldfein was the 21st Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force. As Chief, he served as the senior uniformed Air Force officer who was responsible for the organization, training, and equipping of over 600,000 active duty, Guard, Reserve, and civilian forces serving around the world. As a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff he functioned as a military adviser to the Secretary of Defense, National Security Council and the President. Gen Goldfein received his commission from the United States Air Force Academy in 1983. He is also a graduate of the U.S. Air Force Weapons School and is a command pilot with more than 4,200 flying hours in the T-37, T-38, F-16C/D, F-117A, MQ-9 and MC-12W. He has flown combat missions in Operations DESERT SHIELD, DESERT STORM, ALLIED FORCE, and ENDURING FREEDOM. <https://www.af.mil/About-Us/Biographies/Display/Article/108013/general-david-l-goldfein/>



for a job or join a group that doesn't look like them to learn more. We all need to start taking responsibility for creating diverse organizations even without having to be a commander or have hiring authority.

Something that I have seen in our Air Force when you mention the word diversity, is people shy away from racial and gender diversity. They tend to say diversity like being from different backgrounds or career fields. While all of that is true that you need that level of diversity, you have to be specific about having diverse organizations that include minority Airmen, that include female Airmen, and that include Airmen of different sexual orientations and of religious beliefs. Those things are all controversial and not easy to deal with or talk about. But, if you don't deal with them up front, and you don't admit that there is an issue and take

Your past performance doesn't always predict your future performance, but it can be an indicator.

responsibility for it, then we will always dance around the topic. I think it is really important for people to first, accept that we have that problem and take responsibility for it. And then, call it exactly what it is.

Conley: Gen Brown, I wanted to add a follow up question to your comments and then open it up to the rest. You talked about having an environment where we can all achieve our full potential. As I was preparing for this conversation, I came across something interesting. As cadets, we are all interested in how we can be

successful in our careers. The words of the promotion order state that an individual is promoted based on the special trust and confidence in the patriotism, integrity, and ability of the individual as well as the demonstrated potential to serve at the higher grade. This seems to indicate that there is an evaluation of the both the merit of the work done by that individual as well as that overall potential that they have, which is a little harder to measure. In your experience, what is a lesson that you have learned as well as some advice that you can give in how we can balance the performance aspect versus the potential aspect of our future careers?

Brown: Your past performance doesn't always predict your future performance, but it can be an indicator. The way that I evaluate people is how they carry themselves. How much confidence do they have when they come in the room? How do they engage with their peers?

Are they an informal leader? You can have folks that are in command, but they are not the leader. You can look in your squadron right now and you know who the informal leaders are. Those are the folks that show the potential. They go one step beyond and show some initiative. That, to me, shows potential. I will tell you, the more and more you do this, the easier it is to tell when people are blowing smoke from those who actually have game. It is a bit hard to quantify, because it isn't one or two attributes. Their level of confidence is important because you are going to put them in a tough situation. As you are moving up to the next level, if they can't handle the situation that they are in today, they are going to have a hard time handling the situation above them at the next level. The bottom line is that you have

Chief Master Sergeant Kaleth O. Wright was the 18th Chief Master Sergeant of the United States Air Force. In that capacity, he served as the senior enlisted member in the Air Force and was responsible for providing guidance and direction for the 410,000 member enlisted force. Chief Wright entered the Air Force in 1989 and served in numerous positions such as professional military education instructor, dental assistant, flight chief, superintendent, and command chief on multiple occasions. He earned his Bachelor's Degree in Business Management, his Master's Degree in Business Administration, and has numerous other certifications at the executive level. He is currently the CEO of the Air Force Aid Society.



to know them, engage them, and see them in action. Or, have other leaders who have seen them give you feedback about their potential.

Wright: I think an important question in this type of discussion is, potential for what? Cadet Greisman, I will take your career track as an example. Once you get into the Air Force, you can demonstrate as a Lieutenant, Captain, or Major that you are a phenomenal engineer and you know the business very well. But, let's just say that you have trouble connecting with people or you might have some character flaws. When asking about potential, you might have the potential to be a great staff officer or you might have the potential to go on and do something that requires you to be good at the business of engineering, but maybe not a great commander. Potential is really hard and I agree with General Brown. It is usually centered around character issues and how well you connect with people, how well you inspire or encourage people, and how well you build relationships. When you get to the senior levels, people sometimes forget how great they were, but the skills that have gotten them to where they are today are well beyond the skills that propelled them early on in their careers. As Cadet Walters said, a lot of this is hard to measure. We don't typically write them down. You won't always see them in OPRs/EPRs. A lot of potential is spread through word of mouth. Again, I always start with the question, potential for what, before I decide on whether someone has potential to move forward for any specific position.

Walters: That is a great point about potential for what? How can we start to develop that potential? What are some steps that we can take to develop those skills and traits that we will need to be successful leaders?

Wright: Just like the other gentlemen here, I am a huge consumer of books, podcasts, and information to always get better. I also study leaders that I admire, like the two of them. I will tell you that over the last three years, I have had a front row seat and kind of Ph.D. in leadership sitting beside General Goldfein and watching him deal with situations and how he responds. How he deals with people has been amazing to watch, learn, and grow. I would also say to do an assessment of the areas that you need help in and to know your weaknesses and put some time into developing those areas. Also, make sure that you put time and effort into improving whatever you are really good at because skills do atrophy if you don't use them. It involves reading, learning, and finding someone you admire. You might not have the opportunity to sit next to the Chief of Staff of the Air Force like I have, but there are many great leaders at USAFA and at the bases you will head out to. Many of them you will learn from watching what they say and do. I would also say to get out of your comfort zone. Cadet Greisman, don't just find engineers and Cadet Walters, don't just find medics. If you see someone on the base or in the Air Force that you admire, invite them for a cup of coffee and start a dialogue and ask them some questions. Most great leaders love sharing and passing along information. A lot of the skills that we talk about

Cadet First Class Michael J. Greisman is a Civil Engineering student from the Class of 2021. He is a member of Cadet Squadron 16, the "Chickenhawks", and serves as the 2021 National Character and Leadership Symposium Cadet in Charge. From Ardmore, OK, C/Greisman decided in Middle School that he wanted to join the Air Force and make a difference. His journey led him to the Air Force Academy, where he knew he would be challenged with tough situations and leadership opportunities that would prepare him to fulfill his passion to serve his country. He enjoys helping on the family ranch, welding/fabrication, and coaching basketball and soccer at the USAFA youth center. He is also part of the ASC Design/Build competition team. After graduation, he plans on commissioning as a Civil Engineer.



in leadership are centered around being good human beings. Never forget what it means to be a good person and take care of people.

Brown: I would add to always be willing to learn. At every level, you are still learning as a leader. You are going to be dealing with situations that you didn't plan for and different dynamics. One of the things I mention when I talk about leadership is if on a scale of 1 to 10 you are a 2, then you will likely never be a 10. What I mean by that is you need to understand where your skill sets are. If you are a 6 or 7 and you work hard at it, you can get to a 10. If you are a 2, then you can work hard and get yourself to a 5 or 6, which is average. That is why you want to have a team and you want to have diversity because someone else is going to have a skill set that you don't have. You have to be self-aware. For example, I am an introvert and I know that. I have to work really hard sometimes to make small talk in certain situations. We can talk flying, Air Force, NFL, barbequing, and I am in. Other topics can take work, and I know that. That is an aspect of knowing yourself as you develop your leadership. I am married to an extrovert, so that actually helps me. That is really building your team. That is the thing that you need to think about when you are building diversity in your team. If you don't have a good understanding about a certain area, having someone on your team that understands that better, makes you a better leader. You help them as well. That is part of leadership of not what you do for yourself, but what you do for those around you.

Goldfein: I wanted to build on that theme of continuing to learn. I will give you a real world example that is as current as last night. Here I am, 37 years after graduating from the Academy. I was on Facebook last night. I'm not on there very often, but every now and then I try to get out there and see what Airmen are talking about. I read a post from a young man where he wrote that he was in line to meet the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force and he kept referring to him as Sergeant. Somebody corrected him and told him that he had to refer to him as Chief. The young man responded that "I would, but that I only use that term to refer to my elders." He is a Native American and it was an 'Aha' moment for me. I have been in this post for four years and until I read that post last night, I had never associated the title of Chief with a Native American and the respect that they show to their elders and how hard it is to become a Chief in an American Indian tribe. So, I wrote him back. I said, "I had not ever considered the connection and I will live in a way that is respectful to your tribe. If you are willing, I'd like to have someone follow up with you so that I can learn more." I came in this morning and talked to our Public Affairs team and wanted to know how we could connect with this young man. I hope to talk to him tonight or tomorrow. Here I am, 37 years later and people have been calling me Chief every day, and I never thought about how I have an obligation as Chief to connect with those who have earned that title as Native Americans. To General Brown's point, you never stop learning and growing in your jobs.

Cadet Second Class Conley L. Walters is a Biology major and Portuguese minor from the Class of 2022. He is a member of Cadet Squadron 32, the "Road Runners", serves as the NCLS 2021 NCO In Charge, and is from McKinney, TX. It became his ambition to attend the Air Force Academy and pursue the medical field due to his love and gratitude for human life. These traits have served him well at the Academy as well as during the two-year mission in Brazil he served post-4 Degree (Freshman) year. After returning to the Academy, he strives to share his new appreciation for diversity, life, and character with his classmates, faculty, and the Airmen he will lead. After graduation, Conley hopes to attend medical school and serve as an Air Force neurologist.



Greisman: Part of learning is having critical conversations. Sometimes, those conversations can be awkward. What suggestions do you have for us to lead more inclusively and to get those conversations started where we can have change?

Wright: I do a lot of public speaking and the only time I feel uncomfortable is when I am not prepared. When I don't know enough about the subject, I always feel a little awkward and I don't feel as if I do as good a job as I could have. It is mostly because I haven't spent the time preparing and trying to understand the topic enough to hold a conversation about it. Sometimes, in my mind, I think that I would be better off in the audience just listening to someone else speak about this. Or, having a questions and answers with the audience to learn more about the topic. I would say that these conversations about race, diversity, ethnicity, and gender are so tough is because we often aren't prepared. I go back to the point that we all need to take the responsibility to learn more about people who don't look like us. Sometimes, that means attending an African American Heritage Luncheon or Conference or it could be as informal as talking to one of your friends who may be different from you and asking about how they grew up or your different experiences. Then, when you get into a conversation, you will have a little more context. As a leader, especially as a young leader, I can't emphasize enough that having a conversation doesn't mean you have to control it, be in charge, or have all of the answers. It is being willing to listen and people will help you take the conversation where it needs to go. They might reveal to you a problem that they are having or something that they really like. All you have to say is, you know what, that makes sense, I'll keep doing it or that doesn't make sense, but let's figure out how to stop doing that. As leaders, we sometime have this desire to always be in control of things. In many of these cases, it is more important to listen than to be in control.

Brown: Much of this starts in small groups and even one on one. As Chief Wright mentioned, it is being able to engage with someone that is different than you and to get a sense of where they are coming from and their life experiences. But in order to get to some of the harder conversations, you have to build trust first. That often starts in a small group. If you just come in guns blazing asking what are your questions in a larger group, people may not open up. But, in a smaller group, you can start to build that trust. It is not only learning about them, it is also learning about yourself. For example, we talk about unconscious bias. Everyone says, "I am not biased." However, we are all biased about something. For example, I am not a Patriots fan. So, I am biased. I am a Cowboys fan. I am going to be biased when we start talking about NFL football. But, I know that. But we don't always fully appreciate the biases and understand them. As General Goldfein just mentioned, you may be saying or doing things that is having an impact on somebody and you are not aware. That involves a bit of self-study, knowing yourself, and reading about these topics. For example, why do parts of a diverse group feel a certain way? That will help you be more prepared when you engage. It will also help you ask smarter questions because you have prepared. That will allow for a deeper dialogue which will help you have a better appreciation for the diverse groups of folks that you work with.

Wright: If you are saying or doing something that is offensive to people, it is actually uncommon for someone to say that it bothers them because most people in minority groups don't want to ruffle feathers, be considered weak, or complain. Most of them just internalize it and just learn how to deal with it. So, you really have to be aware because not everyone is going to say something like the gentleman did with the title of Chief.



Goldfein: It is okay to not have the answers. If you are truly searching for better understanding, that will come through loud and clear with anyone you are talking to and with. If you just test driving your answers, that will also come through. It is okay to have the uncomfortable conversation and not have the answers. On this particular topic, it is quite complex, it is very personal, and if we just went with our ears and really listen to search for that greater understanding, then you have already moved the ball down the field 20 or 30 yards.

Walters: Continuing with that topic of difficult conversations, based on your personal experiences, what is something that you can share with us that is an example of when you were able to bring up one of those difficult conversations.

Brown: A good friend of mine is Lieutenant General (Retired) Sam Cox. We were aides at the same time and we were at Air Command and Staff College together. I forgot that I shared this story with him until recently when we had a conversation about diversity. I shared with him my experiences about being a fighter pilot that in my first two Wings as a Lieutenant at Kunsan AB and a Lieutenant and Captain at Homestead AFB, there were only two African Americans in the entire Wing. I was in one Squadron, and the other African American was in the other Squadron. I talked to him about what it was like to be the only person in the room. He reflected that in high school, he was a basketball player and he was the only white player on the team. His point to me was that he only had to play a game, but that I had to walk through life. It is really understanding that kind of dynamic that you have to prove yourself. We had a conversation in a session not too long ago that when you grow up as an African American, you are sometimes going to have to work twice as hard to prove yourself because there is already a preconceived notion that you are in because of diversity issues, instead

of being fully qualified. For example, everyone needs to meet the standard to get into the Academy. That is a given. That doesn't mean that everyone picked has to be the best person though. I will go back to the NFL as an example. When they have the football combine, everybody runs in different sections and are divided by their position. When you pick a team, you don't have a

When you pick a team, you don't have a team of 11 quarterbacks. If you did that, you would not have a great team. That is why you have to have different levels of people that come into this.

team of 11 quarterbacks. If you did that, you would not have a great team. That is why you have to have different levels of people that come into this.

The last thing I would share on this is that there are several books that talk about the head start. In some cases they talk about the 400 year head start. That is because of slavery and other things that have been put into place. I'll offer to you that there is a good Netflix documentary titled *13th*. It talks about what happened to the freeing of the slaves with the 13th Amendment and all of the roadblocks that were put in over time. The analogy is that if you are running a track race and one person has a flat track and the other one has hurdles, the one who doesn't have the hurdles is going to get there faster. We can do affirmative action type of things, but it is not just one time. That is the challenge that we run into. We do a little bit and then think that we have covered it and go back to what we were doing before. That is why you need to have these opportunities to bring people in. They have to be fully qualified, of course, but it doesn't mean that you always pick the top of the list of all one type. You have to have the top of the list from a variety of types of diverse people.

Wright: I think we should first acknowledge that what makes a successful cadet or a successful Air Force officer, academic excellence might be in the top five, but it might not be. There are studies that were done on all of the Service Academies that determined that grit was the determining factor as to who was successful and who was not over things like GPA and SAT scores. One, it might be time for us to consider using other means to determine who should be admitted other than just high test scores. Like General Brown was referring to, you

General Brown just selected the first female Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force to replace me.

can trace back to the disparity in education systems and resources where minorities might end up with lower scores. Maybe consider things like grit and other factors that relate to good Air Force officers. General Brown just selected the first female Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force to replace me. Some people will say that she was a diversity pick or she was picked for gender. I have already had to engage in those conversations to say no, that she was selected through a very thorough process because she had the skills and potential to serve in this role. Sometimes we will say that he or she was the right person at the right time for this job which to me is a little bit of a poke. Certainly they were the right person like any other person was the right person at the right time. They were the best candidate period. You don't have to say anything else. That is something that minorities deal with all of the time. Even if you are the best, there are still people that will judge you and say that you were only selected because you were black or a female, or what have you. We just have to confront stuff like that head on. It starts with education and understanding. It's great that you have great test scores. Lots of people have great test scores, but there are other things that will also make you successful at USAFA that include important things like character, grit, and building relationships.

They may not be as easily measurable as the things that people tend to believe that got them to where they are.

Goldfein: I'd offer that Conley, Mike and I's experience were probably pretty similar. We competed to get into the Academy in a system that was designed by us for us. So, our experience was unique in that we were part of the majority that comes into the Academy. Therefore, we are not going to see the things that are intentionally or unintentionally pejorative to those that don't look like us or sound like us. We need to have a bit of skepticism in terms of looking at processes and procedures and questioning whether they work equally well for all of us. For example, we took on a complete overhaul of our Officer Promotion System and development for promotions. It was the first time since the early 1980's. I had to start the conversation by looking at a table of General Officers. I said, "Let's start this conversation by acknowledging that we are about to change the system that worked pretty well for all of us. What is wrong with the promotion system? It worked for us. The question is, does it work for all of us? Does it produce the talented leaders we need to not only represent America but can also bring that diverse background, life experiences, what we need to lead the Air Force in times of global security challenges?" As you prepare to graduate and move up, take a good healthy look at the processes and procedures and then go to your teammates that don't sound and look like you and listen to their experiences and what it was like for them to compete. Really listen to see if the system truly works for all of us. If we ever start to congratulate ourselves that we got it all right, it is time to be very afraid.

Greisman: Shifting gears a bit, I have a question for each of you. General Goldfein, what are your reflections on what you were able to accomplish as the Chief? General Brown, what are some of your goals heading into the position? Finally, Chief Wright, what are your reflections about your time and what you are handing



off to Chief Bass as the next Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force?

Goldfein: About every two weeks, I sign condolence letters to parents and spouses of Airmen who commit suicide. That is the worst part of this job because I know I am signing a letter to someone whose life has been destroyed because of a tragic decision that a young Airman made when they transitioned from hopeful to hopeless on our watch. That is one of the parts that we didn't get to enough. We worked it hard but we didn't make enough of a dent. There are a lot of reasons for that, but I would have loved to have handed off to Chief Brown, an Air Force where he didn't have to sign these letters.

Wright: I learned some time ago, to live with no regrets. While there are things like the boss just mentioned and lots of areas of our Air Force where I wish I could say I wish we had a do over, I try to live my life with no regrets. We gave the Air Force everything that we had during our time. I think that philosophy actually helps us because it says that there is no time for tomorrow and there is no saving it for the next person. We have to act now. We did that in a lot of cases. Some things we implemented and tried and they didn't turn out as well as we expected. But in other things, they turned out really well. I feel like we are handing General Brown and Chief Bass a good Air Force. We did the best that we could.

Brown: It's been a little while since General Goldfein approached me and said that they were considering putting my name in the hat to be the next Chief of Staff of the Air Force. I was fairly new into the job at PACAF and was really focused on the job I needed to do. But as it got closer, I sat down with my family and talked about the potential and really got pumped up about it. When I signed up for this, COVID wasn't an issue and the racial tensions weren't as significant.

As General Goldfein has mentioned, every challenge is an opportunity. I see that the things that we are experiencing right now is a way to accelerate the changes that we have often talked about. When you start talking about the National Defense Strategy, you start talking about diversity and inclusion, which we have been working for a number of years. For example, I ran the action group for Secretary Donley and General Schwartz. We had a whole thing on diversity and it became diversity of everything which led to a diversity of nothing. What I am really looking to do is how do we can accelerate some of these changes and use the window of opportunity we have with COVID and the racial challenges along with potential budget pressure to drive that?

Another aspect that I am looking at is collaboration. How can we increase our collaboration with our industry partners? One of the things that I have really appreciated about what General Goldfein and Chief Wright have done is being able to push things down at lower levels so there aren't a lot of top down directed programs. Getting a sense from the force and letting them design the way they want to execute things. Like we did with our resiliency tactical pause. The more we do that, the more we get buy in from the force to go and execute.

The other thing I am thinking through is empowerment in the development of Airmen. One of General Goldfein's big rocks was revitalizing the squadron. I think we have made some good progress there but I'm not sure we have empowered our Airmen and leaders down to the lowest level in some cases. We still have a bunch of Air Force Instructions that tell everyone what they have to do and I think there are some decisions need to allow them to make at lower levels. We have had some opportunities with COVID where we were able to delegate things down and not give a whole lot of guidance. If we can give intent and authority down to





the lower levels, they can figure out how best to execute. How do we get them to feel comfortable making tough calls and decisions? This leads into the whole conversation we are talking about with diversity. When people call asking for guidance about what they need to talk about, I shouldn't be giving them guidance. I want them to lead. That means I need to develop them to feel comfortable enough to lead in these tough situations without a lot of guidance because in a high end fight, that is what is going to happen. I am not going to be able to communicate from the Air Operations Center to everybody. I am just going to have to give them enough intent and authority to go execute. We have to be able to do that every day so that when they go into conflict, they are better prepared to do it. We can't start to do it day one of the war or day one of the contingency. That is something that we need to have engrained in our culture. It is a bit of a culture shift.

That drives into the whole discussion on diversity where a commander or leader actually feels comfortable reaching out and talking to people and collaborating better. We will be a better Air Force for that. We are already really good, but there is a little too much bureaucracy in some areas that doesn't allow our leaders to lead. We need to trust them to lead and we need to hold them accountable as well. That doesn't mean we need to necessarily fire them. If you go back to World War II, there were a lot of commanders that got fired and then rehired. They are going to have some "aw shucks" moments, but it is how they handle those "aw shucks" moments and how we help them as senior leaders to coach them through these processes versus crushing them if they have an issue.

Walters: Thank you so much for sharing your thoughts and experiences.

MILITARY

WHAT IS YOUR PURPOSE?

Richard Clark, Superintendent, Lt Gen, USAF



Interviewed By: Kim Campbell, Col, USAF

Campbell: You mentioned at your Change of Command Ceremony that the Academy set you up for success in your career. I also feel the same way about my career, as it really started my path and shaped my future. Would you share what you took away from your time as a cadet and how that still influences you today?

Clark: When I look back, there are a couple of concepts that stand out, but not in any particular order. The first is the ability to multi-task. As a cadet you have to do a lot of things at the same time, every day. You have to manage yourself, your time, and your skills, and put them in the right place at the right time. As an officer, especially as you increase in rank, you find the ability to multitask becomes incredibly useful. Developing that discipline is a great habit I've benefited from for decades.

The relationships I've built have also been critical. Many people who I worked with throughout my career I know from the Academy. Even if I didn't know them when I was here or they weren't from my class, there is always a common bond among graduates. It can be an ice breaker and a relationship builder, either socially or professionally, because you know somebody who knows somebody.

Perseverance is another lesson I took away from my time at the Academy. There are a lot of ups and downs as a cadet. I remember some days feeling incredible because I received a good GR score or I made no mistakes at football practice, but the next day I was sitting confinements because I signed in late. Each week there were ups and downs, but I learned how to deal with those moments and not let the little things bother me. By changing my perspective, and persevering, I kept pressing toward the goals of graduation and being an officer in the Air Force.

The biggest character development for me, though, was trying to be an honorable person and understanding what that meant. Honor now means more to me after I left here as a Second Lieutenant, but my foundation of living honorably started here at the Academy. I actually look back and see just how impactful my time as a cadet has remained in my life. I impart my learned knowledge on my kids and they are beneficiaries of a lot of the lessons I learned here. Such as how you show respect to people, how you talked to people, and how you carry yourself in all situations. All of these skills I developed played a large role in what made my experience

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great. Even though I didn't know it all of the time when I was there, I know it now.

Campbell: I think many graduates would agree with you that we didn't always know it at the time, or know how it would shape us, but we can look back years later and recognize the great lessons we learned from the Academy. I would like to touch on something that you mentioned about living honorably. While you were here as the Commandant, the Leader of Character Framework was established. Can you talk about why it was important to establish the framework of Lifting Others, Living Honorably, and Elevating Performance?

Clark: The framework was a roadmap that allowed us to get to the desired goal of living honorably, lifting others, and elevating performance. We must realize that we have to meet people where they are because everyone comes to the Academy from different places, different backgrounds, different parts of the country, and have different experiences. When we are developing

When we are developing individuals, we have to take in to account the fact that we all don't have the same starting point.

individuals, we have to take in to account the fact that we all don't have the same starting point. We need a methodology to help us reach our strategic goal together: developing leaders of character. The three areas of living honorably, lifting others, and elevating performance are actions that every leader should understand. If people are

going to trust us, those are characteristics that we should always demonstrate, not only as military officers, but as people of character in general.

Campbell: With that in mind, where do you feel diversity and inclusion fit into the Leader of Character Framework?

Clark: When we talk about the three dimensions and meeting people where they are, we must also accept them for who they are. We all have to be able to build relationships and make connections so that we can move forward together. Whether you are leading or following, it's about the connections that we are able to make with people from any background, regardless of their ethnicity, race, gender, economic status, or social class.

Dignity and respect is absolutely essential for everyone. If you don't have that, you don't earn trust, you don't have a connection, and there isn't leadership or followership. Respect extends beyond our borders to our global environment. I've had two assignments overseas, deployed three times, and I've interacted with people from different countries, languages, backgrounds, and cultures. If we are going to develop as leaders in every way, morally and intellectually, we must develop from a diversity standpoint. Inclusion is also a moral imperative, a leadership imperative, a strategic imperative, and an American imperative because daring to be inclusive allows for empathy, perspective, and understanding, which only makes our leaders better. Honestly, this approach just

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makes for a better life. It expands your horizons and doesn't limit your interactions to just the kind of people you usually connect with. You can connect with anyone and everyone that you come across, which is what we want to do as human beings, but especially as officers and leaders.

Campbell: When we talk about developing leaders of character at the Academy, what role does character have in that leadership development?

Clark: Being someone of strong character allows people to look to you as an example and someone they want to follow. Most of us would agree that we want to follow a person of high character. When a follower sees that in someone, it's natural for them to feel a trust in and connection with that individual. We have to set that example and show people that if you follow me, we are going to follow the right path. It's not just our subordinates who are following us, but our peers, teammates, and wingmen connect with us based on our character as well. Mutual trust relies on character, which is the fabric that holds every team together, and leads us all toward success.

Campbell: Recognizing the important connection between leadership and character, would you share an experience of how character influenced your leadership?

Clark: In my career there have been many leaders who have exemplified character and helped me move forward. My Superintendent when I was a cadet was General Winfield "Skip" Scott. He knew me because I played football, and he was a big football fan. He knew that the Air Force had determined I wasn't qualified for pilot training because I had dislocated my shoulders, both of them, multiple times. But he, being a combat pilot himself, had ejected from his fighter. When he heard that they were disqualifying me because of my shoulders, he took it upon himself to say, I understand what the Air Force is saying, but I disagree. He had the fortitude to step in and intervene and tell the Air

Force that it was wrong. He called me into his office and said, "Congratulations, you are going to graduate a Second Lieutenant. Do you want to go to pilot training?" I said, "Absolutely, but I'm not qualified." He asked me to rotate my right shoulder over my head, and I did. He then asked me to rotate my left shoulder over my head, and I did. Then he said, "You know, I ejected from a jet and worrying about dislocating my shoulder was the least of my concerns. I believe you should go to pilot training. I'm not a doctor, but I believe the Air Force got this wrong and I'm going to do something about it." A couple of days later, I got a call from the hospital commander who said, "Come on down. We want to reexamine you for pilot training." That day, I was qualified for pilot training because General Scott saw something that he didn't think was right, and he didn't just let it go when he easily could have. I was one of 4,000 cadets, and his intervention changed my life. It takes character to do something like that. First, as a 3-star, to humble himself to go to a cadet and say, 'I want to help you.' Then, to take time out of his schedule to take the necessary steps needed to turn around the previous decision. That was the kind of person he was. He put me before himself in a lot of ways. I am here right now because of him, and I hope that I have the opportunity to do that for as many cadets as I possibly can. I could go on and on with other examples, not just from people who were my bosses, but also from people who worked for me. Lieutenants who went into combat and did things that brought tears to my eyes. I have seen countless examples in my career of people with strong character and fortitude who took actions that inspired me, and taught me that character does matter.

Campbell: I love that story and I have to tell you that I had a very similar experience because I was not pilot qualified either. But, someone was willing to take a chance on me as well, and that choice stuck with me. One act of kindness showed me that leadership is about looking out for your Airmen and being willing to take a chance and make a difference.



Clark: We have that in common. It is great to hear that there are more experiences where we can point to a moment in time that changed everything. It took someone with character to do it. Someone who not only said, “I am doing this,” but also made it happen.

Campbell: I think it is a reminder to us as leaders that no matter what level you are at, if you can impact an Airman’s life, you never know where that road is going to take that Airman. Who knows, they could be the next Superintendent of the Air Force Academy? With our previous discussion in mind, something that you previously talked about really resonated with me, which is knowing your purpose and your why. Would you share what your why is and why you continue to serve?

Clark: My why is to inspire people to be their absolute best. If I could have some impact on the people that I meet, to inspire them a little bit, then I would consider my life good. I mentioned earlier that people have done that for me many times. Sometimes it was even something as simple as a congratulatory note, which just encouraged me to keep going. So, if I had one thing that I could do every day of my life, it would be to inspire others to become everything that they possibly can. There is no other better force multiplier in a person’s life. Can you imagine if we all did that? Can you imagine if the whole world sought to inspire someone else to be better every day? I realize that everyone has different skills that they bring to the table. But, we all need a purpose, and we should all seek to have a purpose that is bigger than ourselves. It’s not about me. It’s something bigger than me. When your reason for living is something bigger than yourself, your effort and your inspiration become bigger. I had to find mine. For a chunk of my life, I was just trying to make it and really living for myself every day. If I could make it through the day and not get kicked out of the Academy, or make it through the day without washing out of pilot training, then I called it a good day. As I got older, I started realizing that there is more. I’m not here just for me,

or here in this world just to survive. I’m here to make it better, and I have to find my purpose and figure out what my mark is going to be. We are all here for something. I know that we are here for a reason, and we each have to find that. Once we do, we are off to the races.

Campbell: I appreciate your reflections on your time as a cadet and trying to survive. I know a lot of cadets feel that way at times. So, with that in mind, if General Clark could go back and give Cadet Clark some advice, what would you say?

Clark: My advice would be to seek out your purpose now, and to find the bigger why. The Academy started my foundation of knowing that it is about something bigger than myself. But, back when I was a cadet, I didn’t realize that I was formulating what it meant to be part of something that was bigger than myself. If I had known it then, I would have sought it more intently, and I might have pursued having a bigger impact on

We are all here for something. I know that we are here for a reason, and we each have to find that. Once we do, we are off to the races.

others during my time at the Academy. I would also tell myself to expand my horizons. Don’t limit yourself. Granted – football, my squadron, and academics took a lot of time, but I feel that if I had broadened myself a little more, I would have been inspired to do more. My passions would have driven me to an even more rewarding experience. I would tell Cadet Clark don’t just survive, you want to thrive. You need to get out there and be all that you can be, find your passions and go for it. Do what you love, and love what you do!

Campbell: I love to talk to cadets now about the importance of not just surviving, but thriving. To try and do all they can and learn all they can because it will carry over into their Air Force careers. Along those lines, you were a cadet, you were the Commandant, and now you are the Superintendent. I’d like to know

what you are most excited about with this new position of command at USAFA.

Clark: That question wraps up everything that we have talked about. The position of Superintendent gives me the opportunity to live that purpose, and give something back to the school that helped me realize my purpose. It's about the cadets, staff, and faculty, and doing whatever I can to help everybody here to be all that they can be, each and every day. When I wake up in the morning, I look forward to coming to work -- to see what I can do to help us get to the next level. You can't have a better position than the kind of job where you feel like your purpose is being fulfilled, and I actually get to do it every day. Coming back here, I couldn't ask for more. When I was promoted to 2-star, two of my bosses asked me what job I wanted. I said, "I have never in my career in the Air Force asked for a job. But, if you are asking me if there is one job that I could have, it would be the USAFA Superintendent." Both of them, at two different times went back and explored it, and came back and said that it wasn't the right time and I am going to go do other things. So, I thought that the ship had sailed. When the Chief of Staff asked me last April if I would consider this position, you can't imagine the thoughts that went through my head. Being back at the Academy is the best job, the best opportunity, and the best finish to my career that I could ask for. For all the reasons that we just talked about: the things that I want to be, the things that I want to do for people, and the mark that maybe I can leave behind. This is a job where I get to ask someone to rotate both of their arms over their head; and then do whatever I can do for them. If I can do that for as many people as I can, my life will be good and I will feel like I have achieved that purpose.

Campbell: I'm sure that Cadet Clark would never have thought he would come back as Lieutenant General Clark, Superintendent of the United States Air Force Academy. I think it's so important to reinforce to cadets all of the opportunities they have

and all of the great options that are out there for them if they work hard and commit themselves to something bigger than themselves. Are there any final thoughts you'd like to share?

Clark: What I want to impart to cadets is that they are here for a purpose. They have sacrificed a lot. They had other opportunities they could have done, other schools they could have attended, but they chose to come here. What they need to realize is that this is more than just their school and more than just an educational opportunity. If they take this as an opportunity to change the trajectory of their life, it will. The Academy gives you opportunities to build yourself that other places don't provide. If they take that opportunity and own it, they will move in any direction that they want to. I promise. I am living proof of it, and I am here to help them. I know that every other staff and faculty member is here for the same reason. I can see it in the eyes of people during staff meetings or when I am meeting AOCs, coaches, staff, and faculty. They want to give the cadets that experience so that when they leave here, their life is on a trajectory that it otherwise would not have taken. Not just in the military, but in their lives period. Their personal, family, social, professional, and lives as citizens of the world will take a different approach if they own what they develop here and take advantage of the opportunities this Academy provides. It will change everything for them. Take it, own it, and be all that you can be. Don't get bogged down in the little things. Work as hard as you can, do all that you can, and keep moving toward the bigger picture of who you are going to be when you leave here...and live that purpose.



MILITARY

ADDING VALUE



SEAC Ramón Colón-López, USAF

Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

Interviewed By: Douglas Lindsay

Lindsay: You have talked previously about being the sensor, synchronizer, and integrator for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen Mark Milley. Can you talk a little about what that means and a little bit about how you support the force?

Colón-López: All of it derives from speaking truth to power. We hear that often. People use it all the time and it is almost a bumper sticker anymore. But the way I view it is there are a lot of people within Staffs who are concerned about not wanting to ruin the boss's day. In my position, as the Senior Enlisted Advisor, I am not concerned with that. I am concerned about not ruining his career because he doesn't know something critical. In my role, I don't sugar coat anything. I just tell it like it is, the bottom-line up-front (BLUF). This is what he needs to be cognizant about. Does it require his action or does it not?

That takes a lot of courage to do because sometimes the reaction is not something that is going to be pleasant. One of the things that I have gotten in the habit of doing, is that while everyone at the Pentagon is concerned with looking at the strategic picture, I translate that picture to the lower echelons, to the trenches. I get input from the force to see if it is something that is going to number one, resonate with them. Number two, something they need, and number three, that it is something that they are going to buy into. If they are not, I ask the reasons why? I tend to make the problem harder to better understand it. By the time it gets to the principal, in this case the Chairman or the Secretary of Defense, it is a bottom-line up-front kind of message, and includes an explanation of why. It is by the numbers and includes any questions. That's what being a sensor, synchronizer, and integrator means.

Lindsay: How did you grow into that position of being able to be the bottom-line up-front message giver and truth teller?

SEAC Ramón "CZ" Colón-López is the Senior Enlisted Advisor (SEAC) to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff where he is the Principal Military Advisor to the Chairman on all matters involving joint and combined total force integration, utilization, health of the force, and joint development for enlisted personnel. In this capacity, he is the most senior enlisted service member, by position, in the United States Armed Forces. SEAC Colón-López has held assignments in numerous commands and has deployed in support of Operations SOUTHERN WATCH, NORTHERN WATCH, ENDURING FREEDOM, IRAQI FREEDOM, NEW DAWN, RESOLUTE SUPPORT, INHERENT RESOLVE, and others in classified locations. <https://www.af.mil/About-Us/Biographies/Display/Article/2040114/senior-enlisted-advisor-to-the-chairman-of-the-joint-chiefs-of-staff-ramon-cz-c/>





Colón-López: I would say it is all about habits. It started out early on when I was a young E-4 accessing and being selected for Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC). I had a heavy Spanish accent and as an E-5 Combat Search and Rescue Team Leader, I was expected to brief the commanding general on the personnel recovery plan of every exercise and mission. So, I had to grow confident in how to shape the message. I also had to be cognizant that the general only had about three to five minutes to digest the information that I needed to tell him. It was life or death information and I needed him to know exactly what I was saying. So, I got into the habit of summarizing the message with the key points. Very seldom do I ever go in and talk to the Principal off the cuff. I don't like to bounce around and have to say, I don't have that information, or I'll have to get it to you later. I have the habit of shaping the information and being patient enough to stay silent until I have my ducks in a row. But, that doesn't mean that I am going to sacrifice expediency of the message. If it something that needs to be said now because the end goal is going to expire in the next 20 minutes, then you have to go ahead and pull the trigger. It is finding the balance, context, purpose, and value to the intended audience.

Lindsay: I think what you are talking about gets shaped a bit by the communities (career fields) that we grow up in. Generally, I think operators tend to understand that point pretty clearly because they grow up understanding life or death consequences. Whereas in other communities, that skill may not be as developed because there is often more time to debate or discuss issues, problems, and concerns.

Colón-López: On that note, I always took it on my part to train those folks. I always took the time to invite them to meetings, share my notes, and let them understand how I shaped the message. When I was a Command Chief, I went as far as to write leadership papers that encapsulated many of those ideas.

Lindsay: I imagine that part of that process is developing trust with the Principal that you are able to do that.

Colón-López: Yes, it really comes down to making sure that you add value, and not time. To never pass up the opportunity to shut up, when needed. For example, sometimes, because they have the boss in front of them, people will often take the opportunity to bring up trivial issues, because that may be the only opportunity they will have to see them that week. Fortunately, I have access to the Chairman all of the time, and the Secretary of Defense often. If I need to push something to him, I tell him that there is something on my mind and I generally use a 5 x 8 card that summarizes the

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issue that I give him so we can discuss later. Again, it is about delivering the information and making sure that he has everything that he needs to know. It also involves coordinating with the Staff. Being the sensor, synchronizer, and integrator applies to all officers on the Staff because, in a sense, I am their Senior Enlisted Advisor as well. I need to help set them up for success.

Lindsay: That is an interesting point, because leaders, at all levels, don't always understand that point about communication. Not everyone prepares the same amount when going in to see the Principal.

Colón-López: Absolutely. The other part that goes along with that is priorities. Do you really need to bring that up right now with everything that is going on? Some things can be put on ice, where other things need to be put directly in the frying pan.

Lindsay: Continuing with that idea of sensor, synchronizer, and integrator, how have you been able to do that with the restrictions of travel due to COVID? Your travel schedule must have been quite busy prior



to COVID, but how do you ensure you are doing that when you can't go everywhere you want to like you did previously? How do you ensure you are getting the information that you need to feed up to the Chairman?

Colón-López: Traveling was going to be a heavy load, but I was already thinking about how to limit travel because there are a lot of tasks that I need to follow up with at the Pentagon with key decision makers. If I am on the road, doing what the Service Senior Enlisted leaders are doing and duplicating their effort, then I'm not really of value. But, there are certain things that require my presence, the enlisted voice, at the Pentagon where I need to be at those meetings. I hate using the term thinking outside the box. Instead, I like thinking panoramically. What else is out there? What haven't we looked at yet that can be beneficial to our cause? I started thinking that if I am the sensor, synchronizer, and integrator, how am I going to get after that?

I started by employing the talents of our Public Affairs team. We brainstormed on how to get the best information and once the Chairman and the Secretary of Defense had their guidance about how we were going to operate under COVID, I then used social media like Zoom and other mechanisms to be able to reach out to the force and still get their feedback. Even though we didn't have the chance to travel, we made a conscious effort to make sure that we had face to face time with the troops. In smaller groups, of course, but have sensing sessions to find out what was affecting them. When it came to policy creation from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and the advice of the Chairman, my charge was to go out and get the ideas of the Staff and pitch them to our people in the field and get their feedback. Also, to identify any pitfalls we were missing. We would hear from the field, "That was nice, but this is really what is affecting us." What was really being said was "While that is good, this is something that you need to pay attention to." While some of those issues hot at the moment, they the potential to rear their ugly head a month or two, becoming the insurgent inside the wire.

Since we didn't know how long this was going to go, we needed to have plans on ice so that we would be able to execute later. That is exactly what we did. We ended up putting many things in the queue. Then, when the issue surfaced, it was almost immediately implemented. That helped get the trust and confidence of the troops in their senior leaders.

Lindsay: That accessibility is important. As that sensor, you are only as good as the connections and relationships that you have. People need to feel like they can bring those issues up. At the senior level it is difficult. If you just rely on the information that floats up to you, you are not always going to get the fidelity of information that you need to make sure the boss has all of the information that he needs. So, you need to build those relationships and those trust circles so that you know you are getting the information that you need.

Colón-López: Exactly. To also include the proper amount of emotional intelligence and staying close to your foundation and roots. Anyone who has known me for years knows that I haven't changed. This is me since I was an Airman and an NCO. They know what to expect. You develop a reputation for being honest and up front with people. You are a person of your word. Whatever you say you will do, you will follow through on. If you can't do it, then you will say exactly why you can't do it. All off those things play a factor in how open people are willing to be toward you.

The other thing is humility, and the willingness to be honest, opens a lot of doors. I was just at Walter Reed earlier this morning and I was having a conversation with some of our patients. At the beginning, they were a little guarded because there was a figure head coming in. Then, we started talking about some issues that were pretty close and personal to why they were there, and the demeanor changed quickly. Within five minutes, they started talking quite a bit, because they knew they weren't just getting the normal party line. I was there to listen. The whole purpose when you interact



with people is to make sure that you provide something in return. Because your service as a Senior Enlisted Advisor is to do just that. Fix things. Fix people. And, make sure to provide the right information of how we can fix processes. Being a PJ, I fixed things as I cut my teeth through the years, so this isn't really a departure from that.

Lindsay: I really like the points about being humble, genuine and authentic. You aren't different from what you were 20 years ago in terms of who you are and how you care for people. The role, may have changed but the approach hasn't. People can tell when you are authentic. If you are asking them how they are doing, but don't really mean it. You sometime see people get into trouble when they try to lead from someplace that isn't consistent with their values or isn't consistent with who they are.

Colón-López: Some people like to put on a show in front of an audience, but that isn't really who they are at their core. Whether I am in flip-flops and shorts or my Mess Dress, you get the same thing. People have gotten to know that from me. The other thing is that I know my time is limited. I am a carton of milk within the Joint Staff and my expiration date is going to come soon. I only have so much time to feed that machine to be able to provide the best advice, to make the best decisions, and implement lasting processes and fixes to issues in the short time I have in this position.

Lindsay: I like that example of a carton of milk because it highlights the element of urgency. We all have a relatively short amount of time to affect that change and what we want to do. With that in mind, how has your thinking evolved about how view your position, now that you have been in it for a year?

Colón-López: The Senior Enlisted positions haven't really changed that much in that we are advising the Principal and are taking care of the force. But, in this position specifically, Gen Milley asked me to break the

mold of the Senior Enlisted Advisor (SEAC). I am only the fourth one and the first Airman to hold the position. He wanted something different. He wanted something that is going to be able to create lasting effects for the benefit of the force. When I started looking at the things that could help create or better shape how the position operates, the one thing that I always kept in mind was that I couldn't cross streams with my Service Senior Enlisted counterparts. I shouldn't be doing things that the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force is doing. The same goes for the Army, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard, and now the Space Force. Things like manning, training and equipping, I do not do that. However, there are certain policies that effect the manning, training, or things like pay, which I am involved in. If you look at the pay scales from E-1 to E-9, it doesn't say Soldier, Sailor, Airmen, Marine, or Coast Guardsman. So, I am part of that decision-making process. High level decorations, like medals of honor, regardless of whether they are officer or enlisted, I am also a part of that process that looks at the packages when the Services submit them to be able to provide the Chairman the best advice on whether that decoration should go as presented or not.

Something else is brain health. It affects the military writ large. It doesn't just affect the Army or the Navy. It affects all of us. I am part of the Committees and Executive Councils to be able to advocate for the enlisted force. But, there is a fine line between advocating and then advocating with the Services input. Because that inclusion is really the key thing that I do as the Senior Enlisted Advisor for the Chairman. The services provide their issues and the Chairman compiles the information and reports up. That is how I operate as well and how I do my business. Often, in a lot of these meetings, I am the only enlisted representative. The Senior Enlisted Representatives are not there. I take their collective input and present it as ours and not just mine.

Lindsay: That fits into the idea you mentioned before of providing value and representing the entire force. Being able to understand the different services and their perspectives.



Colón-López: Yes. I have an advantage with that having been in JSOC from a young Airman. As a matter of fact, Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Bass was a young Airman with me in that same unit. So, we have a long history together. We were exposed to joint operations before joint was cool. Before all of the deployments that we have seen. We learned to operate with the other Services. Half of my time in JSOC was with the Navy, so I am pretty savvy when it comes to Navy jargon, procedures and the way that they think. The same with the Army because we spent quite a bit of time training, operations, and in exercises together. My education in the joint environment came early on. I believe that is a big part of why I am sitting here right now because of those important experiences.

Lindsay: That is important because it helps to shape the vision of the different roles that we have. For example, if you grow up only in an Airman pipeline, then the tendency is to view everything from an Airman lens and as an airpower issue. It is very easy to get myopic in our perspective. Because of that early experience that you had in the joint environment, it shaped your mental model of what an operation is and who is involved. Not everybody has the opportunity to get that.

Colón-López: That is true, but it is incumbent upon us to get those experiences to move forward. To take people who don't have that chance and teach them. To say, "Hey, this is what I have learned about being joint. It is not about becoming, it is about understanding. And, this is how you can be the best Airman that you can be in that joint environment." People get confused sometimes when they don't have enough exposure to the issues. Then, they end up going to the far left or the far right. So, we try to get them closer to the center, where they need to be with that understanding and what it really means to be joint. Also, timing is of the essence. I wouldn't spend time teaching a Senior Airman about the joint environment. I would wait until they are a Technical Sergeant when they are seasoned in their

skill, in their Airmanship, in their NCO duties. Then, let us teach you about this other side where you can potentially serve as Senior Enlisted Leader or on the Joint Staff. It is all about timing. We need to make sure that all of the services have ample time to create the best soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, coastguardsmen, and now, our space force personnel. We need to give them the opportunity to cut their own teeth in their specialty before we start making them purple.

Lindsay: That idea about timing is important when we think about development. If they don't have that technical expertise or proficiency in an area, they don't know who they are yet with respect to their functional

It is all about timing. We need to make sure that all of the services have ample time to create the best soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, coastguardsmen, and now, our space force personnel. We need to give them the opportunity to cut their own teeth in their specialty before we start making them purple.

specialty. More broadly, as a Service, are we are starting to come around to the understanding of the value of that jointness? We talk a lot about it, but it doesn't always translate to how people think about how their career should be.

Colón-López: It just so happens that Gen Goldfein and Chief Wright made it a point to develop the force. To be ready for joint warfighting. When you ask the Senior Enlisted Advisors of the Services, they will tell you that the Air Force had an edge on the rest of the Services with respect to joint development and teaching them how to do that. It was pretty evident when you looked at the Combatant Commands about two years ago, as you had five Airmen in Combatant Command leadership positions. That is pretty amazing. The Air Force used to have zero as it was pretty Army heavy. So, the scales tipped to a point where people really started



valuing what joint meant and started having Airmen that competed for those positions being able to show the hiring authority that they understood and were ready to operate in the joint environment. I think that our Service has done pretty well in helping people understand that dynamic.

Lindsay: And also placing value culturally on that experience. Your example is a great one that represents that in that you can talk the languages across the different Services. So, when one Service comes to you, you have a perspective of where and why they are bringing up that issue.

Colón-López: Absolutely. We owe it to our people because there won't be a single engagement that we take on that will be unilaterally by a single Service.

Lindsay: As an example, if you look at what we have done in Afghanistan in the last 15 to 20 years that is apparent.

Colón-López: Even in the early stages, the Army had a beef with the Navy being there in a landlocked country and wondering what they were doing with ground operations. But, after a year or so, that kind of died down as they recognized all that needed to be done. They started valuing the company of each other.

Lindsay: People were able to show their competence. To get in there and show that they knew what they were doing. That also gets back to your point about timing. With that in mind, how well do you think we are doing in getting people ready for those leadership positions? We certainly invest a lot in our professional military education to prepare people.

Colón-López: I believe, at least on the enlisted side, that we are doing a good job. But, something that we can do better is increasing the depth of Senior Enlisted Leaders understanding. What I mean by that is often, Senior Enlisted Leaders in the Air Force get comfortable doing things that a First Sergeant should be doing. That

doesn't really add value if they are doing the same thing. Some don't even have SIPR net accounts. How can you operate as a Senior Enlisted Advisor if you don't have access to certain information? Are you getting the same information that your boss is getting so that you can advise them? Remember, you are an advisor to the boss. Some people get too comfortable just doing the routine things and unfortunately, some get carried along by their boss because of loyalties. That can sometimes lead to people being unprepared in senior positions. Unfortunately, those people will fail because they can't hide behind what the First Sergeant used to do. They now are expected to perform with internationals and with other services, and if you are shallow, you will be seen as shallow right from the beginning. There is no way you can hide that.

Something that we need to do is start identifying people early on, like at the Master Sergeant level, and put them in the joint machine so that they can gain that understanding. Remember, the sweet spot I mentioned is around the Technical and Master Sergeant levels. Giving them the education and the exposure to it by having them work, deploy and do certain things. Then, when they become Senior Enlisted Leaders, we can potentially plug them into the Joint Staffs and Directorates to give them more experience. In addition, they can be more competitive when comes to the Combatant Command Senior Enlisted Leader positions. Keystone is a great course, but it comes too late in a Chief's career. You are talking 25 years of service on average. We are creating a course right now called Gateway and that is targeted at the E-6 and E-7 levels that have high potential and are nominated by the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force to the Joint Staff for an in-residence course. We are creating that so that we can start bridging the gap that we currently have, not just for the Air Force, but for the rest of the Services. I think if we do that and start giving people the right experiences, we are going to have a deeper bench, not just in volume, but in understanding. Unfortunately, we didn't do that

years and years ago and sometimes we struggle finding the right person to fill those joint billets.

Lindsay: I think we do a little better job of that on the educational side. People seem to understand the value of it educationally, but not always practically and experientially. That goes back to the point you said about creating value. It is not just about executing. One of the things that I have noticed, is that in large organizations, it is easy to kind of float along and rely on the organization to tell me what I need to do. Or expect someone else to develop me. The successful leaders that I have seen have been those that have taken the onus upon themselves to develop either through research, study, or experientially. They worked intentionally on themselves and did not just leave it up to anyone else to do for them. They were active in their development versus passive.

Colón-López: Agreed. When it comes to the assignment topic, there is only one assignment that I pleaded for in my career and that was to the Joint Special Operations Command. I believed that if I got that one assignment, I would build enough credibility to where I would be placed in the right place at the right time with the best problem set suited for my abilities to be able to get after it. That has been the theme of my career. I have never requested any assignment. Wherever I need to be, so be it. Going to the Pararescue school is a perfect example. It was recommended to me by a Chief Master Sergeant. He said that I had a lot of potential, but I needed to get out of JSOC since I was already a Master Sergeant and I needed to broaden my horizons. You haven't done any training or been out of AFSOC for a while. We need to send you to AETC. I didn't know whether to hug him or curse him at the time. I trusted him so I said that I'll go ahead and do this. To be honest, I learned quite a bit and that was good for my development. Then, JSOC brought me right back in after I got that developmental experience. Just when I thought I was safe to stay in JSOC, I was approached about being a Command Chief. I thought

I was going to be a PJ Chief for the rest of my 30 years and then retire. But, someone saw potential and I had built up some credibility. They said that they thought I should do that because it would be good with my leadership style. I got selected as the Command Chief for the 1st Special Operations Wing at Hurlburt Field, Florida. Shortly after that, I was told that I was going to be the Command Chief at the 18th Wing in Kadena, Japan. I said, okay, that will be my first time working for a fighter pilot, so that will be interesting. Then, when I was sitting in that assignment, someone said that I have too much CENTCOM experience, so they were never going to send me back there again. They said that they needed to send me to Korea. So, I interviewed for Korea and in the process of interviewing the same person that said that I didn't need to go back to CENTCOM because I had too much experience, flipped the tables on me and said that they needed to send me to AFCENT in Qatar. I said whatever, wherever you think I need to go, I will go.

Then, when sitting in AFCENT, I was waiting to see what would happen. They told me that the timing just wasn't working, so they were going to put me in in the Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs Office. I thought, what the heck is a knuckle-dragging PJ going to do at Manpower and Reserve Affairs? I don't know anything about that. I got thrown in there for a few months and the next thing you know I was selected by a Marine to be the Command Senior Enlisted Leader at U.S. Africa Command. The point being, I never bid for an assignment because of personal gain. I always wanted the challenge. To go to the worst possible scenario so that I had an opportunity to do something good or fix something. I figured if I had that, then my purpose was going to be defined, I was going to be fulfilled, happy with what I was doing as long as I was empowered by my boss. That was always my first conversation I had with my commanding officer, by the way. What was the dynamic going to look like, how are we going to operate, and what do you expect from me? Those three questions...always. Then, we marched that





route the rest of the assignment. If you start bidding too much for positions and assignments, you start sounding self-serving which goes against the whole building credibility piece. So, I advise young people that wherever you are, make yourself useful and develop yourself. That credibility that you build there will put you in the best place to be put in the position where your talents will be best utilized. If you do that for the rest of your career, you will have no regrets.

Lindsay: That goes back to what you mentioned before about providing value and excelling where you are at. My guess is that if you weren't successful early on, I doubt people would have come knocking on the door advising where you need to be or go. If you are too focused on the future, then you will lose sight of the impact that you can make in the moment and build that credibility.

Colón-López: You touched a bit upon self-teaching, being proactive, and on educating yourself on the things that are important. I did that quite a bit. I was always reading a lot. I didn't get my Bachelor's degree until I was the AFRICOM Senior Enlisted Leader because the reason I joined the service was to get away from college. So, what I did was study tactics. I studied Clausewitz and many other war-like publications to be able to better understand how my bosses thought about issues. I am always asking them, "What are the top two books that you have read that shaped your thinking?" I then go and read those two books to help my understanding. My education was based on the moment, the fight that we were fighting, and what I needed to provide that boss. When I finally decided to get after my education, I picked my degree based on something that was going to be relevant to my place at the time. That was leadership and management. I always kept everything related to what my purpose in life was, which is to be an Airman, a Senior Enlisted leader.

But often, you see people who are looking for that easy button, that silver bullet. They are thinking that having a Master's Degree is going to give them an advantage. But they have to think, a Master's in what? How is that going to benefit the service? Or they think they need to go to as many schools as possible. Okay, but what have you done with that education? The true end of education is not knowledge, but action. What are you going to do with that education? Are you teaching others? Are you able to translate that into whatever your bosses' mission or vision is? Are you able to use that education to make better decisions and what have those decisions been? I

I have always believed that only the mediocre feel that they are at always at their best. I never felt like I was doing good enough. I always saw room for improvement. I was always critical of myself and was reassessing what I needed to do better the next time I tackled any opportunity. I eventually created a habit to where I was always open minded.

sometimes get people who look at me and ask, what made you successful? You made it to the Combatant Command. I ask them, what are you passionate about? I did the things that I was passionate about and those are the things that set me apart from others at certain points in my career. What is unique to you that we need to start working on to set you up for success? It's not just "get a degree" or "go to that school"...everyone does that. It's about that edge. How do we get you that edge based on your own passion, drive and motivation?

Lindsay: When I hear you talk about that edge, it makes me think about alignment. You are suggesting that if I am working toward something that I am passionate about, invest in where I am at, work hard to be good at what I am doing, that creates that edge and will surpass those who are just holding the position while they are trying to get the next one. People will see that alignment and see the authenticity in that.



Colón-López: Exactly. I have always believed that only the mediocre feel that they are at always at their best. I never felt like I was doing good enough. I always saw room for improvement. I was always critical of myself and was reassessing what I needed to do better the next time I tackled any opportunity. I eventually created a habit to where I was always open minded. I wanted to listen. I wanted to learn from the views of others. That turned me into a very inclusive and transparent person. Eventually, the kind of person that can trust people enough to delegate the things that someone else should be doing. So, I do the things that only I can do based on my position.

Lindsay: Along that idea of development and wanting to learn, one of the things that I noticed is that you have a professional reading list. To go back to your point about books that have impact, I think that helps give some insight on books that have influenced you and your thinking.

Colón-López: That is another example of not just doing things to check a block or put it on your report, you are doing it because you want to get something out of it. I never wasted time with books that didn't peak my interest. Something that you will notice about the books on that reading list are they are not the ones that are the popular best sellers right now. Often, you will see that people will follow the fad of the day because it was a national best seller or for some other reason. On my list, some of those books are 20 plus years old. They are books that I go back and read all the time. So, if I am going to put together a reading list, I want to make it worthy of the readers and to explain why I chose those books. That is why I put a quick synopsis on each of them to explain why I chose each book. Hopefully, people can find value in that. I am about to come out with a second list soon, but I think I am going to do two separate ones. There are a lot of lists out there that talk about leadership and history, but I also want to focus a bit on the human domain. There is a lot going on now regarding resiliency, but I want to know things like what

can they read to increase their threshold for misery. What I mean by that is how can they thrive when everyone else is quitting and falling apart? What are some of those books that can help people think deeper about the way that they are and their biases? How can they be more inclusive? That is what I am looking for and that is why I only chose five books to begin with. With COVID, it seems like everyone is reading more, so I might accelerate those lists. But, I will not push out a half-baked product. I want to make sure they are the right books for the right time and for the right audience.

Lindsay: That goes back to your point about not just reading for knowledge, but for understanding and application. We need to understand that human domain better. Many people are very good at the technical side of things, but tend to put relatively less effort into the human side.

Colón-López: Agreed. I have seen both sides of the spectrum on that before. For example, we were running this Senior NCO board at the Numbered Air Force (NAF) level. We had a senior NCO who came in strong. He said he was a student of John Maxwell and his Laws of Leadership and stated that he had studied them and lived them every day. By the way, at that time, everyone had John Maxwell on their EPR. It was the flavor of the month. So, when he finishes his rant about how well he fits with Maxwell's theory of leadership, I asked him, "Okay Sergeant, tell us five of the laws of leadership." He couldn't do it. My point is that if think that you are the only person putting that on your EPR, then you are not only lying to yourself, you are lying to others and overselling your capability. The reason I read Clausewitz was because I heard a lot people like General McCrystal and Admiral McRaven talk about the art and science of war. I didn't really understand it and was told it was from Clausewitz's *On War*. So, I read the book, and as a matter of fact, I have it right here. This is not something that the average person is going to pick. It is slow and it is a hard pill to swallow. But, I wanted to understand it so I go back often and try to better understand it. I want to know



what people are using and how they get that context into their conversation. I will challenge folks with the question of what does art and science mean to you just like I did that young man about Maxwell. If you are going to read something and be vocal about it, then let's test it and see if the intent was met to better enrich your development, your thought process, and ultimately your actions.

Lindsay: Exactly. How has that changed you as a leader? How has that had an impact on you and your character? That is something that we haven't talked a lot about yet, but that alignment between who I am and what I stand for and my behaviors and actions. We see a lot of places today, due to the media's help, about those who are not in alignment between their thoughts and actions.

Colón-López: To that point, one of the things that I have written about in the past is to know the difference between character and reputation. Character is who you are and what is inside you. Reputation is how others see you. They are often connected based on how you act. If I needed to put money on one of them, it would always be character, because the other will play out from there. But, many people are more concerned about reputation. That is when they take the shallow approach to things like overselling themselves like the Sergeant I just mentioned. Just be proud of your limitations and your strengths because they will both help you to be better at some point. Limitations bring humility. Strengths bring credibility. If you combine the two, you will be a strong, powerful leader.

Lindsay: You will be aligned and develop trust and people will want to follow you. What we know about development is that it rarely occurs when we are comfortable. Being able to identify those weaknesses isn't always comfortable, but to your point, understanding those puts us in a position to grow. Some people see those weaknesses and think others can't see them so they ignore them or try to cover them up. Instead, you are suggesting to recognize them, work on

them, and use that to get after it. That helps to align what training you might need or what educational program you should pursue. Not because it will make me look better, but instead that it will help me to be better and to lead better.

Colón-López: Everyone who assumes a position of responsibility has certain expectations that come along with it. Along with those expectations, if they don't know you, people will make assumptions about what they can expect from you. If you don't deliver, then you are going to lose them from the beginning and diminish that credibility. That happens quite often when people are on panels. They get asked a tough question and they can't answer it and they just dance around the subject. They instantly lose the credibility. They had the perfect opportunity to be prepared, but they just couldn't deliver. They took the lazy approach by not preparing and as a result, failed their people. I try to teach people to not put themselves in that situation.

Lindsay: With that in mind, if SEAC Colón-López could go back to Airman Colón-López and give some advice regarding leadership and preparation, what would you say?

Colón-López: Something that I always tell our young troops is to learn to listen attentively. Sometime people hear things, but they aren't really listening. I know that may sound like a cliché, but let me explain. Often, when you are listening, especially when you are new, you can get overwhelmed about all the things that you need to do. You don't pay attention to the key things that must take place before any action is taken.

If I needed to go back to my young self, I would first say to pay more attention to comprehending the English language and enriching my vocabulary. Number two, I would say to learn to listen better. I wasn't bad, but my understanding wasn't there. I would spend more time talking to my peers about the things I didn't understand instead of just going along.



Lindsay: To be a more active participant in that process?

Colón-López: Yes, because the fix to that didn't come until I was assigned to JSOC where I was putting more attention into messaging, both receiving and transmitting to make sure that I was respecting people's time and the needs of the person that the message was intended for.

Lindsay: That's good advice. Any parting thoughts that you would like to pass on?

Colón-López: The point I want to get across is that there is no magic formula to what we do or the success of any one person. But there is something to be said about character, about humility, and how you treat others. That is really what leadership is all about. If you can demonstrate that you are able and comfortable to do that with the courage to make the tough calls and to be able to properly advise those around you up and down the chain, then I think you are going to find a good place to thrive within the Department of Defense. Don't think that checking blocks is going to be your savior, because it never is. We can smell that a mile away. And always line yourself up with people that you admire. Don't become them, but learn their strengths and weaknesses so that you build this compilation of excellence within you and be able to move forward and be a role model for others.

At the end of the day, the true role of any leader is to create that talent bench that is going to take the place on that shelf of the expired carton of milk. Spend the time to create those leaders now. Those leaders are now sitting at the E-5 and E-6 level, those leaders are cadets and young lieutenants right now. You need to invest early in people. Those young NCOs and officers that are out in the field right now, grow them right and you will see what happens 10-15 years from now.

MILITARY

THE OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE



CMSgt JoAnne Bass

Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force

Interviewed By: SMSgt Ecatarina Garcia

Garcia: Congratulations on your new role and thank you for taking the time to sit down with me for a conversation. In a previous interview, you were asked about where you find inspiration. You mentioned that Airmen, and their stories, inspired you. As a leader and the Senior Enlisted member of the Air Force, what items will you focus on to continue to make an impact on the lives of Airmen?

Bass: With respect to what I am going to focus on over the next couple of years, nothing has really changed. I have always had the same focus areas of people, readiness, and culture. However, now I get to codify it. I've always been a person who values people, what they bring to the fight, diversity of thought, diversity of experiences, and the ingenuity that our Airmen have. Being able to focus on people is something that I am super excited to get after as well as impact readiness and the culture. When I think about people, and what they mean to me, that is number one. How do we as an Air Force recruit and retain the best people? That is where my lens is when it comes to people. Then, number two, part of how we retain them has everything to do with people operations. In the civilian sector, they call that HR (Human Resources). I tend to call it people ops. How do we shape the policies, processes, and programs that will cause Airmen, our people, to want to stay in the Air Force?

For the readiness piece, at the end of the day, we are in the Profession of Arms and we have an obligation to our fellow Americans to help defend our country. How can we make sure that we are a ready force that has everything that we need? As an intelligence analyst, you can appreciate the connection that our Airmen need to have with the National Defense Strategy and understanding the why. We have to get Airmen to act in a readiness mindset so that we are ready to get after it. A part of that readiness is our own personal readiness. Are we physically, mentally, and

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fiscally ready to be able to do anything that our Nation calls us to do? I would say for the physical, we need to look at the medical piece. We also need to look at the mental piece and make sure our people are mentally ready to get after things. That also applies to the fiscal piece and making sure they are financially ready.

As for culture, everything relies on culture. I find it interesting when I hear people say, “I can’t wait for Gen Brown and Chief Bass to get after culture.” While we can, from our seat, help influence and share our expectations on the climate and culture of the Air Force, the reality is it is executed at our most common denominator level. So, if the culture within a flight or section isn’t where it needs to be, there isn’t directly anything that Gen Brown or Chief Bass can do about it. We need every Airmen to have ownership in our Air Force and to help us get after the culture piece.

Garcia: With respect to that idea of culture, and since we develop future officers here at USAFA, I’m interested in hearing your perspective of the role that senior enlisted have in developing officers.

Bass: Here is how I would reframe that. I don’t think it is so much of a senior NCO thing. I think it is every NCO’s role to help grow our officers to be the best leaders they can be. When I was a Technical Sergeant stationed at Ramstein Air Base, I remember I had two Majors that were in my section. I used to remind them, “Hey Sirs, part of my job is to help develop you to be the best officer, and one day commander, that you can be and that development starts now. The

last thing you want, is to become a commander and no one is following you because you don’t have the required competencies, character, and attributes that Airmen are willing to follow.” I think our role as NCO’s is to help our officers become the best leaders that they can be. That takes a lot of communication. It takes a lot of tact. It’s a mindset that we need to help develop them to be the next future commanders.

Garcia: Great point. Along those ideas of development and shaping culture, one of the things that just happened was the Air Force releasing its priorities. One of the priorities centered around modernizing the Air and Space Forces. Previously, you have spoken about the challenge of moving at the speed of relevancy. In addition, our National Security documents appear to address this same issue. How as Airmen, can we operationalize the concepts of modernization and innovation in our work centers and in our everyday missions?

Bass: Every single Airman has an opportunity to do that and we all have to actively apply it at each of our levels. When you are part of a section or a flight, there are opportunities all around you to do things. Innovation often gets a bad rap because it tends to be a buzz word, but really it’s not. Innovation is pretty basic. We have been innovating for over 70 years as an Air Force already. So, the reality is that we innovate all the time. As an example, when my husband and I were E-3s and living paycheck to paycheck, we had to go to the Commissary and innovate on how we were going to eat for the next two weeks on a set amount of money in our budget. Airmen are innovating

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all the time. What it means is how can we modernize and how can we innovate the policies and processes in our work centers so they can be better the next time around? More importantly, how can we improve and better our processes so they are good for people who come around in five years or 10 years? That is when we start to hit the goal. I'm fully convinced that a lot of the ideas to help modernize our Air Force start at the tactical level with the Airmen who are getting after it doing our Nation's business. If people are

The Air Force of today has to think and operate differently than it did 20 years ago. This is not the Cold War or the traditional uncontested environment. We have to have NCOs that think from the neck up.

waiting for Gen Brown and Chief Bass to modernize the force from our seats, that is not the whole picture. Now strategically speaking, there are some things that we can do to modernize our force and there are some things that only Gen Brown is going to be able to get after when it comes to the broader needs of the Air Force on things like airframes and weapon systems. But, every Airman has a role to play in modernizing the Air Force. It starts in their own duty section, getting after their mission, and making it better for Airmen for years to come. If we have that lens, how great will it be?

I will say that on the enlisted side, I think we have some work that we can do with that end in mind. One thing that I love about our officer corps is that they grow up with that lens, especially our Squadron Commanders. They go in there knowing they need to move the ball and there are things that I need to do for the Squadron in preparation for the next Commander that will take their place. We need to make sure that we have that mindset as enlisted leaders. If I was the NCOIC of a flight records office and I thought that way and had the mindset of let me move the ball on how the flight records office operates for people two or three from now, I think we would be in a better place. We need to be very forward thinking to modernize the force.

Garcia: I appreciate that perspective on the word innovation, and reframing the lens, because I have struggled with that at times. That leads me into another question. What role do you see NCOs and Senior NCOs in ensuring that Airmen are prepared for future conflict?

Bass: I think we have huge role in that, but it starts with us in understanding what that role is ourselves. We can't share with our Airmen what we don't fully understand ourselves. That is why I am pretty tough on our NCO corps because I think they can and should be challenged in a way so that they think differently today than they did 20 years ago. The Air Force of today has to think and operate differently than it did 20 years ago. This is not the Cold War or the traditional uncontested environment. We have to have NCOs that think from the neck up. We have to understand the strategic global landscape that we are in. We have to completely understand our near-peer and peer competitors and the capabilities that they have. I think if our NCOs and our Senior NCOs truly understood that lens, it would cause them to operate differently. It would make the other things seem not as important. I'm not saying that the other things aren't still important like EPRs, feedback, and 1206s. Those are part of the people ops that I mentioned, and part of our everyday life. But if they really understood the gravity of the situation that we are in and we understood our peer competitors with capabilities that they have, it would cause us to reframe the way we do business. They have to know it themselves in order for them to share why we do what we do for our Airmen.

Garcia: I agree and it makes me think back to the National Defense Strategy where we have no preordained right to victory on the battlefield. That really drove it home for me to start looking at our competitors and our operations. Thinking about something like future conflict is hard to discuss if we don't have the same lexicon.

My next question is near and dear to my heart. A lot of attention has been paid to you being the first female



selected as the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force. In your Change of Responsibilities Ceremony, you made some moving remarks where you not only showed appreciation for the women that came before you, but you also indicated that it was a historic moment for individuals who may have never been able to see themselves as the CMSAF or CSAF. I was wondering if you could reflect a little bit about what it means to be the first female Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force?

Bass: Truthfully speaking, it's not lost on me that I am the first female Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force and the first female Senior Enlisted Leader of any Service. It is an honor and it is very humbling and it is not lost on me that the title alone makes me a role model for lots of folks. Whether that be young women, little girls, and even men across our Services have reached out to me to tell me that they are inspired by that. To that end, it is truly humbling. What I will be most excited about is when we have gotten to a point in our Air Force where people are not described by being a first, second, or third but that it is just normal ops. That it is Chief Master Sergeant Jo Bass and not the first female. That is when we will, in my mind, have arrived. The opportunity to be that first, so that there can be a second, third, and fourth, is very exciting to be a part of.

Garcia: We have seen a lot of struggles in 2020. But I think it has also showed a lot of things that we can do that we may have previously not thought that we could before. In a previous interview, you mentioned that you are never too old to learn. Specifically, you indicated who you are today pales in comparison of who you will be years from now. Today's environment of COVID has challenged us to do new things and learn new ways of doing our mission. For example, here at the Air Force Academy, that meant putting a lot of our curriculum online. As a Senior Leader, who understands the array of Air Force missions, what do you think are the major takeaways from operating in such a unique moment in time?

Bass: What 2020 has showed us, whether it was through the pandemic or civil unrest, is that we can still fight through it. There is nothing that we cannot do through a unified team together. When it comes to fighting through those challenges, we had to learn to operate our mission sets a little bit differently. The COVID environment has caused us to be able to move out and get after our mission without going through the 18-months that it would normally take to make a change for a single process. That is a win. It showed us that we don't actually need to have 10 people sign off on how we move out on these things.

We can actually take the smart risk ourselves and make changes. From an Air Education & Training Command (AETC) lens, that is huge. We have been able to move out and continue to train and develop our Airmen. We can make changes in hours or days instead of months or years. For the things that we have done to effectively get after our mission in the COVID environment, if we are doing it better, we should never want to go back to the pre-COVID days. However, if there are things that we have to do to be able to get after training and it is not ideal in the way that we are doing it now, then we go back or tweak to the way it needs to be. With challenge, always comes great opportunity. It has given us the opportunity to improve. To what you said earlier, to move at the speed of relevancy. It's not about waiting until we can go back to the pre-COVID days. Those days are gone. We should be capturing right now, what are some of the things that we will never go back to because we have learned to do them better and faster?

Garcia: COVID has been terrible, but I agree that there have also been some opportunities that we need to capture.

Bass: Again, there are certainly things that we are working through that I'm not sure are ideal. For instance, look at Professional Military Education (PME) today and doing PME in the virtual environment. There is a lot to be said about face to face engagements with people and there is a lot to be gained from that. We may not have

to go back to the way we did it before, but maybe there is a hybrid version or a better way to do it. We owe it to our Air Force to examine that. It gets back to modernizing our force. We have an opportunity to modernize our force for the good. So, what does it need to look like? This also gives us an opportunity to think unconstrained, which is a hard thing to do for people who have been doing this for a really long time. I would offer that we should not have any limitations on what does X, Y, and Z need to look like. What does your classroom need to look like? What should training for the defenders look like when we can think unconstrained? I think we get to modernizing the force that we need.

Garcia: It is difficult to think unconstrained when we have all grown up in a constrained environment. With the current environment, things that may have previously been dismissed, now become potential possibilities. One of the things that you touched on earlier was civil unrest and social justice. How do you think these events will have impact the Air and Space Forces moving forward?

Bass: They certainly will. Any time there are challenges that plague our nation, they undoubtedly affect our Service. We are a volunteer force where all of our Airmen come from communities all over our Nation. When things are impacting our Nation like social justice, or in this case, injustice, it impacts us as Airmen. We have moms, dads, sisters, brothers, cousins, etc. out there living that life. So, it is heartbreaking to see our Nation going through this situation. But it is a reality that we have to be able to talk about it as Airmen and as brothers and sisters in arms so that we can overcome and we can continue to stay on the path that our Air Force is on. What I am most proud of is that we are serving in a Profession of Arms where it is not okay to be racist. It is not okay to assault people. It is not okay to harass people. I'm proud that we are in a force that has stated that openly. Now, because we are an all-volunteer force with close to 700,000 total force Airmen, there will always be Airmen who don't necessarily prescribe to our Core Values or they are still

growing and developing into those Core Values. For those Airmen, we have to hold each other accountable to be able to get there. I'm heartbroken by what is going on

Character is an imperative. You cannot be a good leader without good character. You might be a good manager, or you might be a good boss, but I don't believe you can be somebody who inspires others to excel and succeed if you lack character.

in our Nation, and my focus is on this Air Force family and what we can do as Airmen to make sure that within our fence line, we are upholding the rules and regulations and the values that are so important to our Air Force.

I have to give credit to my predecessor, Chief Wright and my boss and wingman, Gen Brown, for their courage to be able to speak up on something that has been a challenge that they have gone through their whole life. I'm really proud that they had the courage to do so when, at one point in my career, it would have been taboo to ever talk like that. By their actions, they opened up the door to be able to have the conversations that we need to be able to have as leaders, as uncomfortable as some of them may be. Because of their ability to be courageous enough to open that conversation up, it led to culturally across our Air Force, leaders realizing it is okay to have those conversations. But it is also incumbent upon leaders to have a sense of emotional intelligence to tactfully know how to have that conversation and when. That emotional intelligence piece is huge because if we are going to have conversation like that, it has to be genuine. It has to come from a place of acceptance and tolerance where we treat everyone with dignity and respect. When I say you are never too old to learn, you have to come from a place where you actually really do want to understand what your brothers and sisters are going through. Because when you do, that opens up your aperture so much that you can move your organization forward. The silver lining in all of this is that we will come out as a stronger and better force for it.





Garcia: I agree and your point about it previously being taboo to discuss these things is very true. It is so encouraging that we are having these conversations now. That moves into my next question. You talk about character a lot. As the Center for Character and Leadership Development, we focus on developing officers of character. That is the Air Force Academy's Mission. What role do you think character has with good leadership?

Bass: Character is an imperative. You cannot be a good leader without good character. You might be a good manager, or you might be a good boss, but I don't believe you can be somebody who inspires others to excel and succeed if you lack character. I'm reminded of Tony Dungy. I like a lot of his writings and I think he is a phenomenal coach. He always says, when building teams, he would rather have people of character than people of talent. This is not a common perspective for everyone. Even in my own Air Force experience, when it comes to building strong teams, but this isn't how I always thought. When I was younger, I didn't think like that because I didn't have a high sense of EQ. Back then, it was all about winning. Fast forward to now, I would rather have someone who has the character than the skill set because we can always teach skill sets. We can always teach a job. If you have the character, then you have everything that you need to do well in our Air Force.

Garcia: Speaking of Tony Dungy and reading his work, I know you are a reader. How does reading impact your development and what are you reading right now?

Bass: I just pushed out a list on my social media of four books that I am going to read and reread that will take me through the rest of the year. First, I'm reading *The Kill Chain*. I just finished it, but I am about to go through it again and highlight some more things. Anybody who reads that will understand the readiness piece on why what we do matters. In fact, I just spoke to the author today in a Zoom call and I am so excited to, one, have talked to him, and two, be able to geek out

with him a little bit on how we move forward today with our Air Force in making sure that we don't give our adversaries any more advantages. I also love the *Heart Led Leader*. I want to stay true to who I am. I am a leader with heart, so I will read that again. One of other books is *Stillness is the Key*. All of us need some stillness in our lives. That is a good thing. We all need to find a way to quiet our mind and remain focused on the things that we need to. The last one is *No Time for Spectators* by Martin Dempsey. For the smallest Air Force we have ever been, every Airman counts and every leader counts. We don't have time for people to be spectating and just picking apart what we could or should be doing. Everybody is a facilitator or an active role player in what we are doing. The one thing that I will say when it comes to reading, is that I don't always necessarily read a book from beginning to end. It really depends. I don't want people to be intimidated and think that I am a crazy speed reader. That is very far from what is true. I have learned to look at the Table of Contents and find what speaks to me and sometimes just dig into those chapters. I'm also a big audible fan so sometimes I go to sleep listening to something like Malcolm Gladwell. I believe every leader is a learner. So, what I would ask every Airman in their quest for learning to take whatever time you can spare to read. Any time amount will work. If it is five, 10, or 15 minutes a day, that is not much to ask for. If you can just steal away a few minutes a day to read, you will learn something during the time that you may have otherwise been scrolling on your device or some other activity. 15 minutes a day to help you make yourself better will help you be better, your organization be better, and make our Air Force better.

Garcia: That's great advice in being able to start to invest with a little time every day. In my Doctoral program they gave us similar advice in trying to write 15 minutes a day. You don't need an hour or two a day. Just do something. Start somewhere.



Bass: Exactly. You just need to do it.

Garcia: We have talked about a lot of good leadership and character topics. If you could go back, what advice would Chief Bass give Airman Bass?

Bass: That's a great question. If I could do that, I would have saved myself a lot of heartache. One piece of advice would be to give yourself some grace. I was always trying to do everything and be everything. I don't consider myself a perfectionist, but I consider myself pretty squared away. I would debrief in my head how the day went and I would beat myself up on how things really should have gone. So, I would tell myself to give some grace.

A second thing I would tell myself is to learn how to say no early in your career. I don't think I learned that until I was a Senior Master Sergeant. It's not because I was a yes person, but people come to you because they know that you can handle a project, a task, or a team and the tendency is to say yes, because you don't want to tell them no and you are honored that they are even coming to you in the first place. We do that sometimes to the detriment of our own selves and to the detriment of our family. Oh, and by the way, if you are used to not saying no, it is incredibly hard the first time you say no. I'm married to someone who is the total opposite. He can say no in a heartbeat. It takes a lot for him to say yes. He would say, "What is the problem with you? Why is it so hard?" I'll never forget when it first happened. I was a Senior Master Sergeant and they came to me and asked me if I would do the Wing Annual Awards Ceremony. I thought about it and I finally said no. And when I did, a felt like a relief came off of me. Just really think about that because if you are saying yes to something, then you are saying no to something and typically that no is something like you, your family, your PT, or something similar. That would be my second piece of advice.

When I was growing up, the topic of emotional intelligence wasn't a thing. It has recently started becoming more common in the last 10 years. So, the

third piece of advice I would give is to learn about emotional intelligence. That would have helped me in a lot of relationships. When you can actually understand your own emotional intelligence, how it impacts those around you, and vice versa, it is a powerful thing.

Garcia: Great advice. One last question, which you touched a little bit on already. What are you most excited about in your role as the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force?

Bass: I am most excited in my role that I have the opportunity to influence the Air Force for good and make positive impact on close to 700,000 Airmen. I wake up every day thinking, how am I going to make a difference? It's pretty amazing know that whatever that difference is, it can potentially impact Airmen and their families. That is pretty cool. It is humbling and van honor and I am just excited to be everyone's Chief during the next four years. Of course, it will come with challenges. While we are going through COVID, we potentially haven't seen all of those challenges yet. But, I know with the team that I have around me, with the support and leadership from Gen Brown, we can continue on the legacy of those that came before us. It is exciting!

Garcia: Thank you for your leadership, your example, and your time.

ACADEMIC

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHARACTER



Marvin Berkowitz, PhD

Professor of Character Education, University of Missouri-St. Louis

Editor, Journal of Character Education

Interviewed By: Douglas Lindsay

Lindsay: Do you mind talking a little bit about your journey and how you got to where you are today in terms of your interest in the field of character?

Berkowitz: I'm a developmental psychologist. My degrees are in lifespan developmental psychology which basically means I study normative or typical development from conception, to death and dying, but my focus has always been on children and adolescents. The content area that I was most interested in was morality. It sort of came about with the interface of my upbringing to tripping over it in Graduate School and learning about Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Reasoning. I was really interested in changes in reasoning and how people got to reason better. It just hooked me. So, I went off and got my Doctorate in Lifespan Developmental Psychology focusing on the moral development of adolescents. I went from there to actually work with Kohlberg as a post doc at Harvard. That was a real qualitative turning point for me in my career. One, I got to work for two years with the best and brightest in the world, all who were in a community studying the same kinds of things. That was just a remarkable opportunity for me. It also exposed me to applications because Kohlberg was doing work in experimental schools and how to do this work in school settings.

Dr. Marvin W. Berkowitz is the inaugural Sanford N. McDonnell Endowed Professor of Character Education, and Co-Director of the Center for Character and Citizenship at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, and University of Missouri President's Thomas Jefferson Professor. He has also served as the inaugural Ambassador H.H. Coors Professor of Character Development at the US Air Force Academy (1999), and Professor of Psychology and Director of the Center for Ethics Studies at Marquette University (1979-1999). He was also founder and Associate Director of the Center for Addiction and Behavioral Health Research in Milwaukee. Since 1999 he has directed the Leadership Academy in Character Education in St. Louis. He earned his BA degree in psychology from the State University of NY at Buffalo and his Ph.D. in Life-span Developmental Psychology at Wayne State University. Dr. Berkowitz has served as a visiting scholar in Canada, Germany, Switzerland, Scotland, Spain, and Taiwan. His scholarly focus and expertise is in character education and development and he is author of more than 100 book chapters, monographs, and journal articles. He is founding co-editor of the *Journal for Research in Character Education*.



After that, I went off and got my first job at Marquette University where I was the developmental psychologist in the Psychology Department. I had to teach all of the developmental courses like child, adolescence, adult, life-span, and so on. I was being a good social scientist doing research, theory, and publishing but I still had this seed of really wanting to make a difference in the real world. That just grew over the years as I dabbled in education. I started thinking more and more how can I leverage schools, and to a certain degree families, to help optimally nurture goodness in children and adolescents. I don't know how reflective I was about it, but it was certainly calling to me.

When I was finishing about 20 years at Marquette, I had already at that point began working with educational organizations. I had been publishing in education, working first with West Point and later with USAFA and other military organizations thinking about it in terms of military formation. I was dabbling all over the place. At the time, I got headhunted for the job that I have right now. It is an Endowed Chair funded by Sanford McDonnell who was the CEO for McDonnell-Douglas, and later Boeing. By the way, he was always thrilled to come to the terrazzo at USAFA to see how many of his planes were sitting out there that he had designed and manufactured. He liked that a lot. It was a coincidence because at the same time, I was also headhunted for the Ambassador Holland H. Coors Professor of Character Development at USAFA. I got both offers at almost the same time. First, from USAFA, and that came about from meeting people when I was working with West Point. I accepted that one and then I was offered the one at St. Louis, the McDonnell Chair. I actually turned it down because I told them that I had just signed a contract with the Air Force. Even though it was just for a year, I wasn't backing out of a contract that I had signed. They said, "It's okay. We want you, so we will hold it for a year." So, I spent a year working with

the CCD, I think it was called that then, which is now the Center for Character and Leadership Development (CCLD). I was triangulating a bit there. I went from Milwaukee to USAFA, and then to St Louis.

Once I got to St Louis, I was in the College of Education and my job was explicitly to be dealing with schools, and particularly leadership. The leadership piece came about in the following way. When I was at Marquette, I was encouraged to pursue my interest in applying it to schools. But I was encouraged to pick one school with a good leader and mentor that leader through whole school transformation. We were not able to pull that off for all sorts of bureaucratic reasons. So, when I got to St Louis, part of my job contractually was to run a Leadership Academy for school leaders. It is part of the definition of my job. I have been doing that for over two decades now.

That turned out to be the best gift that I got out of this whole thing because I think it is my greatest leverage point. The most powerful thing that I do is work with leaders in the field of education to help them rethink what their organizations are, what their role as a leader is, and what kind of person they have to be as a leader to pull this off in order to optimally serve the flourishing of kids. We have been turning schools around left and right. Now, it has grown to where we are doing it all around the world. That is how I got to this point.

Lindsay: That's quite the journey. Is the Leadership Academy part of the Center for Character and Citizenship?

Berkowitz: Yes. When I first got the University of Missouri at St Louis, it was just me. I remember when I left Kohlberg's Center at Harvard and came to Marquette, I felt like I was all alone. I had been in a Center where everybody had a synergy, where we were



all studying the same thing. It was great but now I was not only the only one studying moral development, I was the only developmental psychologist at the University, so I felt really alone. I ran around campus trying to find people to connect with. Fortunately, at a Jesuit University, you find people interested in morality and ethics all over the place. I started building a network there so that when I came to the University of Missouri-St Louis, I had my head on to know that I needed to come in there and find people that had a shared interest.

I started finding people and attracting others to come join us, but there was no formal organization for it. It was just me and my Leadership Academy. When we hired Dr. Wolfgang Althof into another prestigious position, he was a Chair in Citizenship Education, together we said, let's make this formal. So, we proposed to the University of Missouri system that we become a Center of Excellence, and they said yes. That was about 15 years ago that we turned it into a Center. We are now formally a Center for Character and Citizenship. We have a lot of people working there and the Leadership Academy is a part of it.

Lindsay: You talked about helping leaders in the field of education, is that primarily K-12, or is that at other levels?

Berkowitz: Let me pull back a step before I get to that to give you some context. We do multiple things. The leadership training is one of the most important things that we do, but we also do work in scholarship. We edit the Journal of Character Education. We also are the key folks trying to digest, synthesize, and disseminate all of the research that is going on in this field. The real goal of that is to say, "What are the evidence-based practices? What really works?" When I was at USAFA, I wrote a couple of papers about getting our heads on straight thinking about what are the real leverage points. What

are the active ingredients? How do we emphasize those to achieve the character mission of the institution? I still think that way and I still try to do that. We have done that very consistently for 20 years. We have a whole model dealing with the design principles for the evidence-based practices in promoting the development of character. That background leads me to answer your question. The leadership piece is mostly K-12.

It is dealing with principals, assistant principals and other leaders. The broader work is asking, "What does organizational reform look like, what are the design

Character education is much more a way of "being" than a way of "doing." Be-Know-Do is a common phrase in the military context, but this "being" piece is the really slippery, but most important, piece of it.

principles for that, and what are the best practices?" While we certainly do that mostly for K-12 schools, we do get interest from all sorts of sectors. Post-secondary is certainly an obvious one, but we also have interest from corporations, non-profits, and others. We don't do much with the rest of those because I am in a College of Education and most of my work is explicitly out of the education literature. So, that is really the mission for my position. Therefore, we are heavily skewed toward the K-12 sector.

Lindsay: You mentioned developing design principles. I imagine part of that gets into some pretty good discussions to include the development of curriculum regarding character development? Do you advise on that as well?

Berkowitz: I'll give you a yes and a no answer to that. Yes, in the most direct sense that schools want to know about that. We have plenty we can lend people about how we can do that. In fact, I had a conversation last



night about that with two high school government teachers who said, “We are up and running with our virtual learning at the high school level, now we need your advice on how we do character in these classes.” So, we brainstormed about that. A lot of it had to do with integrating it through the curriculum, but a lot of it had to do with other places like classroom management, ancillary stuff, and so on. That is sort of the yes part of it.

The no part of it is that is the first place that people go, and I mean all around the world, the first thing people want is curriculum. They say, “Can you give me curriculum, lesson plans, and can you teach me how to teach this in the classroom?” My inclination is to say, “No, we are not doing that.” Character education is much more a way of “being” than a way of “doing.” Be-Know-Do is a common phrase in the military context, but this “being” piece is the really slippery, but most important, piece of it. How you are with others has the greatest impact on their character, much more than what you cover in your classes or what you teach about. I’m not belittling that or saying that we shouldn’t do that. If you are going to sit down at a roulette wheel and put your money down, don’t put it on something that isn’t likely to pay off. Put your money where you have a good chance at having the greatest impact. We all have limited resources so let’s use our resources wisely. That is a tough sell to people. That means I may have to be a different person. For instance, one of the most overlooked and most powerful elements, and I am talking K-12, but we can extrapolate to other levels, that can impact character is the adult culture. The culture among the teachers and the other adults who work in the building. It is the leader’s job to nurture and shape that adult culture. The leader doesn’t have to worry about the kids as much. At USAFA, that means the Superintendent doesn’t have to worry about the cadets. He needs to worry about those that impact the cadets. That gets lost in a lot of places, but it is so

critical. What you have to shape is how do we function as an adult community? What do we model in front of those people? How do we get along with each other? Do we act out of character with each other or not? That is a critical piece of this that is so often overlooked. That is so far away from curriculum, you can’t get much further away than something like that.

I met years ago in Hong Kong with a high level education person from the government and I tried this line of argumentation with him and it just fell on deaf ears because all he could think about was (1) how we could increase academic scores, and (2) the only way to do that is what you teach and your teaching methods. I kept telling him that there are other things that impact the outcome that you want. What we are talking about at a place like USAFA, and this is a line that I always used to use when I was there is, “Yes, it’s about the character of your cadets, but that is not really your end game.

The end game is the character of officers in the operational Air Force. That is the end game.” When a person is out there 10 years later and they have control over critical decisions, that is the end game for USAFA. That is when the character has to be there. I remember there was a guy at West Point who I heard speak many years ago who wasn’t a graduate because he was disenrolled for a violation of the Honor Code.

They would bring him back every year to give a talk to the cadets. His talk was that he had lied during an inspection on whether he had polished his boots, or something like that. They asked him if he did X, and it turns out he didn’t. They didn’t know that he had lied. He actually later self-reported out of remorse. Back in those days, and this probably happened 40 years ago, it was single sanctioned so he was disenrolled. I thought, the message here should be, we blew it because this is the type of person that we want. At that point in his life he



was so driven by ethics that he self-reported. He didn't become bitter and hate the Military Academy, he was loyal to them over all those years. Those are the people that you want to keep in uniform if you can, because in the long run, those are the people that are going to do good in the world.

Lindsay: As I hear you talk about that, I think the default toward curriculum is to be able to get a plug and play answer. It is pretty straightforward and easy.

Berkowitz: It is easy. Here is an interesting way that I frame this. There is a thought experiment that I do in presentations. I say to people, I want everyone in here to think about the thing that you like to think about most in the world. They look confused and I say, yourself. Everyone thinks about themselves more than anything else. Think about yourself and think about one of your actual character strengths. You aren't going to share it with anyone so don't worry about humility here. Are you particularly caring, honest, responsible, or what is a strength of yours that you would hope that people who know you see and are pleased that their friend or relative is like that? I have them think about that for a minute. Okay, now I want you to answer a tougher question. How did you end up like that? How did you end up strong on that and not on something else? What made you that kind of person? Where did that come from? They do that, and then I ask them to share out.

What you get from the vast majority of them is they will tell you that either one or both of their parents had that characteristic. Some others will say someone else significant in their life had that characteristic. A few will say that there was some significant adult in their life, often a parent, that had the opposite characteristic and they vowed they wouldn't follow that path. I actually first learned that when I was at USAFA. We were sitting around in our offices and were talking about

our lives and our parents and one guy was talking about how his dad was a horrible bigot. As a result, he always vowed he would not be prejudiced and lived his life to not be. Another one said that her mom was an alcoholic and that is why she never drank. I thought, wow, this is an interesting fork in the road. We know from statistics, if you are raised by a bigot, you are more likely to become a bigot. Or, if you are raised by an addict, you are more likely to be an addict, and so on. But for some people, it takes them in a different direction. That is the third one.

The fourth answer that I hear is a life trauma. Life threw me challenges and that brought out the character in me. Those are the things that I always hear. But, there are some things that I never hear, and I have done this all over the world with thousands of people. I have never heard curriculum, a lesson, poster, a song about character, or an award I got, caused my character. Nobody has ever said that to me. Yet, schools flock to this stuff. It is the first thing they want to do. Some of those are just low impact and don't do much. If we really want to change someone's fundamental nature, that is a heavy duty task and we need heavy duty input.

Lindsay: I can really see how people would want to start with curriculum. How do you address that fundamental idea that it is a way of "being" and not just doing? How do you start to unpack that for people when they want to just focus on the curricular part?

Berkowitz: When you deal with cadets, who happen to be some of the best and brightest in the country, they will sometimes tell you that you can't impact their character. It is already done. You aren't going to change me. One part of the answer is that for every complicated problem, there is a simple solution, and it is wrong. Another one that I learned a long time ago is the way that we make meaning in the world is to draw lines and



make distinctions. The first distinction is a dichotomy. It's this or it is that. Those are overly simplistic. Human beings are so complex. I used to teach my students that the human mind is too complex for the human mind to comprehend. We are not going to fully understand it. These are interesting issues to raise, like you can't teach an old dog new tricks. That just isn't true. It may be a bit more difficult to teach an old dog new tricks under certain circumstances, but you still can. That is the answer to much of this. It is complex and nuanced. It doesn't mean there are rules and patterns that you can follow, but they certainly aren't dichotomous, neat rules in that regard.

My argument would be that human beings are not born a blank slate as behaviorism would teach us, or that any human being has equal potential to be good or bad, or smart or dumb, or whatever you want to look at. Rather, we are born with certain tendencies that are vectors in certain directions. While there are these vectors that will push us in certain directions, there are also countervailing forces. So, we are born with the potential to develop as pro-social, moral beings. But, we need certain conditions and circumstances to draw that out and still others to optimize it. That is really what we are trying to do in character education. To ask, what are the conditions that will optimize the flourishing of the potential for goodness in people? A metaphor I often use for this is that there is the potential for a seed to become a tree. But, if you don't have the right nutrients, temperature, light, etc., it won't. If you do it optimally, then you greatly increase the chances that you will get a positive result for which the potentiality already existed.

Lindsay: Creating those optimal individual conditions to maximize that potential can be a challenge when you have a large school. I think that is why you often see

a more one size fits all approach, hence the curriculum approach. Let's try to get everyone over the line that we need them to be over. When you are dealing with a technical skill, it is more straightforward on how we can intervene with someone on a particular skill. When you are dealing with character, that is a different challenge because it is so individual. So, when you are looking at creating the conditions, you can quickly get past the curriculum discussion and then you get to the "being" part of influencing the faculty. What have you found to be successful in creating the conditions necessary to create a culture where character is modeled and shown?

Berkowitz: The easiest place for me to start are with six design principles I have described. The model is called PRIMED. I actually have a book that will be out within a few months on this model. PRIMED is an anagram for six ideas. It comes out of our digesting the research for the last 20 years to see what the evidence suggests. P is the most important and it stand for Prioritization. For example, the character development of cadets is an authentic priority at USAFA. It is in your mission statement. It doesn't mean that it doesn't sometimes get short shrift because something else supersedes it. But, to a large degree, as an institution, I think character formation of cadets is an authentic priority there.

The R stands for Relationships. It is building the healthy relationships that are necessary for human flourishing. It means everybody has to be included. So, if you have a cadet who is different in some way, being ostracized in the squadron, in some way being marginalized, or someone who is shy and insecure, we need to make sure that we have structures and ways where that doesn't happen and everyone is connected. Mentoring is a great way to make sure there is a relationship, and my former Ph.D. student Lt. Col. David Huston, who is at CCLD did his dissertation on mentoring. What some schools are now doing, and now I am back to the K-12 world,



is that they do a scan of each student and find out who does not have a staff to student relationship and they strategically make that happen. There are all kinds of structures and ways to do that. It is thinking, how do we make sure there are these relationships? It is keeping an eye on how do we keep building relationships.

One of the things that I would love to see USAFA do, which is an idea I came up with years ago, is making your character a self-project. When I was there, the probation system started to touch on that. For example, if someone stole something and was put on probation, then they have to work on that. They write on it and reflect on it during their probation. However, I think it is something that everyone should do. I will play it out as a possibility as an example. Let's say every cadet who comes into USAFA, when they first arrive, are taught about the Core Values. They are asked to complete a private self-assessment that they don't share with anyone else, to really do some deep work on what I am strongest on, what am I weakest on, and so on. Then, they chose one of those that they want to work on in their first year. There is a whole system in place at USAFA for this. Every class that they take that has any connection at all, assignments are linked to that.

If you are studying history, you are asked to think about where do you see evidence of or the absence of evidence of that at this moment in history. If you are in literature, where do you see it in the literature, and so on. If science, where do you see famous scientific discoveries manifesting it or not manifesting it? They are also taught how to do strategic planning and they do strategic planning for themselves. They are creating a portfolio for four years. Maybe at the end of the first year, they do a final report and they do a public presentation in their squadron or some place else of my journey this year on this character trait. When they are a sophomore, they

can choose a new one or continue working on the same one. So, they end up with a four-year portfolio on their character growth. But, they are also assigned a peer in the same class who is their accountability buddy. You wouldn't have to be working on the same character strength so the accountability is on the process. You stay together as accountability buddies. Maybe there are three sets of accountability buddies assigned to a junior who is mentoring them. You are building relationships while you are focusing on character and empowering people to build their own character. I kind of made that up just now as an example, but it is based on a model that I have been working on.

The I stands for Intrinsic motivation. Ultimately, what you want is that when these cadets go out anywhere, that those character strengths are inside them and go with them everywhere. It isn't just something that they do at

You have to be the character you want to see in the people you are trying to impact.

USAFA because they are being monitored, rewarded, or punished, because that is extrinsic motivation. Instead, it becomes who I am. There is a whole psychology of how you get that inside a person. We don't have time right now to go through all of that, but we focus on building a whole program around what will make these cadets really honestly motivated to be the Air Force values and to work to become more and more like that all the time. Otherwise, when they leave, it is gone.

I used to go nuts when I was there and people would come in and brag about all of the stupid things that they did when they were TDY. Then, they would say, "What goes TDY, stays TDY." If they really realized how much they were undermining the character education message of USAFA, and particularly the toleration clause of the



Honor Code, by telling those stupid bragging stories, they wouldn't do it. They are undermining it all. Don't do that.

The M stands for Modelling. Cadets are constantly telling us that officers are yelling at them because one little button was off but they are doing that when they are disheveled themselves and have their uniform on wrong. It doesn't work then. You have to be the character you want to see in the people you are trying to impact.

The E stands for Empowerment. There is a lot of empowerment at USAFA. Cadets get to be officers and run the Honor System, and all kinds of activities. D is for a Developmental perspective. Which is saying, in everything that we do, how can we do it in a way that impacts the long term development of this person? That is why I said I am much less concerned about the character of cadets as the outcome than I am of the officers in the Air Force that they eventually become. That is the goal.

What kind of education do we need to have that kind of impact as opposed to getting them to be a certain way right now? For example, we can get them to clean up their acts while they are at USAFA because you have a system over their heads. When they leave, and are Second Lieutenants, they have to decide how they are going to act. They remember how everyone told them, what goes TDY, stays TDY, and how people really wear their uniforms. They taught me well how to act in the operational Air Force. Because they pay attention to everything. That is the PRIMED Model and the principles of design of how you make this stuff go deep and stick.

Lindsay: That is an interesting point about how we may be undermining our own work by what is modeled

and talked about. If we agree that our leadership is a natural extension of who we are being, then we need to pay attention to that within the system.

A challenge with that PRIMED approach is that it is a highly individualistic approach. Some might say that takes a lot of time and resources to pull that off. I'm sure you hear that quite often.

Berkowitz: That is a real issue and a real concern. But you have to look in the mirror when you say that. What they are saying is that they don't want to do the heavy lifting. If that's the case, then is it fair to say, that maybe isn't the kind of person you want in the Air Force. If you are immediately going to say that it is hard, difficult, and different than what we used to do before, then what are you going to do when you are in harm's way and that is difficult? It's really just getting in people's faces and shining a light on them for their own development. The single most powerful tool you have to influence someone else's character is your character. That is the greatest tool you have.

The other thing that I hear is that you are asking too much of us. You are asking us to be saints and to go so far above and beyond. You know what I say to educators who tell me that? I say that education is not just a job or a profession. It is a calling. It is a calling to service. I think that speaks a lot to your readership. Anyone who is serving in the military as just a job or mainly to make money, they are missing why they are there in the first place. Don't we want the people who are called to serve? For example, I met a lot of special operations folks and they were just amazing. These are people who are consistently willing to put themselves in harms way in some of the scariest places because they have a true calling to serve the best interests of this nation.



The other thing that I wanted to say is that it does optimally get to a more individualized approach as you mentioned. But people take that and say they have so many students and we can't have a separate program for each student. However, you have all sorts of resources in place to help you do that. At USAFA, you have the benefit of having them 24 hours a day and so many structures that many organizations do not have to really get to know the individual. I met a person recently who is an "edupreneur." He does technology for education. He said, when his kids started going to school, he realized that teachers don't know their kids well enough. They don't know them individually. So, he created a website application called Thrively with the idea that it is a platform where kids have e-portfolios that grow over time. As much data as possible gets in there. He also recommends collecting data on character. So, teachers can have a ready way to get a deeper understanding of each student. I thought that is a great idea.

One high school approached it this way. They got some of their best and brightest juniors and seniors to each be assigned five incoming freshmen. They would meet with them and advise them on how to navigate high school. What they did was pair them up. Two of the older students with each of their five mentees would get together periodically. They said in the very first semester they did this, 9th grade misbehavior plummeted. It almost went away just by having them be in a small group of five of their peers and one older student.

There are all sorts of structures that can be used to get a more customized knowledge. The thing is, most of the cadets (or students) coming in don't need special attention. So, you are trying to identify those that need support. You need to be able to find out who they are because you can't necessarily predict them. It may not exactly be a one-on-one individually tailored educational experience, but you can be flexible.

Lindsay: That approach expands a bit to how you might about faculty and staff. It becomes more than just having people with technical competence in a particular knowledge domain. As you mentioned one of the benefits of USAFA is that we get 47-months with each cadet and 47-months is quite a bit of time.

Berkowitz: It is, but only if you are strategic and intentional about it. While I think USAFA does a pretty good job, there is always room to improve. What happens is that our tendency is to fall back on the tried and true and what we know. There are really two strategies in higher education. One is to put the filter up front. These are places like Harvard. If we put the filter up front, then we don't have to worry about them afterwards. We know that they all will be able to do the work and what we demand of them because we select them for that. The other one is to say that we will let more people in without that kind of filter and set up hurdles along the way and they will kind of winnow themselves out. In essence, USAFA is both. The key is having that discourse. It is important. Do you think of your cadets as already pre-selected so that the vast majority of them should have a relatively easy path through the 47-month obstacle course that USAFA is? If so, then they don't need a whole lot of scaffolding or help. Or, do you see this as a real obstacle course where at the end, only the best and brightest are standing because they winnow themselves out because we made it so challenging for them? What do you really think you are doing there? That would give you a better sense of how you need to operate.

One of the problems with the model is that some may not have it yet, but could develop it under your watch. So, what do we do for that? The other part is do we have selection science nailed down well enough where we could differentiate who is the sure winner and who isn't?



I don't think we do yet. One thing I tell school leaders all the time is to start with the assumption that everyone here has the potential to be what you want them to be. My friend Clifton Taulbert always says, "Don't teach to people as they are, teach to the potential in people." That is what you teach to. I tell leaders all the time, that is the first thing you do is to put every resource possible that makes sense there to help this person be able to do their job as a teacher.

With the teachers, if you have tried everything you can and it is clear that they are never going to become a teacher who is healthy for kids, then you need to get them out of there as they shouldn't be teaching kids. Likewise, at USAFA, what can you do to give each cadet a shot at becoming a good officer in the United States Air Force? Do you know who Dave Bing is? He was an NBA all-star and then went on to become the Mayor of Detroit. He always had a passion for helping urban minority youth. I remember him once saying, "As much as it kills me, we don't have the resources to save some of these kids, and some will need to be locked away." That is an extreme case, but I tell principals to try and try to see if you can get the burnt out or cynical teacher to become a good teacher. To teach to that potential. Lead to that potential. But, if you figure out it is never going to happen after you have tried everything, then they need to go find something else.

Lindsay: Understanding which approach your organization has is important to determine what steps you need to take. With all of this in mind, if you could pass on advice to young leaders, what would you say?

Berkowitz: I'm going to answer that question by telling you about a new initiative that we have around servant leadership. I want to give credit where credit is due. My colleague, Dr. Melinda Bier, is really the leader behind us moving in this direction. What she did is come up

with a model of the virtues of servant leadership. She got it from the scholarly literature and there are eight core virtues of servant leadership. What we are doing with educational leaders is to take them on a journey to first learn about these eight virtues and then to make themselves a self-project to become more like those virtues. Some of the things that we are hearing back from educational leaders is that they need to be more courageous, which is one of the virtues. Or that they need to be more grateful, which is another one of the virtues. I don't express my gratitude enough.

The idea of servant leadership, which comes from Robert Greenleaf, I find dovetails so nicely with the development of character. Basically, what it says is to take a systemic perspective. We are a system. I can't be a puppeteer who just orchestrates it all and everyone will go along with it. Instead, what I have to do is respectfully understand how critical each piece of this is and I have to empower and equip them to be the best that they can be at what they do. Or, I can't be the best that I can be and the organization can't be the best that it can be. That notion of servant leadership would take new leaders a really long way. If you serve the people who follow you, they will follow you more closely and more effectively.

ACADEMIC

THE ROLE OF FAITH



Dondi Costin, Maj Gen (Ret), USAF, PhD
President, Charleston Southern University

Interviewed By: Douglas Lindsay

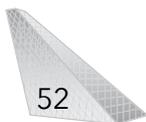
Lindsay: Would you mind sharing a little bit about your journey, any leadership lessons you learned along the way, and how you got to where you are today?

Costin: I was raised in a home where faith was important to my parents, and they demonstrated in word and deed why it should be important to me. I grew up seeing the best leadership example I have ever seen in the person of my dad, who owned a small floor covering business. My dad was born during the Great Depression, raised by a single mom, barely finished high school, and started a business in his early 20s, never having had a single course in leadership. His only instruction in leadership came from the foundation of the Bible. I had the privilege of watching him sometimes struggle as a small business owner, lead a team of two different crews who understood that their primary job was to do whatever it took to satisfy their customers. What most impressed me, even at a young age, was the way my dad balanced people and mission. As I would later learn at the Air Force Academy, this is the most basic leadership model of all time, an approach my dad knew instinctively and practiced religiously.

When it came to people, my dad would give them second, third, and fourth chances. His crews, who would never have had any real economic opportunity otherwise, were important to him so he taught them how to lay floors, serve customers, give people value for their money, and be proud of their work in ways that nobody had ever done for them. He made a point of paying his crews a lot more than they could have otherwise made in any other kind of job because he wanted them to know that the work itself is valuable on its own, and that we all ultimately work for Someone greater than ourselves.

I realize that everyone is not religious, but I'll frame it from my perspective as a person of faith. Between baseball practices in the summer, I was gopher number one growing up. The way I earned room and board the rest of

Dr. Dondi E. Costin, Major General (Retired; USAFA 1986) is the President of Charleston Southern University. Prior to assuming that role, he served in the Air Force for 32 years and retired as the Chief of Chaplains. In that position, he was responsible for establishing guidance and provides advice on all matter pertaining to the religious and moral welfare of Air Force personnel and served as the senior pastor for more than 600,000 active-duty, Guard, Reserve, and civilian forces serving around the world. Dr. Costin graduated from the United States Air Force Academy in 1986, hold's five Master's Degrees, a Doctor of Ministry Degree, and a PhD in Organizational Leadership. <https://www.af.mil/About-Us/Biographies/Display/Article/623192/chaplain-major-general-dondi-e-costin/>





the year was “gophering” for my dad. “Go to the truck and get this tool. Go back into the house and clean up that room. Go find us a pack of crackers.” During these formative experiences, I saw my dad on multiple occasions, after sanding a floor and applying finish, back away to the edge of the room and admire the job he had just completed. Whether or not anyone was in the room, he would say to himself—and to God—in an audible voice, “Pretty work.” In that sacred moment, he was acknowledging that he had done a job first to please the Lord, and in so doing he hoped to have pleased his customer. For him, his work was an act of worship. That’s a lesson his only son will never forget.

I learned as a young boy that being a leader means that you answer to Someone higher than yourself or some cause larger than yourself—whether you are leading an organization, your family, or yourself. If you can frame your life and your work with that mindset, all of your problems don’t disappear, but it gives you a perspective on life that fosters resilience, regardless of the difficulties you face. Many of us have spent the better part of a lifetime packing bags and travelling the globe in defense of the Nation, usually not at times or places of our choosing. A lot of what I packed in my rucksack from the Air Force Academy, and why I am so grateful that I was allowed to spend time in that crucible, is learning that life will be challenging at times, but the grit that you develop as a cadet stays with you long after graduation. That grit drives growth. Along the way, you develop a capacity to accomplish more than you ever thought you were capable of doing.

Neither of my parents attended college, so going to college was just not something our family discussed. As I mentioned, my dad barely finished high school. My mom attended a two-year secretarial school and became a bank teller upon graduation, but the thought of me attending a traditional university never entered our minds. So, as my high school years wound down, it just wasn’t part of our family’s lexicon. The only reason the subject ever arose was because my high school guidance

counselor told me late in my junior year that “Our valedictorian usually goes to college.” I said, “Okay, I guess that is something we could talk about. What do I need to do?” One thing led to another and I wound up attending North Carolina Boys State. Back then, one of the summer programs for rising seniors at the Academy was serving as a Boys State camp counselor. The first time I heard of the Air Force Academy was during a special session at Boys State hosted by a Firstie from the Class of 1983. What I took home to my mom was, (a) I should probably go to college, to which she replied, “Probably not a bad idea.” And (b), there is a school in Colorado that will let me attend for free. She said, “Now we’re talking. Tell me more.” All I can say is thank God for Jay Dunham from the USAFA Class of 1983!

We are shaped by our experiences and education, but mostly we are shaped by the people in our lives. I agree with the writer who said that who you are five years from today is based on the books you read and the people you associate with. It’s certainly been true in my life. I have been shaped by those places of worship, teachers in school, my USAFA squadron buds, and supervisors during every military assignment who saw more in me than I saw in myself. But in the grand scheme, apart from my parents, the single most influential teacher in my life was an eighth grade teacher named Mercedes J. Newsome. For perspective, I have an undergraduate degree from the Air Force Academy, five earned Master’s Degrees, and two earned Doctorate Degrees, including a Ph.D. in Leadership. In all that schooling, the question of “Who was your most influential teacher”, the answer is easy. Because she had such high standards and was a taskmaster by nature, she was not-so-affectionately known as Gruesome Newsome. While I wouldn’t necessarily recommend her teaching methods to everyone, she motivated me to excel like no other teacher I ever had. At the end of every graded event, whether it was a project or an essay or a test, she made the entire class collect our belongings and back away from the desk at which we had been seated. In her hand would be the stack of graded materials. Then, as the class waited



with great dread, she called out each student's name—from lowest grade to highest grade—and re-seated every student around the room from last to first. Let's just say that USAFA isn't the only institution to have discovered Tail-end Charlie. Everyone knew everyone's class rank until Mrs. Newsome held another stack of graded materials in her hand. Depending on your perspective, it was either public humiliation or private motivation.

...investing in others the way that others have invested in you is what life and leadership are all about.

At the beginning of this exercise in academic torture, I was timid, unsure of myself, and more than happy to be seated midway through the class. Right there in the so-called Gifted and Talented Class, a place I never wanted to be in the first place, I contracted an early case of “cooperate and graduate.” Midway seemed about right because I was not in last place, and I wasn't too far from the front. Good enough for government work. But Mrs. Newsome wouldn't stand for it. She called me aside on more than one occasion and said in her most intimidatingly caring voice, “You know, Mr. Costin, you don't have to sit in the middle. You have what it takes to be up front. If you work harder than the others and do what I tell you to do, you can earn a seat at the front of the class.” Because she believed in me, I began to believe in myself in a way that I never had before in the classroom. Like most Air Force Academy cadets, I made pretty good grades along the way. But the turning point, the hinge, the pivot point in my life was Mrs. Newsome's direct motivation. Academically, she pushed me to be all I could be long before the U.S. Army came up with the idea.

As a hardheaded human, there were other occasions on which I would learn that lesson down the road. The next time was during my initial assignment as a Second Lieutenant. Looking back, I was at best a middling Lieutenant for most of the first couple of years. However, a crusty old Major named Milt Clary took me aside and blessed me with what my mom would have referred to as jerking a knot in me. But he did it without being a jerk. He did it by running with me and

mentoring me through the miles. The great thing is that he took the initiative. Like Mrs. Newsome, he saw something in me that I didn't see in myself. “I know you have this fancy Air Force Academy education,” he said, “but this is the real world. Let me tell you how the real world works.” He, too, was a person of faith. He told me

that I really needed to perform better if I was to be the kind of professional that God intended me to be. It was a life changing revelation that redirected the course of my professional life because somebody who had nothing to gain by helping me—he wasn't even in my chain of command—cared enough about me, the squadron, and the Air Force to push me to perform up to my potential.

Decades later I retired as a Major General, but it would never have happened without Mrs. Newsome and Major Milt Clary believing in me and motivating me not to settle for mediocrity. Those two wake-up calls came at critical points in my development. Others could have allowed me to meander toward mediocrity, but these two chose to direct my steps in life-altering ways. I am who I am today in no small part because they did so.

I could go on and talk about mentors like Chaplain Charles Baldwin, a 1969 Academy graduate who flew rescue helicopters in Vietnam. When I got to the Academy in 1982 as a Doolie, he had fulfilled his Academy commitment, gotten out of the Air Force, gone to seminary, and come back as a chaplain. As it turns out, he was the answer to my mother's prayers. Beginning months before I turned 18, Chaplain Baldwin mentored me in several seasons of my Air Force life that didn't end until I was Air Force Chief of Chaplains, nearly a decade after he retired from the same position. In the Providence of God, he retired to Charleston long before Vicky and I were called to serve here, so he mentors me to this day. I say that to say this: I can point to people all along the way who told me



that leadership is mostly about building relationships and serving others. In many ways, investing in others the way that others have invested in you is what life and leadership are all about. I could go on and on, but standing on the shoulders of giants is how I got here.

Lindsay: Can you imagine a Mrs. Newsome in a classroom today and the fallout from her approach?

Costin: Not a chance, but, for whatever reason, her approach worked for me. Come to think of it, our baseball coach at that same school in the 1977-1978 time frame still used a wooden paddle on students who misbehaved, and his motivational methods didn't seem all that odd. People said that he was tough because he used a paddle, but nobody complained about it. No one ever said that we should get a lawyer and sue him. We just behaved better so we could avoid the paddle. As with Mrs. Newsome's methods, I certainly do not advocate the use of wooden paddles as behavior modification tools. But they worked for us. Looking back, maybe that's why the, shall we say, stringent disciplinary methods at USAFA in the early- to mid-1980s did not seem over the top. As far as I know, my mom never called my AOC to complain about them. She must have thought that whatever was happening to me could not have been worse than a wooden paddle in the hands of a junior high baseball coach.

Lindsay: I agree that those relationships shape us and can direct us. When you graduated from the Academy, you started as an analyst, but then when you were a CGO, you transitioned to the Chaplaincy. Can you talk a little bit about how that occurred?

Costin: I graduated as an operations research major, which is industrial engineering in non-military circles, and spent the first six years as an operations research analyst. For the first three years I evaluated precision guided air-to-ground weapon systems in an operational test and evaluation squadron. I spent the second three years conducting a variety of studies and analysis

projects on a major command headquarters staff. Along the way, I was called into the ministry. As a second lieutenant, about the same time Major Milt Clary was pointing me in the right direction on the running trails, I was reminded of something that I hadn't thought too much about since high school. When I was 15 or 16 I felt a calling to the ministry, but the one thing I knew was that I was scared to death to speak in public. In my teenage brain the calculus was pretty simple: Being a preacher means you stand in front of people and talk two or three times a week. Since I was deathly afraid of standing in front of people and talking in any setting for any reason, I was sure God had called the wrong guy. So God, as has happened on many other occasions in my hardheaded existence, said to me in so many words, "You want it your way, huh? Fine. I'll let you have it your way for a little while, but I'll be back when you've matured enough to understand that God's way will always be the best way for you."

Fast forward until I was a Second Lieutenant, which brought with it a renewed sense of calling to the ministry. But there had been relatively little progress in overcoming my fear of public speaking. By then, thankfully, the Academy had worked some of that fear out of me, but it wasn't something that I enjoyed doing. Rather, it was still something that I avoided every chance I got. At the time, I was doing a lot of running. Then as now, a lot of revelation happens to me while I am running. It always has and likely always will. To this day, people who work with me hate it when I run because they know that long runs generate lots of ideas. One day while running as a Second Lieutenant—I can remember this like it was yesterday—God reminded me of that old calling to be a pastor. For me, it was an immediate, no-questions-asked call to be an Air Force chaplain. There was never a smidgen of a doubt about the specificity of that call. I loved the Air Force, I loved Air Force people, and now there was this calling to be a chaplain.



So, I started going to school, which became a mad dash to complete the educational requirements to become a chaplain, a 96-semester-hour Master of Divinity degree. I first completed a Master of Arts degree in Counseling, which was closely followed by a Master of Arts in Religion degree. But these two degrees still meant I was short of the requirement. I had to find a seminary to cross the finish line. At the six-year point of my Air

recognition was evidence that the immature Second Lieutenant of a few years prior had finally learned the lessons my dad, Mrs. Newsome, Major Milt Clary, and others had tried so hard to teach me along the way. You don't get paid to prepare for the next thing. You get paid to do the current thing well.

Your job is to bloom where you are planted by doing the best possible job you can do right where you are. If your character and competence are shaped as they should be, then good things are likely to happen.

By miraculous events, I was able to complete a competitive category transfer from the line of the Air Force into the chaplaincy without separating from the Air Force, which almost never happens. By the grace of God and a bunch of others, I was a line officer one day and a chaplain the next.

Force career, I said to God, "If you want Vickey and me to stay in the Air Force, then place us near a seminary for our third assignment. If you don't want us to stay in the Air Force, then give us an assignment that is impossibly far away from a seminary. In that case, I will seven-day opt, leave the Air Force, go to seminary full time, and return as an Air Force chaplain sometime in the next five to 10 years."

When I talk to young leaders about leadership, I tell them the number one rule of thumb is to bloom where you are planted. I wasn't doing that early in my career, but Major Clary ran that out of me. The mistake I made as a Second Lieutenant, especially when I decided to become a chaplain, was preparing for the job I was going to have rather than doing the job I actually had. That is no way to live. Not only is it miserable living, it is selfish living. Your job is to bloom where you are planted by doing the best possible job you can do right where you are. If your character and competence are shaped as they should be, then good things are likely to happen.

It's a long, miraculous story, but when my next assignment RIP appeared, I was assigned to teach Air Force ROTC at Texas Christian University, which was less than 10 minutes from the denominational seminary that I wanted to attend all along. This was before the Internet existed, but the seminary was just beginning to cater to working adults. Thankfully, they had classes at seven in the morning. I would attend class in uniform four days a week at 7 A.M., and be at work by 8 A.M. I would sometimes take a lunch-hour class and then take classes at night. All the while, I wanted everyone to know that my number one priority was doing my Air Force job so well that my colleagues—and especially my students—would never be able to say that I shortchanged my day job for the next big thing. Which is why I am perhaps most thankful for being named the Air Force ROTC Company Grade Officer of the Year during that assignment. Awards come and go, but this particular

One of the reasons that I wound up as Chief of Chaplains is due to the weirdness of my career path. People told me all along that there was no possible way I could ever be Chief of Chaplains since I had spent so much of my career in the line. They said I didn't have enough time left to have the right jobs in the right order to finish at the right place. That didn't bother me one bit because, after eight years of night school and getting ministry experience on the weekends, I just wanted to be a chaplain. It was everything I prayed it would be. I had no conscious thoughts of wanting to reach a certain rank, but I knew that blooming where the Air Force planted me could lead to other opportunities down the road. My job was to do my job; if good things happened,



great. In the end, the “fact” that I never had a chance to be the Chief of Chaplains was liberating. “If you are telling me that I can’t be the Chief of Chaplains, that works for me. I don’t have to do anything but be the best chaplain I can be for as long as they let me stay.” No pressure other than the pressure to serve Airmen and families as effectively as possible.

Fast forward to my 30th year on active duty, serving as the Pacific Air Forces Command Chaplain. If you think being a chaplain is the world’s coolest job, as I do, it doesn’t get much better than being a chaplain in Hawaii. And since I had known all along that I could never be the Chief of Chaplains, I had to pinch myself every day to make sure this “chaplain in Hawaii” thing was real. I just could not imagine a better career ending than that. Wrong again.

As you know, you have to be selected for Brigadier General before your 30-year shot clock expires. If you aren’t, you have to retire. As a result, I assumed I would be retiring at the 30-year point, just as I had been told. Although I wasn’t ready to go, I knew all along that was the deal. But due to a maximum-age rule that forced both the sitting Air Force Chief of Chaplains and Deputy Chief of Chaplains to retire in a four-month period, the Air Force had to fill both roles in one fell swoop. In my 30th year, with no expectations beyond retiring 30 years and three days after my USAFA graduation, I was selected not to be the Deputy Chief of Chaplains, but the Chief of Chaplains. For the first time since the first Chief of Chaplains was selected in 1949, an O-6 chaplain skipped Brigadier General and pinned on Major General. I had nothing to do with the circumstances of that promotion other than blooming every place I had been planted, having been freed from any careerist notion that there was anything I could ever do to position myself to become Chief of Chaplains. As they say, timing isn’t everything, but it sure is something. It was timing, it was Providence, and it was the result of a gift early on of people telling me that I could never be Chief of Chaplains, so don’t even try for it. Therefore, I

didn’t. I just tried to do the best job that I could every step of the way, and I wound up with the great privilege of being the Air Force Chief of Chaplains. I look back over that strange sequence of events, and even telling it now, it was like threading 14 different needles back to back to back. It was impossible, but God allowed it to happen. Once again, I was simply the beneficiary of God’s amazing grace.

Why did I retire? Because they made me retire. Having been a chaplain in the Air Force was incredible. Along the way, my wife, Vickey, and I would occasionally try to imagine what the next chapter might look like. How could you possibly duplicate what we found in the Air Force? Let me reiterate that what we found in the Air Force was a pure demonstration of both fundamentals of the simplest leadership model of all time: People and Mission. In the Air Force, you have people who are dedicated to serving their country at all costs and dedicated to a mission that is far larger than themselves. Airmen are selfless, ambitious, servant leaders who embody the Core Values of Integrity First, Service Before Self, and Excellence in all We Do. Those are the kind of people you get to be around all the time. When you are in the Air Force, you tend to take for granted that you get to be around such high-caliber people day in and day out, all around the world.

Then, there is a mission that is compelling beyond words, which for me was compounded by the exponential effect of not only being in the Air Force but being in the Air Force Chaplain Corps. When your job is to care for people who raise their right hands and demonstrate their willingness to put their lives on the line for citizens whose names they will never know, it just doesn’t get any better than that! Hanging out with those people is life-changing and life-affirming. I got to do that at home stations and deployed settings in every corner of the globe. How do you duplicate this brand of people so committed to a mission so compelling? This was the question Vickey and I asked ourselves over and over again. While not exactly the same, we found that higher

education was the best next place, a place where people are dedicated to serving people in pursuit of a cause far larger than themselves. It has allowed Vickey and me to do in the civilian sector what we had done together for so long as chaplain and wife. So, that is what we get to do here. We serve essentially the same demographic, because a large portion of the Air Force is in the 18- to 25-year-old range. We get to serve alongside colleagues who are called and committed to a cause greater than themselves. We get to do it in a place where we can see the fruits of our labors as lives are changed change. That is what we loved so much about the Air Force Chaplain Corps and what we love so much here.

Lindsay: You said that you were the beneficiary of all of those needles being threaded, but there was also a willingness to do the work and answer the call. Had you not done that, then I don't think those opportunities become possibilities. You get to appreciate the moment, versus just trying to think about what you needed to do next or where you needed to go next.

Costin: Exactly. If there is a corollary to "bloom where you are planted," it is "don't burn any bridges." Whenever I have the chance to speak to young Second Lieutenants and young chaplains, I say, in so many words, to "bloom where you are planted" and "don't burn any bridges." You must understand that in the Air Force, and this is likely true in most corporate settings as well, your career is built one day at a time. Practically, it is built based on what is written in your performance report. There are rough equivalents, of course, in the civilian sector. Your career is based on what you do day after day and week after week, but it's evaluated down the road based on what is recorded in your personnel file year after year. When it's time for your promotion board, people who have never seen you in the flesh will judge the fruits of your labor as recorded in a stack of government documents bearing your name. Blooming where you are planted is doing the kind of work that is worth recording. Part of not burning bridges is being diligent in the recording of that work in terms that a set

of highly qualified strangers (who know fluff when they see it) can use to decide which leaders get to lead at the next level.

Lindsay: I think people often struggle with that balance. People will sometimes sacrifice the moment in looking for what will be a potential down the road. It goes back to something that you mentioned earlier about the work being valuable and answering to someone higher than ourselves. I want to follow up on that a bit. When you were at the National Character and Leadership Symposium a few years ago, you spoke about the relationship between one's work and one's faith and belief systems. Often, I think we have difficulty having those discussions because we don't want to offend anyone or say the wrong thing. Do you mind talking a little bit about that, the importance of spirituality, and how that can shape us as leaders and as people? Not so much about a certain belief system that someone has, because as a chaplain you care for people with many different belief systems. But the importance of spirituality in our personal development and our development as leaders.

Costin: That very issue was foremost in my mind during my tenure as Chief of Chaplains. We had been through a period where it seemed to me that faith had become a four-letter word. But if you look at the data, roughly 85% of Americans claim a religion of some variety. So, whether you are referring to a particular religion or not, you can't escape the fact that people are, and always have been, spiritual beings. In many ways America is actually an outlier because of the way we tend to approach spirituality and religion. Most of the rest of the world doesn't have a concept of separating your faith from your person, from your work, or from your family. It isn't even a category they can understand. As Americans, we have this very special relationship between religion and who we are. From the very beginning of our country, as evidenced by its prominence in the First Amendment of our Constitution, religion and faith were considered crucial for most people. The First Amendment is first for a reason. In the same breath, of course, the Constitution





acknowledges the freedom to express your own faith as you see fit without being attacked or overly limited by the government. The First Amendment is amazing because it powerfully prohibits the government from picking sides where religion is concerned, while at the same time making it clear that religious liberty frees citizens to express their religion. In other words, it's not limited to the four walls of one's house of worship.

The significance of faith in the life of the warfighter is recognized in the Comprehensive Airman Fitness idea, but it's not always clearly understood. Comprehensive Airman Fitness (CAF) is an ancient idea in modern language because it speaks to the holistic nature of humankind. As philosophers and theologians have discussed from time immemorial, humans are comprised of physical, mental, social, and spiritual elements. But some of those elements are more easily discussed than others, while some are more awkwardly discussed. During my time as a chaplain, I found that commanders were very comfortable talking about the physical, because it's an essentially neutral concept that is easily understood and easily measured. You do these exercises and run this distance in this length of time, and a chart tells us if you pass or fail. That is easy. It isn't threatening to anybody. Commanders are a little less comfortable discussing the mental aspects of CAF, so it's often reduced to reading books, taking courses, seeing a counselor, or earning professional certifications as measures of merit. But at least there are metrics, things we can count, although we can debate how accurate those metrics are in measuring one's true mental health. It gets a little more challenging when you talk about the social element. But the fact is we were made for relationships, to be in community with others. When I talk about this concept, I talk about three things we were made to do. We were made to believe, belong, and become. Belonging captures the idea that we were made to live in community. The believing aspect really speaks to our faith, that there is a Being and/or a cause greater than ourselves. I come from a Christian background, but as a chaplain I spent a lot of my time

helping people from all kinds of faith groups and those who expressed no particular faith at all. But what all of them expressed was this longing for meaning and purpose, even if they expressed it using different terms than I used. I never shied away from my faith because it is such a game-changer for me, and I found that people were more than willing to talk about the meaning of life from my perspective as long as I allowed them to do the same from theirs. In this way, I encouraged individuals to get in touch with that very important aspect of their life, because to neglect it is to miss a key component of meaning, purpose, and resilience. Can you help someone whose religion is different than your own, or someone who claims no religion at all? Absolutely.

When I was the Chief of Chaplains, this being the topic de jour, we launched a program called Faith Works. The idea was to consider the thousands of scientific articles produced in the academic literature every year that show an unmistakable relationship between devout spirituality/religion and every aspect of one's health (physical, mental, emotional, social, spiritual, etc.). There are direct correlations in the literature between devout faith (as opposed to nominal faith) and health. Even apart from the supernatural element recognized in most religions, there are countless statistically significant benefits in joining routinely with others of similar faith to dissect life's big questions, discuss life's common challenges, and find solutions to those challenges in ancient Scripture and active communities that have stood the test of time. The appeal of this approach in the military context, in which warfighters and families represent every imaginable perspective, is that this reality is not limited to a particular religion or faith tradition. The intent of the Faith Works campaign, simply put, was to demonstrate that there is great value in working one's faith because your faith can support you in becoming a better warfighter, a healthier person in every way, and a more resilient human—everything commanders want for their Airmen. Even for those who don't profess a particular religion or don't see value in religion at all, I would encourage them to examine the academic literature because there are lessons to be learned that can help address

how to find meaning in life, belong to a community with whom you can build relationships, and become the kind of person you want to be.

For example, something as simple as riding motorcycles with a group of like-minded friends can keep you in the orbit of others who might love their work but know that there is more to life than going to work. If you like riding motorcycles and find that your motorcycle group is the place where you feel you belong, take advantage of every opportunity to hang out there.

Believing and Belonging leads to the third B, Becoming: You becoming the person that you were meant to be. To complete this line of thought, I often encourage people to read a 28 October 2016 USA Today editorial written by Tyler VanderWeele and John Siniff. This brief editorial is a good introduction to the Faith Works concept, in which the authors capture their evidence-based thesis in the editorial's simple title: Religion may be a miracle drug. Tyler VanderWeele is a public health professor at Harvard, and he spoke at one of our annual Air Force Chaplain Corps conference while I was Chief of Chaplains. His talk, like his editorial, referenced in clear terms some of the countless benefits that accrue to people who are devout in their faith. The operative word here is devout, which is in sharp contrast to those who are people of faith in name only. From a public health perspective, VanderWeele observes that the scientific evidence is overwhelming, in that even the most casual observer would have to conclude that the effects of devout religion on health in all its aspects is the same as if a miracle drug had been injected into the population. If you think about it, this makes perfect sense. If you are a person who takes your family at least once a week to a building where other people have brought their families and who share your faith, and you sit around and talk about life's big questions and how that relates to your faith, and then raise your family according to those principles, and you keep coming back week after week, the data clearly indicate that those people will have better relationships,

better resilience, and better physical health, among other benefits too numerous to mention here. The great thing is that this is not new stuff. My point to commanders was simply this: Why would we withhold from Airmen that which is so demonstrably good for them?

Lindsay: There does seem to be a hesitancy of people to share about their belief systems. But it really goes back to the connectedness to those around us and a cause higher than ourselves.

Costin: It does. For example, if I were to go to a commander and say, "I see that your squadron is not doing very well on the run portion of the fitness test. Here is what I am going to do. I am going to coach all of your members, and I promise you that based on this schedule of workouts that I am going to lead, and understanding that there are people with different metabolisms and body types and motivations, I promise you if you follow this plan of development, everyone in your squadron will improve their run times. What do you think about that?" The commander would likely say, "When do we start?" I could also do the same thing for mental fitness by developing a plan that would all but

I would remind commanders that faith is not a four-letter word. Americans do it better than anyone because we are a heterogeneous society that revels in the freedom of religion.

guarantee broad-scale improvement. I could do the same thing for social development and spiritual development. I would base it on the fact that people are different. People have different faith groups, and some have no specified religion at all, but if we understand what faith refers to and develop a plan for each individual based on evidence-based practices that can help your people be more resilient, develop better relationships, and be better warfighters, would you be interested?





I would say to commanders that I am aware that you are a little bit scared of this, but let me ask you this question once again: “Why would you withhold from your Airmen that which is so demonstrably good for them?” You don’t hold back when it comes to physical fitness. You don’t hold back when it comes to mental fitness. You don’t do it when it comes to social. So, why is there this fear when it comes to helping Airmen and their families experience the evidence-based benefits of faith if they choose to do so for their own good? I would remind commanders that faith is not a four-letter word. Americans do it better than anyone because we are a heterogeneous society that revels in the freedom of religion. We understand pluralism like no other culture. I can believe what I want to believe, and you can disagree with every fiber of your being, but we can still work on a jet together. We can have a conversation, hang out together, and go to lunch together. Things went sideways somewhere along the way because we became afraid to even talk about faith. You cannot talk someone into believing something that they don’t believe, so genuine proselytism is a non-starter from the get-go. But the evidence could not be clearer that the expression of religion and the practice of faith that is consistent with an individual’s own belief system is critical to holistic health. This is precisely why leaders at all levels should not be scared to talk about every element of health in ways that move the needle in Comprehensive Airmen Fitness.

Lindsay: I think that approach is important because everyone has a belief system about how we make sense of the world around us. Importantly, such an approach incorporates everyone, which is vital. It doesn’t keep people out of the conversation because they do or do not believe a certain thing. For example, most of us had a calling to serve and that calling can be influenced by many different things.

Costin: Exactly. In the military, that calling for some is patriotism. The sense of patriotism gives them a purpose that is higher than themselves. In fact, almost

everyone who has ever worn the uniform can understand the pull of patriotism. But for most, in my experience, it doesn’t stop there. I found as a chaplain that young Airmen would come to me for many different reasons. Sometimes it was by their choice, sometimes it wasn’t, at least not completely. For those with whom I met, not all had a particular faith, but they all had a belief system of some sort. They had a belief system they constructed that included all kinds of things that were important to them. It comes back to believing, belonging, and becoming. As an example, when the First Sergeant would send someone to talk to me, they were really saying that this person is having some belonging challenges and these belonging challenges are getting in the way of them becoming who we need them to be. In almost every case, it became two adults talking about life’s most important things from different perspectives in order to help understand each other so that we could move forward. My point is that anyone can have those conversations with those in their circle of influence, including commanders and supervisors who should understand the value of faith to others even if they adhere to no particular faith tradition themselves.

Lindsay: Are there any closing thoughts you would like to share about leadership and character?

Costin: When I talk about leadership, there are really three elements that are primary. The first of those is character. Who are you? What do you value? It’s the old saying that character is who you are when no one is looking. Who are you when you are not trying to impress anybody? It’s who you really are, not who you pretend to be. You can work on your character in all kinds of ways.

The second element is competence. How good are you at your job or your technical skill? If you are a person of strong character but you are terrible at your job, you likely aren’t a good follower and won’t be respected by others. It will be a challenge for you to be a good leader because people aren’t going to respect you in the way that you should be respected.



So, character first, competence second, and then chemistry. How well do you fit in this organization? As you know, these things are so tied together. If you have strong character, you will do everything that you can to get better and more competent at your job. I have always appreciated Jim Collins and his book *Good to Great*, the central theme of which is level five leadership and its grounding in humility. If you were to ask the average group of people to name the number one leadership quality, few people would start with humility. But companies that moved from good to great in Collins' research were led by humble leaders. Part of being a leader and a team player is the ability to say that I am here to serve others, not require others to serve me. It isn't about me, and it never really was.

When I talk about leadership, I typically say that I have been a student of leadership for a long time because I have always wanted to understand it better so I could do it better. That is why I earned a PhD. in organizational leadership. What I have discovered after a PhD. in leadership, a lifetime of studying it, doing it in a number of different places, reading hundreds of articles and books on leadership, and writing thousands of pages on the topic, is that character, competence, and chemistry are the essence of effective leadership. In one sense leadership is leadership, and the principles that work in one organization will work in another if applied appropriately in context. Along those lines, all leadership books worth reading say exactly the same thing, though they may say it a little differently or use more words to say it. At the end of the day, however, it all comes down to those three fundamentals.

My own philosophy of leadership is based on a Biblical story called *The Parable of the Talents*, from which I derive seven principles that form the not-so-creative acronym L.E.A.D.E.R.S.:

- The Lordship Principle: Your job as a leader is not to lead for your own good, but for the good of somebody or something higher than yourself. For me, that Someone is the Lord.
- The Environment Principle: The leader's job is to be a keeper of the organization's culture, creating the conditions for every team member to flourish.
- The Accountability Principle: There will always be an accounting, and part of good leadership is letting people know up front what the standards are and then holding them to that standard.
- The Development Principle: My job as a leader is to develop those around me so that they can become better leaders themselves. A rising tide lifts all boats.
- The Execution Principle: Leaders must create systems in the organization that rivets our focus on getting things done.
- The Results Principle: Your title may be impressive, but you are evaluated on results. It doesn't matter where you come from, what your background is, or how successful you were in your last job. What matters is what you have done for the organization lately.
- The Shepherd Principle: As leaders, we are to be a shepherd of the flock that has been entrusted to our care. We need to care for the people and the mission we have been given, knowing that we answer to someone higher than ourselves.

Lindsay: There is a tie in to what you talked about before between character, competence, and chemistry with believing, becoming, and belonging. Believing is the character part. What do you believe in and how does that guide you? Competence is the idea of becoming. Who do I need to be and how good am I? Chemistry ties into belonging in terms of how I fit and make those connections in the organization. If you overlay the framework that you just talked about, that is the doing of it. That is how you get it done and enact your leadership. Thank you for sharing that.



ACADEMIC

REFRAMING AND LEADER DEVELOPMENT

Bernard Banks, Brig Gen (Ret), USA, PhD

Associate Dean for Leadership Development & Inclusion

Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University

Interviewed By: Douglas Lindsay

Lindsay: Would you mind sharing a little bit about your journey and how you got to where you are today?

Banks: Delighted to do that. Let's go back to childhood. I am an Army brat and my father was a career military officer. He was drafted during Vietnam. When he entered the service, since he had already gone to college, they selected him for Officer Candidate School (OCS). Following that, he received his commission in Field Artillery but was immediately sent to flight school. At that time, aviation wasn't a single track career field in the Army. So, you had a primary branch and you had aviation. It was like this thing that you did back and forth. As a result, he exposed me to aviation at a young age. I just thought he had the coolest job. I decided at a young age that I wanted to be a pilot like my dad and I wanted to go to West Point. My dad didn't go to West Point, but I knew of West Point because of the parents of my friends and what I had read. I thought it was an amazing place.

Fast forward, I get to the Academy and at the Academy, I was very highly ranked physically and militarily, and the bottom 1/3 of my class academically. I hovered right around 700th in the class. I never made either Dean's List, the good or bad one. As you are well aware, we have an Order of Merit. When it came time to compete for career fields, where you stand on the Order of Merit determines what you can get access to. I was very clear that there was

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only one career field that I wanted...aviation. We went in that night, where they announced what we would end up getting, and my friends kept telling me, "Don't worry. It will work out." I knew it was going to be close, but things always seemed to work out for me. When we opened our envelopes, I didn't get it. My whole world imploded. Fast forward a few weeks, and they posted the statistics for the career fields of the first person to select it, the total number of people who selected it, and the last person to select each career field. I found out that I literally missed a flight school slot by one person. I was the next person who would have gotten it. I was so distraught and mad that I went into a genuine depression for a couple of weeks. I was in a malaise and I couldn't believe that happened. My life's dream was flushed down the toilet. I missed it by one person.

Once I really started to reconcile how did this happen, I came to the realization that it was all about me. I just didn't work hard enough. It was not that I didn't know what it took or that it was beyond my capabilities. I just did not work hard enough. In that moment, I decided that apathy would never decide anything in my life ever again, nor would I let it determine the outcome of anybody that I cared about. Everything that the Academy had been trying to teach me came into focus in that moment. The Academy promoted the importance of standards always. The importance of accountability. The importance of doing your best. I heard all that, but I was viewing it selectively. When it was something that I enjoyed, I'd buy into that philosophy. When it was something that I convinced myself wasn't my signature gift, not so much. There is a great quote that comes from Will Durant, but for years it was misattributed to Aristotle. It says, "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not a single act but a habit." I had been treating excellence as if it was a light switch that I could turn on or off. But, I went to flip the switch one day and found out that I didn't pay the electric bill. The light didn't go on. I said, "That's got to change." So, the single most

important leadership lesson I ever learned, I learned at the Academy in that moment. That excellence is what we repeatedly do.

I said to myself, what is it going to take to overcome this? It took four years out in the force before I was able to get a transfer to flight school, but I did it. In flight school I was number one and I continued that in pretty much every course I went to after that because I could think back to that moment at the Academy. Because, up to that point in my life, that was the worst moment of my life. I still, to this day, draw inspiration from that experience. Using the language of Warren Bennis out of the Marshall School of Business at USC, in his book *Becoming a Leader*, that was a crucible moment for me. It transformed the way I thought about application and accountability.

I started in the Army jumping out of airplanes and serving in the Airborne. I loved it. We go to Desert Storm and they were paying my class to get out of the Army. I thought I was going to get out of the Army because everyone around me was getting out. But, I did some inventory and thought, I really enjoy this so I decided to stay in when a lot of my friends got out. I rose through the ranks leading aviation organizations. I was a Major who had just finished my development time and I said, "I want to go to grad school." The Army said no, that is not when we send people to grad school and we have other plans for you. I said, "Yeah, but I want to go to grad school." I had found a program that typically was used for individuals that were officers who were just a few credits shy of obtaining their Bachelor's Degree. Usually, it was for people who were enlisted, went through OCS, but still hadn't finished their Bachelors Degree. The program said you can use it for a Master's or Doctorate, you just have to have already started and you have to complete all your studies in 18 months. So, I circled that and said I wanted to go to graduate school using that program. They were like, no, no, no all day long. I had seven General Officers call Human Resources Command telling that that I had



a great file, done all the right jobs, had already been a General's Aide, was a commander twice, below the zone selection to Major, so let him go do what he is asking for. They kept saying no. Finally, one day I said, "Are you going to let me go or not?" They told me not to have any more Generals call. I told them, "I have number nine standing by in the wings. So, are you going to let me go or not?" They finally said yes and off I go to Harvard. When I was there, I was 39 and I started dating someone, who is now my wife, who had two very young children. I thought coming out of graduate school I need an assignment where, if we get married, I can have some time to start a family. I was selected to do a Congressional Fellowship but I thought, I don't think that is the right place. So, I started calling West Point. I told them that I was up at Harvard and was looking to see if they had any openings in the Department of Behavioral Sciences & Leadership? I called twice and each time it was no. The third time I called they said, "Well, you know what? Somebody dropped out of the pipeline and we have like 80 files of direct hires. But, if you come down here and interview, we will see what can happen. I drove down from Boston the very next day and interviewed. They said that they should really look at the other applications, but I was there, had a smoking hot file, was going to Harvard, so if I wanted the job it was mine. That is how I ended up in the Department the first time. It was because I tracked them down and didn't take no for an answer the first time they said no.

I taught there for two years and was selected for O-5 command, so off I went to do that. But, when I left, they said that I had a successful tour and that they would love for me to come back for a second tour as a doctoral rotator. That is where they send you for a PhD., you come back for three years, and then you go back to the force. I said, that it was a bit too soon as I'm about to go back to the force, but I will let you know in a year. When we left for Korea, I had three small children. After a year in command, I had four small children and one on the way. I thought command is going well, but if we keep

on this path, we will be moving every one to two years. The family was supportive of whatever I wanted to do, but I wanted a place where I could balance my familial responsibilities and my professional passions. So, I said yes to the West Point offer.

I came out of command, went to Columbia to start my doctorate, and then came back to West Point in 2009. I was selected for permanent faculty and rose through several positions to the Department Head. If somebody had asked me when I started my journey if it was my intent to go back to West Point to be a Permanent

...leadership is not just an academic exercise. It is a way of examining how you can live your life in a more purposeful way, to be more intentional about driving certain outcomes, about transforming people's lives, and about creating better outcomes.

Professor, I would have said, "Absolutely not." It was not something that I was intent on. I loved West Point and I thought it would be neat to come back as a faculty member at some point, but I didn't see myself there permanently. I was a dyed-in-the-wool operator. But, I loved studying leadership, applying it and teaching others how to apply it. To me, leadership is not just an academic exercise. It is a way of examining how you can live your life in a more purposeful way, to be more intentional about driving certain outcomes, about transforming people's lives, and about creating better outcomes. That is a little bit about how I ended up doing the work that I am today.

Lindsay: How did the transition from Permanent Professor to where you are now happen? Was it a desire to want to continue on in that domain?

Banks: Once again, the answer is no. When I was doing my doctorate, I decided I was going to max that time out. I was selected to go to War College in residence.



I said no, I'm not going to move the family twice in a year. I will do it by distance. So, I did my War College while I was doing my PhD. Then I said, I want an MBA. Let's do that as well. So, I was in three degree programs simultaneously while I was doing my doctorate. My MBA was at Northwestern so I had to get on a plane every other weekend to do that. As a result, I had an affinity for the school.

I was on a hunting trip in 2014 in South Dakota with a bunch of friends. One of the guys on the hunting trip was the Chief Marketing Officer for Kellogg. He said, "What are you thinking about doing after the military?" I said, "There are only two things I won't do. I won't work for the U.S. Government and I will not go in the Defense Industry. I will consider anything else." He asked if I would talk to them. I thought, well, you are not the Government and you are not in the Defense Industry, so yes. Fast forward a few months and the Dean of the school is in New York on a development trip and asked if I would have lunch with her. So, I came down from West Point to have lunch with her in the city. She laid out the strategic plan of the institution and asked me my thoughts about a few things. We could clearly see that we were aligned. At that point, she started her campaign. This is March of 2015. She said, "I am going to create a job for you." So, the job that I occupy now did not exist. She created the role and said that she wanted me to fill the role. I said, "I haven't even applied to get out of the military yet and I am going to Afghanistan this summer for three months." I can't say yes because I haven't even really looked to see what was available but this is an amazing offer. She said, "I'll tell you what. I will hold the job for you until the end of the year."

I went into hyper drive. I started to seriously look at what else was out there. I had the great fortune of being offered some amazing roles like leader development at Goldman Sachs, same kind of deal at J.P. Morgan, run an ops team for a large health care company, and some other stuff. Most of the roles I was looking at were private sector in operations

or in talent development and some roles in higher education like Northwestern, USC Marshall School, and a few other schools. But when I did my decision matrix and looked at the things that were most important to me, Northwestern kept rising to the top because of things like cultural alignment, an internal champion, the leverage opportunities that could be created, and the opportunity to live in a great city. So, true to my word, I called her on December 31st at 11:58 p.m. I said, "I told you I would give you an answer by the end of the year and I'm in." That is how I ended up at Kellogg and I have thoroughly enjoyed it. I love the work that I do. I was not necessarily committed to doing this work in academe as I saw myself being able to do this work in the private sector either in a talent function or running teams and leveraging my insights as part of those teams. The short answer is that relationships are what led me to Kellogg.

Lindsay: I'd like to hear more about your work at Kellogg, but I want to go back to point you mentioned earlier. When you were sitting there and realized that you were only one spot off, what was it that caused you to all of a sudden to reframe that into a developmental approach to own your role in what happened versus going down a bitter or cynical approach, as many do?

Banks: Two things. Upbringing and a competitive mindset. My parents and my grandparents had always emphasized the importance of hard work and to strive to fulfill your potential. It's not so much about getting knocked down, it's what are you going to do when you get knocked down? Life will present you a series of obstacles. It's not that you run into one, but do you have the wherewithal to overcome the obstacle? I had that through my upbringing.

Then, I had this thing where I was a competitive athlete my whole life. You go up against tough adversaries and when you don't win, you ask what will it take to win in the future? I realized that I was not going to just take this loss and just say that's it. That is not the way I am geared. I can take losing if I know I left everything on



the field, I prepared properly, and I gave it everything. So, my upbringing and my competitive instincts said, “If this is truly your dream, then how hard are you willing to fight for it?” That is how I did the reframe.

Lindsay: At some point in all of our lives, we come to the point where we have to do that. In that moment, what am I going to do? Am I who I say I am or am I not? Is this really what my identity is?

Banks: Absolutely. A quote that I am fond of, that comes from Socrates, says that “The greatest way to live with honor in this world is to be what we pretend to be.” It’s one thing to talk a mean game, but it another thing to have a mean game. I talk a mean game, but what I just found out was that my rhetoric was not matching my deeds. I need my say/do ratio to be 1/1. I need to step up my deeds. This is not beyond me. I do love that statement. We pretend to be a lot of things but do you have the conviction to be the things that you pretend to be. If so, you will accord yourself with honor. In that moment I realized that what I was pretending to be and what I was, there was a gap. I could either explain the gap away, or I could close the gap. I chose to close the gap.

Lindsay: And it’s not that you weren’t successful in other domains like athletics and military.

Banks: Yes. If people looked at me, they would have said that I was a good cadet. I didn’t get a bunch of demerits, I was in the top 20% in terms of leadership, my military development grades were A’s, my physical development grades were A’s, and I was a rule follower who didn’t get into trouble. I wasn’t a person who didn’t care. It’s just that I was a C+ student. I would get A’s and B’s in the humanity-related courses and get straight C’s in the engineering courses, and we had a lot of engineering courses. I know if I went back today, my grades in those courses would be markedly different because I would apply myself in a different way. I just knew that outcome was not a

result of my best effort. I refused to let my dream die giving a substandard effort.

Lindsay: That reminds me of a conversation that I had recently with Coach Bob Stoops and why I think sports metaphors are so appropriate with respect to leadership. He was talking about how players sometimes get hurt and that some people will see that as a justifiable excuse if performance falls off or results aren’t where you want them to be. But, when it all comes down to it, justifiable excuses or not, are you going to position yourself and the team to win? You can take the excuse and try to explain it away. You could have taken the result and come out of the Academy cynical, but at the end of the day, we have to say to ourselves, how did I show up in that situation and what did I bring? As you said, “What was my ratio of say/do?”

Banks: Absolutely. I’m fond of etymology, the origin of words. Legacy comes from the Latin word *legatus*, which means person delegated. That means that your story will not be told by you. So, when someone elects to tell your story, what will they elect to tell about you? Will the story they tell be commensurate with the narrative you were intent on crafting? I did not want the story that was told about me to be one where he just said, “Oh well, I guess that’s it.” That is not going to be my story. I refuse for that to be my legacy. That when confronted with this reality, he just gave up. That is not who I am. That is not the way I am cut. That is not what my grandparents and parents would expect. That is not what my teammates would expect. It was a setback, but this setback won’t define me. This setback will refine me. Character doesn’t come from adversity; it is revealed in adversity. So, I had an opportunity. It wasn’t a good one, but it was an opportunity nonetheless.

The same things had happened throughout my career at various points. In my doctorate, I failed my comprehensive exam by one question. It was a big quantitative portion and I get anxious on super advanced math. The program said, “You have to take your comps



again and if you fail, you are out of the program.” This is Columbia, it is a hard place. I go home and was upset. My kids were like what’s wrong? I said, “Dad gets 24 hours to wallow in misery. At 24 hours and one minute, you will see your father again.” The next day, I marched in there and asked, “When can I take the exam again?” They said, “Bernie, take a year. If you don’t pass, you are out of the program.” I asked the again, “When can I take the exam?” They said that the soonest I could take it was 30 days. Okay, mark it on the calendar. I don’t fear failure. I fear not having the courage to try. I will make it through this. I have gone through harder things in my life. I know how to do the math, I just got anxious about the math. Put the time down and I will retake it.

After a month, I went back and I crushed it. I crushed my dissertation. I went back to that moment at West Point. Yes, this is disappointing. They said, “We don’t have to tell anyone.” I said, “I will tell everyone. I need their help in preparing for this thing.” I am not going to hide in the corner and act like nothing happened. People started offering their assistance. It was great and their assistance was invaluable. That wasn’t a crucible. That was just a significant experience. The crucible happened at West Point. Bennis said that the significant experiences, you learn from them. They are meaningful but they aren’t transformative. That moment could have been a crucible for someone else, but for me, it was just significant. Yes, I had a setback, but I will overcome this. How did I know that? Because of the things that I had overcome in my past. I had zero doubt of my ability to successfully navigate the examination.

Lindsay: Then it is just about doing the work right? Once you reframe it that way, then it is time to get to work. You know what you are capable of bringing. Now it is just a matter of going through the steps to make it happen.

Banks: Exactly. As a sports example. You need to honor the process. There is a process that is necessary to get you to your best on game day. You have to honor the process. What are your habits? Some are habits that serve us well, and some don’t. Are you building habits that serve you well?

Lindsay: Thank you for sharing about where you came from and that journey. If we look at your current role, you are doing leader development but you are also looking at inclusion across your institution. Can you talk about how those two fit together?

Part of that character piece, in addition to a competence piece, is rooted in fostering inclusion for all. Leaders create inclusive environments.

Banks: I’m fond of saying at Kellogg that we put two things to the world—people and ideas. Both should be extraordinary. If you think about most business schools, they think about what they want their students to be capable of doing. At Kellogg, we think it should start with the question of who do you want your people to be? We have certain competencies that we need to develop in every one of our community members, but there is also character that we need to imbue in every one of our community members. Part of that character piece, in addition to a competence piece, is rooted in fostering inclusion for all. Leaders create inclusive environments. So, how do we build leaders, people who are committed to exercise the process of leading, whereby they understand that they have a manifest obligation to foster inclusion for all? To create belonging, afford respect, extend empowerment, and provide support so that everyone feels that they are a valued member of the team who can achieve their full potential?

There are five developmental outcomes that we seek to foster for our leader development activities. One, *Enhanced Understanding of the Science*. The more you know the science, the more artfully you can apply it. Two,



Enhanced Self-Awareness. Self as instrument. Three, *Enhanced Empathy.* Fourth, *Enhanced Self-Efficacy* as it pertains to your believing in your ability to lead effectively. Fifth, *Enhanced Commitment to Behaving Inclusively and Fostering Inclusive Environments.* Those are the five leader development outcomes that we seek to foster through our broad set of activities.

If we look at number five, that is part of how we are crafting leadership at Kellogg in terms of what we are trying to get people to do and what we are trying to get people to shape. That is why, for me, I am able to marry up the two roles. Everywhere else, those are separate and distinct. I have a behavioral orientation toward my thinking. I am very Lewinian so my work is informed by classic social psychology and organizational psychology. Psychologist Kurt Lewin says that behavior is a function of the person and their interaction with their environment. So, what kind of environments are we creating? Behavior, if I want someone to behave inclusively, do I embed them in an inclusive environment? Do I attract people who believe in the power of inclusion? Part of what I do is help shape that environment so we can inform someone's behavior in the future. But the time you spend in the environment can also have an impact on what the person elects to believe.

If we look at classic change theory, if you are trying to change to become more inclusive, James Lange says that behavioral change precedes attitudinal change. With most change efforts they say we are going to tell you the new thing that you are supposed to embody, and we want you to embody it. Lange says that, instead, you mandate the behavior and you hold people accountable for it as they start to accrue positive benefits, they then adopt a belief associated with the behavior. That is the whole premise of the Military Academies. We are going to mandate your behavior, we are going to measure that behavior, you are going to be rewarded or punished for that behavior, and over time as you accrue more benefits for doing the things we are asking of you, you are going

to adopt a belief associated with the behavior. So, you are going to make your bed every day and you are going to shine your shoes over and over again. Ultimately, what do you come to believe in? You come to believe in discipline. We don't say just show up at the Academy and be disciplined. We mandate these behaviors, we hold you accountable for them, and over time, you really start to believe in the importance of discipline because of these behaviors that you have been required to display over and over again. We want to think from a behavioral perspective, what is it that we want you to behave like at Kellogg and reinforce that over and over again. And, guess what? Those behaviors are all associated with behaving inclusively.

Lindsay: That focus on the behavioral approach is key. Just imparting knowledge is pretty straightforward to do. There are a lot of people out there with a lot of knowledge, but it is that focusing on the behavior that we want that is really important. Not just what you know, but who you are. If you shape the behaviors the right way, and you scaffold a system appropriately, the focus is about the behaviors you are exhibiting. Then you can layer the knowledge part and you know it will get applied the right way because the foundation is solid. That inclusiveness becomes the way that we do things around here and is such an organic part of the culture. What does that look like practically? The educational piece is there, but is there a developmental process as well?

Banks: At the Academy we have four buckets: Academic, Military, Physical, and Character. That is how it is broken down at West Point. Four programs that are integrated. So, I could be doing something in the physical program that is also related to the character program. For example, there are Intramurals. We have cadets referee the games as opposed to hiring referees. Why? That is a physical activity where we are integrating a character component into it. We are using sports as a vehicle for developing character. It is a classic integration activity.



At Kellogg, we have three big buckets: Curricular, Co-Curricular, and Extra-Curricular. There are curricular courses that you take for credit. There are co-curricular workshops that are designed by faculty members to address targeted needs. Extra-curricular are the things that students do in clubs and student government. We are trying to take activities across all three of those buckets and tie them back to those developmental objectives. So, if you want to enhance the science, what do you take in curricular and what do you take in co-curricular? If you want to enhance self-awareness, what feedback are you getting in these activities in any of these buckets? For self-efficacy, extra-curricular is your learning lab to take thing that you are learning in the workshops and in the classes to go apply it in real time in leadership roles that you are occupying inside student government or inside student clubs. We take extra-curricular as the learning lab and we take both curricular and co-curricular as the opportunity to acquire the knowledge.

We start having them work on these things over and over and they get feedback from a variety of places like faculty members, staff members, peers, employers when they go out for internships, and we start helping them to process that information through the rubric of what are those core beliefs that Kellogg possesses? I say core beliefs because Kellogg has not formally established a core set of values like West Point does. But Kellogg does have core beliefs, such as Kellogg is deeply rooted in the power of collaboration. A notion of being high impact but low ego. The belief of demonstrating humility. Those are some of our core beliefs. We help them to examine how the actions that they are taking are reflective of those core beliefs? If we find that there is divergence, then what would it take to behave in a manner that is consistent with those core beliefs?

Now, the accountability mechanisms that you have are very different at a graduate school of business than you have at the Academy. So, a lot of it is getting

people to regress to the mean of the communities' culture. So, who you select to be a part of the community, what things you choose to celebrate, and the things you choose to denigrate play a huge role in helping people to understand what does it look like to be a valued member of this community?

Lindsay: What you are talking about are faculty and staff that don't just come in and do their primary job of teaching or support. What you are suggesting is for everyone to make the connections between those three curricular aspects. That is a pretty broad mandate for a faculty or staff member to understand and buy into. How do you do that?

Banks: This is a journey. At West Point, you were told that every person is a leader-developer. That is not what I encountered at Kellogg. People would say, "What is Kellogg's perspective on leadership?" I would say, "Kellogg doesn't have a perspective on leadership." Research tells us that there is no single definition of what it means to be a leader. Now, we know from meta-analysis that it has primary components. But Kellogg doesn't have a Kellogg only definition of leadership. Kellogg does, however, have a set of core beliefs. But, here's the thing, if I was to ask somebody, "What must a Kellogg graduate be?"- no one could give me a defined answer. Where when I was at West Point, it was clear.

You start with the end in mind of what success consists of. It is an identity that is rooted in some very specific components. I brought that kind of model to Kellogg. Let's start with the end in mind. What do we want a Kellogg graduate to be? We started crafting that we wanted them to be good at these six competencies. We want them to believe in these six things. I said, that is our target. That is the definition of success, so let's view ourselves as a factory. High quality inputs, throughputs that we are constantly massaging, and outputs. The outputs, we predefine and we measure against specifications that are associated just like if we were building a bolt. There are certain specifications for that



bolt. Do we produce it within tolerance to standard? Let's start with the end in mind. Competence and character, what are the things that are associated with each? We will get lots of feedback from people on how well are we delivering on that promise in terms of what you should expect from a Kellogg graduate. Then, how do we build out those throughput activities such that we have a high degree of confidence that the outputs will meet our specifications? Now, one of the things that you have to do in order to make this happen is to develop the understanding that every person is a leader-developer. Not everyone thinks that way, but it is something that I am trying to get everyone to embrace. Whether you are in the Registrar's Office, Food Service, Teaching, Operations Management, or Finance, we should all think about every touch that we have. Is it contributing toward somebody really buying into the importance of becoming the embodiment of those competence and character attributes? It is a work in process.

Lindsay: I'll bet it is because some of that is attitudinal and some of it is more transactional in terms of what behaviors are rewarded and are called out. For example, what you are highlighting is what does a leader-developer who works in Food Service look like? Have you found some things that have helped move the needle toward where you want to be?

Banks: One is highlighting behavior that is consistent with our expectations and celebrating that. So, let's take somebody in Food Service and the way that they engage people coming through the line. You can just tell if that behavior is consistent with what we espouse. For example, do they demonstrate humility, are they very collaborative, or do they take a team-based approach? Celebrating that person and then tying it back to how their actions are an exemplar for our beliefs. Saying that is the type of behavior that we all should aspire to embody. Highlighting exemplars and when something happens that isn't in keeping with our behaviors, owning up to that and going this is an example of where our beliefs were not reflected in either the institution,

group, or an individual's action. We need to think deeply about what it is going to take to get back into alignment. A lot of it is the power of example. When people say, I believe in leadership by example, the reality is whether you believe it or not, it is true. What you are really saying is you believe in being an exemplar for certain behaviors. The question is, "Are you an exemplar for those behaviors always?" Not just when people are looking. What are you doing when no one is looking or you believe no one is looking?

Lindsay: As I hear you talk through that a couple of things popped in my head. The first of those is having transparency in the system. This is what we say is important, this is what we value, and this is what we recognize and reward. Transparency goes a long way in showing what the institution cares about.

Banks: And, this is what you should hold us accountable to.

Lindsay: Exactly. So that the accountability goes both ways. The second thing is that the institution really does want me to buy into being a part of the leader-developer process, and the institution cares about me as a person and wants me to develop. It goes back to that inclusion piece and feeling valued as part of the process. Am I provided opportunities and resources so that I can get better in that? So, I am not on my own. Do you feel like you are moving the needle of creating that culture where people see themselves as leader-developers?

Banks: Yes. We definitely have made progress. We have made more progress in some areas than others. It is the idea of people understanding that every day, they have the opportunity to shape those around us. The staff has showed tremendous movement. The faculty are getting there as they learn to approach their duties as an organizational leader and not just part of a discipline where they impart knowledge. Students absolutely have started to embrace this notion of intentionality. Start with the end in mind. What is the target we are working toward? Competence and character, they get it.

The clarity that we have been able to provide, they have embraced fully. They think it is great and they don't have to guess what the school expects of them.

Lindsay: I would assume that works in attracting students to your program as well?

Banks: It is a huge part. If we go back to behavior being a function their of interaction with the environment, you have to find a person who wants to be in that kind of environment. Whose beliefs are already highly

I don't view leadership as the role you occupy, I view it as the way that you are.

congruent with the beliefs that we telling you that we are going to hold you accountable for? For example, you will be a fish out of water if you come to Kellogg and have a very individualistic nature to you. You may flourish elsewhere, but at Kellogg, people will look at you like you have two heads. It is contrary to our core belief of collaboration. Kellogg is the place that introduced the concept of teams in business education. Kellogg is very relational and low ego. It isn't a place where people go around thumping their chests. A prime example, from the Dean on down, we just call people by our first names.

We never use Dr. We never refer to someone as Dr. so and so. If you are going to refer to them it is either their first name or you can call them by the title, like Dean or Professor. That is because we are low power distance in that regard. When I came there, people wanted to call me General. I said no. That is not the consistent with the type of culture that we want to have.

Lindsay: Any parting thoughts?

Banks: I think it goes back to the notion of do you understand why leadership truly is important in whatever sphere of influence you operate? I don't view leadership as the role you occupy, I view it as the way

that you are. It can be viewed solely as a role you occupy, and in that role it gives you certain powers. It goes back to the original power bases research done by French & Raven. It gives you legitimate, reward, and coercion power. That role can also give you information power. But, being in that role doesn't give you expert or referent power, which is about who you are and not the position you are in.

Ultimately, you need to be able to address the questions of "Why is fostering the development of one's leadership capability not a nice thing to do around here, but a must do?", "What happens if we fail to do it?", and "Are you willing to live with those outcomes?" If the answer to that last question is yes, then odds are you probably aren't going to do anything about it. If the answer is no, then what is it going to take to do it well?

Lindsay: Back to your experience at West Point, it comes down to the question of what am I going to do with that outcome that I don't like? Am I going to let it define me or refine me? You chose the latter.



SPORT

NO EXCUSES: BUILDING CULTURE



Bob Stoops

Interviewed By: Douglas Lindsay

Lindsay: One of the primary things that a leader does is to set the culture for the organization or the team. You had a phenomenal run across your coaching career, especially at the University of Oklahoma. Can you talk a little bit about your approach to creating culture on your teams? You have a lot of dynamics that you are dealing with, so how do you set the culture that you want for your team?

Stoops: To me, it is an ongoing process. First and foremost, it starts with what you promote. Is it positive or negative? I feel you get much more done with a positive culture. For example, how you relay your message. If you have to pass on critical information, how do you do that? Anything you do, even if it is discipline or corrections, you need to find ways to do it positively or to be taken in a positive manner. My experience is that it is accepted much more when it is done that way.

I think another part of creating the culture is that there is no substitute for the work. Everybody needs to know that up front. It doesn't matter how talented you might be. We had a saying in our weight room forever that said, "Hard work beats talent, when talent doesn't work hard." That was our mindset. We were going to put the work in. It consisted of two parts. When I first got to Oklahoma, we didn't have a culture. Or, if we did, it was incredibly negative and poor. We sold that we were going to outwork everybody so that we knew that when we took the field, we deserved to win. There wasn't ever the attitude that we didn't deserve to win. Our mentality was that we worked too hard to not win. That was the first part of developing it. Then, once you we had it, we knew that we still needed to outwork everybody with the toughness, sacrifice, and effort that we put in through the year. Whether it be daily, weekly, or monthly, we were willing to do the work necessary to win. You also have to be smart on how you continue to motivate your team. All teams are different so it is continuing to work on that.

Bob Stoops is a former football coach at the college and professional levels. He coached numerous places, but culminated his collegiate coaching by spending 18 years as the head football coach at the University of Oklahoma where his teams played in four national championships and becoming national champion in 2000. From 1999-2017, his teams won 10 Conference Championships, an amazing .798 winning percentage, and he won numerous coach of the year awards. During the inaugural season of the XFL, he was selected as the head coach and general manager for the Dallas Renegades.



Another thing that was big for me, so big in fact that I titled my book after it, was no excuses. You either succeed or you don't. You either win or you don't. An excuse is just trying to justify failure. At the end of the day, there are good excuses out there, but they really don't matter. You either won or you didn't. That was the other thing that was plastered all over our weight room and other places in our facilities...No Excuses. You went to class, or you didn't. Your car may have broken down, but you still found a way to get to class. When you were on the field, you either made the play or you didn't. It's pretty cut and dry. Those are really the things that I focused on regarding setting the culture that I wanted.

Lindsay: I appreciate you sharing that perspective. You had an incredible amount of success, but that didn't always translate into a win. For example, even when you go to the National Championship Game, which you did four times, and fall short when the buzzer goes off there, isn't a reason to have a pity party about why you didn't win. The answer is to get back to work and we are going to take another run at it.

Stoops: Exactly. It doesn't matter. It's a continuous fight and struggle to keep improving. That is what you are trying to do.

Lindsay: As the leader of the team, you are promoting that idea. Did you find that your players and the leaders on your team picked it up and repeated that message?

Stoops: Definitely. With the number of people we work with, like assistant coaches, it is important to make sure that they have a clear understanding of the message and that you continually update them on that message. That is important because it can change from week to week. In fact, during the season depending on who you are going to play that week, you could be a heavy underdog, you could be favored, you could be going into a huge stadium, it could be loud, or it could be quiet. The leaders under you have to be continually updated

on what you want the message to be and be able to get it to the players clearly. You also have your older players who know what you expect and you need to empower them to deliver on the culture and the message as well. It takes everybody. It is your job as the leader to make sure it is coordinated and the right message is being pushed and heard.

Lindsay: That clear understanding is important and not always easy to get to. For example, right now there is a lot of talk out there in the college football realm about which conferences are playing, which aren't playing, when will the season start, how is the playoff going to work, will players opt out, can players transfer, etc. That is a lot of uncertainty. To your point about having the right culture and clear understanding, that is a challenge in such an uncertain landscape. However, even in spite of the challenges we are seeing with respect to COVID, it seems like a coach's job is to deal with uncertainty every day. When you think about different teams every week, things like injury and travel, it seems like your normal is to balance large uncertainty from week to week and day to day.

Stoops: It is constant. Even during the season, different people are hurt and you have to adjust and keep moving forward in a positive way. COVID has created whole new obstacle to continually work and fight through with respect to safety, which is paramount, and the resulting uncertainty.

Lindsay: Do you get to the point where you ever get comfortable in that uncertainty? Where you settle into that. How do you get the mindset of whatever happens, we will move forward?

Stoops: It goes back to what I said earlier that there are no excuses. You play with what you have and you expect to do well with what you have. You expect people to step up and work. As an example, in the 2006 season, we removed our quarterback from the team the very first day of practice. As a result, we moved a receiver



to quarterback. Midway through the year, and we had already lost a game on the road to Oregon, we lost our best player, Adrian Peterson, to a broken collarbone. I say all that to say, my Monday meeting to the team after that was, if you are looking for an excuse to not win the Big 12 Championship or not have a great year here, you have it. If you choose to grab that excuse. Or, we can go with what we have, say the heck with it, we are still going to win. That is what we did. We went on, didn't lose another game and won the Big 12 Championship. We beat our rival Nebraska and went to the Fiesta Bowl. We did it and we beat our rival to do it. Point being, there aren't any good excuses. You just need to find a way to win.

Lindsay: At the end of the day, you don't get the Championship for accepting an excuse, even if it is understandable.

Stoops: If you take the excuse, someone else is going to get the Championship.

Lindsay: Along those lines, something that I have noticed over the years, is that programs across all sports have suffered from character issues among their players. That is something that I noticed about your teams, was that you didn't really have a lot of that. Do you attribute that to what you mentioned about you culture of not making excuses and doing the work?

Stoops: We had a few from time to time over my 18 years. I think everyone does to varying degrees. Overall, as a team and as a program, we had a very hard-nosed attitude. We weren't going to relinquish that for anything. It didn't matter if a five-start recruit wanted to act like he deserved something or not. We never promised anything other than an opportunity to play on a great team and to compete for championships. We were going to be tough minded in how we did it. So, I think overall, players knew that. We sold that in recruiting so that we knew we were recruiting people who came in knowing it was going to be tough, hard-

nosed work and the best person is going to play. Nothing is going to be given to you. If you think you are going to set your own pace, then this isn't the place for you. I told them that in recruiting, so if a kid was looking for an easy road, he might go somewhere else and not come to us. We weren't going to change the way we did things for anybody. I think it also attracted great players like Adrian Peterson and Tommy Harris because they knew that they were going to be challenged.

Lindsay: That's what winners want, right? Winners want to have that opportunity to prove themselves and earn their spot. That way, when they get that roster spot, they know they have done the work, earned it, and can feel good about it.

Stoops: Exactly, and at a place like Oklahoma, there is always going to be someone going after your spot, so you better keep it up.

Lindsay: People don't get too many passes in life and they need to be willing to do the work. We see that willingness to do the work at our Service Academies. I remember in 2010, Air Force went to Oklahoma and had a really close game. The Academies know they don't always have the size of some of the other Division 1 programs, but they are always willing to do the work.

Stoops: One of the best experiences I ever had was playing Fisher DeBerry's team at the Air Force Academy in 2001. We played well and won the game. But, we knew going into the game how difficult it was going to be because you don't see the option offense all of the time. Our guys were ready. We prepared them. After the game, we were celebrating. To us, it was a big game because we always did the work to win regardless of who we were playing that week. As we were leaving the field, everyone on our team was yelling because of the win. As we were walking off the field, we noticed the Air Force players standing in front of the student section singing their anthem. All our guys stopped and were quite while that was happening. We quit



our celebration out of respect for the cadets and just watched. When it was over, we headed into our locker room. Fisher DeBerry came over to me shortly after that and thanked me. He said, “Bob, nobody has treated us with that much respect.” Our guys get the commitment and the service these guys and gals are going to do. That was pretty cool.

Lindsay: That speaks to the culture of your team. Some teams get into trouble because they often will go into a game where they are favored but don’t always appreciate the preparation. They don’t always show up ready to play at the level they normally do. They may be looking past the present game to the next game.

Whoever does the best wins. It doesn't matter what year in school you are. It doesn't matter what rank recruit you were. You either get it done or you don't.

Stoops: I was always big on, not just the Friday before the game, but all week long about what to expect. We prepared all week like that so hopefully there were no surprises. All week our guys were hearing and digesting what they were going to experience. I think that is why we were so consistent because very little took us by surprise or came up that we weren’t ready for. To your point about some teams not being prepared because they expected to win or that they were heavily favored so didn’t prepare the same way, that didn’t happen to us because we were always ready for it and prepared mentally and emotionally for what was about to happen.

Lindsay: I think that is a key point because if the mentality is just to win, then that can potentially cause someone to do just enough to get above where they think the bar is going to be. But, if the work becomes the mission and the focus, then you know you are going to go out there the best that you can to execute. So, it doesn’t become about trying to beat the option that week, it is about playing Oklahoma football. It keeps the mentality on the work.

Stoops: Exactly. It was always centered on the work and not who or where we were playing. It was on us

to prepare, work, and be ready for what we are about to do that day. I didn’t just start that on Friday. I was talking to them all week, so that they would be familiar with it.

Lindsay: I was going to ask a question about how do you handle a member of the team who gets a little bit beyond themselves, but I think you addressed that through your culture and work comments. If the culture of the team is to work hard, then it isn’t about an individual. It is about the team. Kurt Warner has talked about how

some athletes will often stagnate because they find out what they are good at and just keep doing that. Whereas the elites athletes find out what they aren’t good at and are willing to work on that to better themselves overall and also the team. It is the idea of if I focus on the work, then it takes the focus off me and puts it back on the team.

Stoops: It does. Earlier, you brought up the idea of privilege or someone who thinks they are better others. How we deal with that is that we constantly evaluate and we lay it out honestly. We watch every step that you take. If another guy has taken 10 steps better than you, why would you be playing in front of him? My job is to win. You think I am actually going to play someone who isn’t better? It is really simple. Your actions on the field are evaluated, graded, and scored and the best evaluations are the ones that get the most time. They understand that the second that they walk in our building. If you say you are the best, then let me see it. We practice every day, so what are you seeing that I am not?

Lindsay: What I like about that is the idea of working it out on the field. Are you better than them or not? It is not whether you think you are better than another



person. It is your actions and your habits. That focus on the work keeps egos out of the way.

Stoops: It keeps everything out of the way. It is the great equalizer. Whoever does the best wins. It doesn't matter what year in school you are. It doesn't matter what rank recruit you were. You either get it done or you don't.

Lindsay: In today's environment of recruiting, that approach, at least in the beginning, could be seen as a bit risky because you are focusing on people who want to work and not necessarily on just talent.

Stoops: It's not risky if you want to establish the right culture. You can have a true winning culture, which that is. Or, you can have a phony culture that won't last or be consistent. We weren't too worried about protecting anyone's ego.

Lindsay: You don't get 18 consecutive Bowl game berths or 10 Big 12 Conference Championships without a culture of winning.

Stoops: I think there is no question, that since 2000, during those years, we were more consistent than anyone else in the country, and still are. Lincoln Riley maintains the same type of culture. We won a National Championship and played for three more. We were consistent. Since 2000, there were only a couple years where we didn't have at least 10 wins.

Lindsay: You stepped away from Oklahoma in 2017 and then decided to come back and coach in the XFL with the Dallas Renegades. What was it that intrigued you about that opportunity and to come back to coaching?

Stoops: At lot of it just fit me at the time. It was a combination of my family situation, time of year, and being in Dallas worked for my family. I was also intrigued with working with older players that don't

have to go to school. It is all football. I don't have to go to academic meetings in the morning. I don't get an update on who missed class. It was just all football. It was fun and it was fun working with older players who knew a lot about football and picked things up quickly. So, all of that just kind of fit. We will see what comes next.

Lindsay: I appreciate you taking the time to have this conversation.

Stoops: No worries. Anything for the Air Force Academy. Big respects for all those involved with the Academy and what you all do.

BUSINESS

DEVELOPING A CULTURE OF LEADERSHIP



James Cameron

Vice President of Global Leadership & Learning at Walmart

Interviewed By: Douglas Lindsay

Lindsay: Would you mind giving an overview of how you got to where you are today?

Cameron: Absolutely. As I was growing up, I learned that I had certain skills, qualities, and interests. However, I was not the model student and I didn't want to go to university. I decided that I wanted to go into a military career partly to give myself some space to work out what I wanted to do with my life. So, I went into the British Army, which was exactly right for me. At the time, I don't think I was mature enough for other things. The British Army system is different than the U.S. military system. The military academy, which is Sandhurst, is where officers are trained in the British Army and it has several tracks. If you don't have a college degree, you can go in for a short service career as an officer for several years. The other option is to go to university then attend since there is no college degree at the Academy. You have to go to another University, then you join, and then it is slightly accelerated for promotion. With that path, you are available for longer term careers. So, I went in on the non-degree track.

I found myself in a world that I really loved. I became an Infantry officer. It was very much about people and not technology and that suited me. The first conflict that I was involved in was the Northern Ireland conflict, which was consuming the British Military between the late 1960's into the 1990's. It was a 30-year insurgency where many British leaders grew up. I was an 18-year-old Platoon Commander in Northern Ireland in a highly politicized insurgency. That taught me a lot and I made a lot of mistakes along the way. I learned, and I still believe, that some of the most complex leadership challenges you face are in those first moments of becoming a leader. When you have a combination of accountability and responsibility with immaturity and lack of experience together. You often just get by and you learn by your mistakes.

James Cameron is Vice President of Global Leadership and Learning at Walmart. In this role, he is responsible for executive development and talent management programs for Walmart both in the United States and globally. Prior to his role at Walmart, he spent 25 years in the British Army where he retired as a Colonel. Following retirement from the military, he joined McKinney Rogers as a partner and helped create a leadership development project for Walmart. The organization was so impressed with the work, that they acquired his whole group to expand the work globally. His efforts directly impact over two million employees throughout the Walmart enterprise.



If I wasn't in Northern Ireland, I was in the Cold War in Germany in armor brigades. Then the world changed with the Balkans, the Bosnia Conflict, the Kosovo Conflict, and Croatia. I spent many years in those environments. That was as I was growing up as a Captain and a Major. Along the way, I achieved an understanding that this was something that I wanted to make a career versus just a job. Then, I started to get ambitious and knew I needed to go to the Staff College. I knew I had to perform well in the exams. I had to get to the college, etc. My trajectory became one of more being part of the high potential track where previously I was just doing it because I loved it. I knew that if I wanted to get to the highest ranks of the military, I need to achieve certain things. So, my whole ambition changed and my whole view of life changed. These things are relevant because what I am trying to do in Walmart is letting people go on the same journey. To have the skills necessary when you are a junior leader to meet the challenges that you will face as you advance. To allow people to mature their ambition. To allow people to learn and expand their capabilities and their understanding of the world like what I experienced in Staff College.

Then, I continued to use those skills in all of the different things that I experienced like a year in Sarajevo in a G3 Plans role or later as the XO to the Commander in Chief, where I had two wonderful years. One of the most incredible jobs I had, was as the Assistant Director of Counter Terrorism in the Ministry of Defense in London which was an extraordinary strategic role at a time of real ambiguity of what we should be doing about terrorism. It was after 9/11. On my watch, there was a very serious attack in London in 2005 where four suicide terrorists blew themselves up in the transport system. It was the first suicide attack we had ever experienced from British citizens against other citizens. One of my team's responsibilities was providing support to the Situation Room in Downing Street, called COBRA. I was in COBRA as the Prime Minister was determining what we were going to do about the attack. All of these

things evolved me, grew me, made me think differently, and expanded my strategic thoughts far more than any formal education would have done. I'm trying to work out how we do the same in Walmart for our people and how we give them careers that will allow them to expand and think differently.

I was a Colonel in London and that job was incredible. I was 42 years old, and my future was going to be alternating between Afghanistan, Iraq, or a staff job that I likely didn't want. I didn't mind that but I was always away from my family and I missed so much of them growing up. Because the world was changing and governments were realizing that they couldn't deal with some of these threats around the world they needed to get help from the private sector. So, the private sector was getting interested in people like me because I had worked with 20 governments around the world helping them with their counter terrorism plans and policies and building their capacity in places like Libya, Algeria, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Thailand. Most of these were Muslim countries that we wanted to help because that was where the threats were being generated toward the U.K.

Because of my experience, the private sector came knocking and said, "You have got some incredible skills and we need those skills. Would you think about it?" So, I did. I left and joined a company called Control Risks, which I absolutely loved. They were very unmilitary, but brilliant and took a very nuanced approach to risk where they used a lot of data and analysis. They weren't a Blackwater, they were the other end of the spectrum. I joined them for two years and really enjoyed it. They were hiring out of the military and that's how they got a lot of people. They didn't pay very well since they knew we had pensions. The money wasn't great, but I loved the environment.

Then, a 4-star whom I had worked for in the military when I was doing global counter terrorism programs told me that he was the Chairman of a small consultancy



working for Walmart and they wanted to build a Staff College. That is how he put it. He asked me if I would be interested? It sounded really interesting to me because that implied changing how one of the world's biggest companies thought. I had some vacation saved up, so I came to the U.S. to check it out and I met the Chief Executive Officer at Walmart who was an ex-Navy pilot, named Bill Simon. I loved his vision and the company. So, I resigned from Control Risk and joined this small consultancy. I spent four years building, in Walmart, the equivalent of junior officer's training, emerging leaders training, the Staff College, etc. However, it is very expensive using consultants to do that sort of thing. So, in 2012, Walmart acquired my whole team and I became a Vice President in Walmart. Ever since then, I have been after creating structures that in some way mirror the sort of experience I had during my military career and my own evolution of thinking. At the same time, Walmart and the world around us is changing fast, so we really need that. That is where I am right now.

Lindsay: People, even in the military, don't always run toward professional education and development. What was the response to the structures and opportunities you created and put into place?

Cameron: It is a lot harder in the private sector than it is in the military or the government sector. Anyone who isn't earning money or working can be seen as an unnecessary and unhelpful overhead. We are blessed in the military to spend a whole year or two investing in individuals and a large portion of the military's manpower is assigned to being developed in some way. That is natural in the military and it is an incredible strength. When I went to Staff College for a year, I wanted it because I knew it was going to help me. I wasn't forced into doing it. I was desperate to do it because I knew it would help me develop and improve my career opportunities. In the private sector, every moment you spend training is often resented. Not necessarily by the people, but by management.

Getting time away from working and earning money for the business is very difficult. I managed to do it in Walmart only because Bill Simon understood it because he was in the military. It was natural for him and he understood the investment. So, I was able to develop the Leadership Academy, which was about six weeks. That was absolutely unheard of at the time. The second thing that was unheard of was that if I didn't think that they were motivated enough to stay, or to achieve the standards that we wanted them to achieve, then I would

There is an unbelievable amount of attention paid to individuals in the military. It is incredible. As a result, I never had to apply for a job. I just had to wait to be told. In the private sector, it is very different. The reality is that you have to look out for yourself.

send them home. I had lawyers all over me as you can imagine. In answer to your question, it is very difficult to get it done. The only way you can do it is for senior leadership, top down to support it. Now, I know better ways of doing it so I don't try to run courses like that.

Lindsay: How do you build that value so people don't see it just as an expense? How do you show your leadership that it really is value added?

Cameron: I think that is the Holy Grail of development, to be honest. If someone could really prove that, they would be rich. I have typically relied on leaders seeing the difference in their people that have gone through the program. That was really necessary when I would take them away for six weeks. The way we do it now is different and I don't have so much of a challenge. We initially took them away and put them through a course around what would make them the leaders of the future. We covered topics like critical thinking, understanding the world around business, some functional skills like communication, etc. That is what we used to do. We would create a curriculum, they would attend



it, and they would return to work. What happens in many organizations, is when the CEO leaves, the new CEO wants something different and often changes everything. That kills most programs. However, when Bill Simon left, the new CEO asked, “Why these topics and who says these are the ones they need? Why these people? Why have you got them out of the business?” Those were his three challenges. I thought, right, I am going to adapt to those challenges. Picking 50 people out of the business to develop is hard. You are trying to get leaders where the investment is really worth it and you want it to happen right before they get promoted so that they use the skills and it is sticky, we had to come up with something different.

The talent system in a company like ours with such a large scale is nothing in comparison to what it is in the military. From the moment I joined the military until the moment that I left, someone was thinking objectively about me. What job should I do next? What did I need to develop? What course would I qualify to go on? There is an unbelievable amount of attention paid to individuals in the military. It is incredible. As a result, I never had to apply for a job. I just had to wait to be told. In the private sector, it is very different. The reality is that you have to look out for yourself. You rely on relationships with people who may leave and it relies a bit on luck. It also includes all of the biases that are inherent in the system. That is where you can get into trouble with inclusion and lack of diversity. When we had a system where we would train 60 people a year through an expensive course, we knew we weren’t always going to get the right people. We knew some people would get promoted who weren’t in this group. Or, some people would get fired who were in the group. We decided that we would take a different approach. We would try to identify, across the whole company, the 300 mostly likely to be successful at the Senior Director level. For us, that is the level below the Vice President. They are the targets that we wanted to develop. So, instead of trying to pick a few, we would identify a talent pool and then develop them. That is much more

efficient, because it is more likely that most people who get promoted will be from that pool. That was the first thing that we decided.

The second thing that we decided was to not have a six-week class a year. We decided that we would deconstruct those classes and then we would tell them, within a year, all of these things are available. You choose what you need and want. It was a choice based and personalized approach. We created a system where my team would create 30 or 40 different events or immersions that take place during the year. If you are in the pool, you can apply to be in those events. You discuss with your boss, what do I need this year? It could be something like you need to think more strategically, or we want you to develop your critical thinking skills, or you need to understand more about the business. The range that we created allows them to pick and attend the ones that they need. That is the theory. The reality is that they all want to do all of them. Just to give you a sense of what an immersion is like, it could be something like what we did yesterday. We had John Cahill, who is the Chairman of Kraft-Heinz, who also used to be the CEO of Pepsi talking for an hour about leading through transformation. It was so fascinating. We had 400 people on Zoom watching.

The Zoom world has really helped us with scale. That was an example of one that is scalable. As another example, we would do something like take a group of 20 to Mexico to visit our Mexico business. We would spend three days there doing a deep dive of what they are doing, spend time with their leaders, and see their transformations. As another example, I took a group to China to look at their health care system. Ironically, that was last October, where we looked at what might happen in the case of a pandemic. That trip was deliberately not thinking about retail. It was to make them think differently and bigger.

Because we are Walmart, we have a vast ecosystem, including governments that want to collaborate. That

is another thing I enjoy. We are China's 8th largest trading partner in the world. For any organization like Kraft Heinz, Unilever, or Procter & Gamble; we are their biggest customer by quite a bit. For example, we are 40% of Unilever's sales. It is relatively straightforward for me to put together an MBA level training, just by using our network. Doug McMillon, our CEO, is on the Business Roundtable for the President, so that is giving us access to all of the thinking that is going on around topics like racial equity. So, through connections like that, we created a whole range of events which they can personalize. That is working really well because no one is saying to me, "Why these people?", "Why this topic?", or "Why are they out of the business?" It was the challenge that made us better. Now, COVID has made us even more connected because we couldn't always afford fly people to our China business, but now that we do so much over Zoom, it is so much more accessible and we are much better at it. That is how we are doing things at the moment, but I am only getting to our high potentials. What happens to the hundreds of thousands of employees that we don't directly reach?

Lindsay: Is the hope that through avenues like Zoom you will be able to let that filter down to lower levels of the organization? I'm sure you have systems in place for them as well.

Cameron: We do. Over the last five or six years, we created the Store Academy. That was a very big investment. Approximately 200 stores across the country were turned into training vessels. It is like a training vessel in a fleet or a training squadron. The store itself would qualify by achieving certain standards and then we built on to these stores an Academy with all of the necessary facilities. In that region, people would come to that store to train. That is like junior level training as well as functional training like cashiers. That is how we were able to get to scale. As an example, my son, who is an Assistant Manager in a store, went through the training and really enjoyed it. It takes place in a store, so they are

actually out in the store learning. We do it in the operational environment.

What I don't think we have done well enough is to get to lower levels with high potential programs. That is what I have always wanted to do. To get down to the lowest levels to where you are getting to people right after they join. I think the answer to that moving forward will be in technology. I think artificial intelligence will help us far better than any human can to look for the triggers and indications that someone has potential almost from their first interview. Then, it should be possible to build up with more confidence about that person having potential as they move quickly between jobs, gets promoted quickly, or do well on tests. The system could indicate that this is someone that we need to watch and then we get our people involved. With humans though, we have bias. So, using that artificial intelligence can possibly help us with that. If we only rely on junior managers in the stores, we may be in a situation where they really only want people to do a good job for them. That is a weakness that we have. What the military has is a system that moves people around for the good of the military. People are moved in a bit of duality where it may be good for you, but it is in the long-term interest of the military. In my company, as it is in most companies, all decisions are made by hiring managers. The person who is hiring is asking, "Is this person good for my job?" or "Will they make my life easier and increase my profit?" They aren't necessarily thinking, "They need this job because it will expand her portfolio and make her better for the future of the company." No one thinks like that, with very few exceptions. I am now trying to bring in a system which would allow us, at least for the high potentials to tell the hiring managers, you have an opening and here is who we want to put in it. You don't get to choose, we are choosing and you should trust us that she is going to be awesome. As you can imagine, that is very difficult to do in the private sector.

Lindsay: That was a question I had, as it seems like it is pretty common for someone to start at the entry level





and then work their way up in your organization. Do you see a lot of people growing up in the organization? In the military, we have to grow from within. You don't have to do that, but it seems like many do grow up in Walmart.

Cameron: They do. Approximately 75% of managers started as hourly employees and entry positions. In fact, our current CEO started working part time in a distribution center and worked his way up as did the new CEO of the U.S. We are actually going to emphasize more about doing that. We believe there is going to be a real scarcity of talent and people. So, even though there will be automation and it may threaten a lot of jobs in some industries, in our industry we think we will need more people. As an example, we have a relationship with a company that will buy your groceries and deliver to you. They are like Uber, but they are all about home shopping. We have a system of home delivery but with them you can order something and they will deliver it to you in something like two hours. We are working on a relationship with them. They are the biggest employer in many areas apart from us. It takes a vast amount of people to make that happen. If we want to be a part of that, then we need to have people. Therefore, we believe that our internal pipeline is incredibly important.

However, it can also be a curse if you want people to be thinking differently at higher levels. If you start at an entry level position in a store, and you work your way up through the store, we know what you are good at. You are good at executing at scale. You are good at attention to detail. You are good at hard work over time and managing large groups of people. But, if we put you in a different environment, you may fail because you also need to do things like critical thinking, problem solving, be an entrepreneur, and take risks.

We breed those things out of you if you just come up a certain track. My belief is that we need to simultaneously

have a way of moving this pipeline up in the company, but also create the same types of experiences as if they left the company, but within the company. We are in 26 countries around the world. We have e-commerce. We have supply chain. We have one of the largest private fleets in the world. We have large amounts of data analysts. We have seven facilities in Silicon Valley. We should be moving people around so that they acquire the same level of understanding of the world and the ability to think like I did when I went to the Staff College and

The culture is what you experience every day, which then drives your beliefs and actions, and that is the results that you get. Those experiences are important to have and then people start to see that is the way things are done around here.

the experiences that I had as a junior officer. With your audience, being an officer in the Air Force gives you an extraordinary advantage over someone who has just been in one company in the private sector because they don't necessarily think about things outside of their company. Walmart is the U.S. in how we think about things and react to things. The U.S. tends to be quite siloed and inward looking. Therefore, anything that you can get out of your Air Force career that can help you see the world differently, understand how to solve problems in different ways, and to take risks, those are the skills that the business world is desperate to find. As well as the raw leadership qualities that you get in the military and resilience, which is increasingly important today in business.

Lindsay: Of course, in the military, we can be siloed as well in our services as well if we aren't careful. However, we are trying to get people more joint experience so that they can interact with different people and have those different experiences that you talked about. To allow people to go out to industry and sit in those organizations to learn a broader perspective. One of

the things I keep coming back to is how do you build a culture that values that?

Cameron: We do kind of have that culture now. If you ask anyone who has been in the business for 20+ years how many places they have worked or stores they have been in, the answer is always dozens. The culture is what you experience every day, which then drives your beliefs and actions, and that is the results that you get. Those experiences are important to have and then people start to see that is the way things are done around here. So, if you want to be a store manager, you need to go to another store. When someone says that to you and you have heard it before and actually see it happening, you know that. That side of the culture is very strong. What I need people to say is, I am willing to go work in South Africa, Canada, or Chile. That is the hardest thing. They haven't experienced it that much so they don't think it is something that they need for their careers, but for some levels, it really is needed.

Lindsay: With that in mind, what are you looking for in a leader?

Cameron: We need leaders with different characteristics at different levels. However, before I go to the different characteristics, we also know that we need all of our leaders to have basic human skills regardless of the level they are at. Things like empathy, listening skills, and the ability to let people know that you care about them while also holding them accountable. All of those really good leadership skills are needed at every level.

For the different levels, there has been some good work based on a Harvard Business Review article about 10 years ago about the Seven Transformations of Leadership, also known as vertical development. We were working with a company called Global Leadership Associates and we were introduced to them in Colorado Springs by the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL). They introduced us to this concept of vertical development and the Seven Transformations of

Leadership. According to that work, as you develop as a leader, you start as an opportunist where everything is about you. Then you go through a period of a diplomat where you are trying to get along with those around you. Then you emerge from that where you want to be known for something, the expert stage. You can stay at that stage for a long time in your life. In fact, a friend of mine is in a tech organization and his CEO is an expert. That has implications for how you lead. You only trust other experts. You don't delegate. Why would you? They don't know what they are talking about. Then, the next level is achiever, where you are driven by objectives, goals, and achieving things. That is most executives in most companies. Then you get above that level to redefiner. You realize there is a lot of ambiguity and that there can be two rights going on at the same time. It is not always black and white. That is the redefiner stage where there are a lot less people. Then, you get the transformer level, where you have all of the skills in your bag. You become someone who can genuinely manage ambiguity and change.

We need lots of achievers and lots of experts. We don't, however, need everyone to be transformers. For example, if everyone at Apple was Steve Jobs, that wouldn't have been very good. What we are thinking is, do we have people with the right attributes at the right level? We have over 4,000 stores to run. We need lots of experts and achievers, but the ones that we want to change the company and think about the future, we need redefiners and transformers. So, we need different attributes at different levels. The things that move you between those levels is life experiences. I am trying to create those for people and force them to think differently. I believe the military is world class at getting people to move through those levels by the experiences we have, the challenges we face, and by the education you get. I could feel myself moving from achiever to redefiner at the Staff College. I know that my job in the Ministry of Defense working with government around the world helped me to get to the transformer level.





One of the challenges that people sometimes face is that when they leave one organization like the military, they can get stuck at the level they left at. I think I got it just right where I left early enough to be attractive to the private sector but my thinking had evolved enough where I was looking for something different. I was in my redefining phase. You made me realize something that I hadn't thought about before. I think I found it so easy to leave because I was in my redefining stage. I was reframing everything. I wasn't looking back, I was looking ahead. I'm not sure if that is what you were looking for.

Lindsay: It is because it aligns with what I have experienced with people in transition phases. Some people will go through these transitions and will be anchored strongly by their belief of where they think they are at based on what they were when they were leaving. That mental model can limit where they see themselves going. They don't have an identity beyond where they were at in that role and can't see beyond that role.

Cameron: That's a great way of putting it. Mental models are what vertical development is about. Not only do you have different mental models, you have a range of them to choose from as you get to different levels. You are seeking out other mental models and downloading them into your head so when you are challenged, you have something to pull from. When you don't know something, it is what opens you up to look for other perspectives. It forces you to wrestle with the fact that you don't know how to do something and it is very uncomfortable. So you have to identify different perspectives to help with the challenge. Acquiring that new perspective expands your capacity.

Lindsay: To your earlier point, the more a person can move around and be comfortable with that uncertainty, the easier it is for them to try to solve that unknown and look for different perspectives than to simply fall back something that they have done before, but maybe not as

effective. So, the more times you can put a leader or high potential in and ambiguous, or what is often referred to as a VUCA type situation, the more comfortable that they get in staying in that comfortability to make a decision versus quickly falling back to a previous method.

Cameron: Are you aware that there is an evolution beyond VUCA to BANI? It is from Jamais Cascio at the Institute for the Future in California. It stands for Brittle, Anxious, Non-Linear, and Incomprehensible. With brittle, things you thought were strong, suddenly shatter. Anxiety is a very prevalent state for many people right now. For non-linear, things happen in all kinds of weird orders much faster than we often expect. Our customers, because of COVID, what we were calculating would take five years, took five months in terms of how quickly they came on line and their shopping habits changed. Incomprehensible speaks for itself. When you see BANI, you think, if only it was just VUCA.

Lindsay: I like that perspective and COVID has certainly caused us to understand that in just about every facet we deal with. Some organizations found out how to pivot, and some did not.

Cameron: That is something which gives me such a passion for those who are the field leaders who are trained to be achievers to be able to think differently than that. If they are waiting to be directed about what to do differently, that is way too slow. The asymmetry is what we are facing right now. It is very similar to what the military faced post-Cold War and the new doctrine of Mission Command. Essentially, I'm pushing the same thing in Walmart. How do you decentralize? How do you get decision making to a lower level? How do you increase tempo? One of my heroes is a U.S. Air Force Officer named John Boyd. He challenged the system about thinking and decision making. We need more people like him right now. He was either being vilified or being made a hero depending on who was

talking about him in the military. That is the type of thinking that we need, even in our stores. We haven't been bred for that. That is where the BANI comes in. You have leaders who were told to do something all of their lives and became very successful and got to high levels in the organization. Now, they are finding that we are looking for something else. That creates a lot of anxiety.

Lindsay: It does. Where you are at, it creates a challenge of how to help people transition from that technical expertise to get into being in that space of uncertainty and it not be negative, but generative. So, they can take a more holistic look and not just see constraints based on what they know, but opportunities. To see that there are other silos than the one they came up in. With that in mind, as you look toward the next 5 years in your role, what are you most excited about?

Cameron: Funny enough, I am excited about the changes in how people are thinking brought about by two things. Number one, the COVID pandemic. Number two, the events around the George Floyd killing movement. We are taking them both very seriously. The first, COVID, is making us much more aware of individual's wellbeing and connecting our leaders to their teams on an individual basis. The second is creating leaders who may not know how to respond but they are willing to say, "I don't know how to do this, but let's be willing to do this together, can you teach me?" That is very good leadership. We used to have a situation where leader/teacher was the model.

That was kind of broken because leaders don't always know everything any more. Everything has moved so quickly and technology has moved so quickly that it is rare that a leader is able to teach. They are much more likely to be shown. So, lead/learner is more applicable now. To be much more connected to teams on an individual basis because everyone wants to feel like their leader cares about them on an individual level. And to be much more willing to learn and understand what

they don't know. Those two things really excite me and how do we make that a part of our culture.

Lindsay: As a last question, as you mentioned earlier, let's say that we have figured out how to pull out 300 high potentials at the entry level, what advice would you give them?

Cameron: Probably two bits of advice. First, all of the challenges you are going to face, and you will have many, will grow you if you have that approach. If you look forward and say, I don't know how to do that, it looks terrifying, and I am uncomfortable, you need to simultaneously think, but that is how I am going to evolve. To have that growth mindset. The second thing, is that when it comes to your team, the self-fulfilling prophecy is real. If you believe that your team or an individual can do something, they are much more likely to do it. I wish I'd known that in the military about the self-fulfilling prophecy and the growth mindset. Those two things are very much on my mind.



BUSINESS

THE VALUE OF PEOPLE



Jay Caiafa

Chief Operating Officer, Americas at InterContinental Hotels Group

Interviewed By: Douglas Lindsay

Lindsay: Could you share a little bit about your leadership journey and how you got to where you are today?

Caiafa: I grew up in a very small town in Connecticut. My parents were born in the United States, but my grandparents came from Italy. We grew up with a passion for this country. With a passion for our heritage. But, most of all with an understanding of the importance of family. I think that is something that has always stuck with me because when I think about leadership, teams, and the way that I manage my organization, we are actually more of a family first. The importance of that bond, trust, and teamwork has always been important and clear to me my entire life. I think that came to me from that immigrant heritage. The pride in getting over to the United States, serving the United States, and then building a family and a legacy in that way.

As a kid going to public school in this tiny town in Connecticut, I actually had the opportunity to do a number of different things. I look at kids today and so many of them are forced to specialize, whether it is sports or arts or whatever, so early on in their life. I was able to be kind of a jack of all trades. Starting when I was a little kid, I always played multiple sports like baseball, golf, basketball, and I ran cross country. The one thing I couldn't do is play football because my high school was so small. At the time, it was the smallest public high school in Connecticut - we had 52 kids in my graduating class so we did not have a football team. I think through high school, both academically and athletically, I often found myself in a position to lead. That started off by being the Captain of all three sports that I played at a varsity level. But also, even in academic environments, I often kind of led the charge in my classroom activities. Bringing that back to leadership and character, I don't know if I was ready for that. At the time, you don't really think about being a leader or the responsibility that goes along with wearing the title of team captain. It just seemed like something cool to do and I was able to rally around my friends. I don't think it was until later in life when I realized how formative some of that actually was.

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When you are now expected to be the one motivating the team, and you are supposed to embody the integrity of it. Like golf for example. You have to call penalties on yourself. It is a sport that is rooted in integrity. It is not a sport that is based on enforcement of someone else seeing you. So, I always kind of found myself thinking about building that type of culture, that type of integrity often in a team sport environment.

I actually decided that I wanted to go to the Air Force Academy when I was in high school after I saw *Top Gun*. I realize that was a Navy movie, but it planted a seed. I knew that was what I wanted to do with my life. I wanted to serve. I had the opportunity to attend the Academy and I graduated in 1999 and became a pilot. My generation of fliers, we were really odd because we went through casual status, went to pilot training, and then there was just a brief period of time where we were serving on active duty before September 11 happened. We graduated in early 2001 from flight school. You saw the world in a different way and it was fun. We were doing air shows and poking holes in the sky. It was a great job.

Then, September 11th happened and I think that was the first time in my life that I realized how quickly our lives could change. How fragile normalcy really is and how quickly you have to adapt to change. That morning, we were mission planning for an air show in the far east. We were sitting in the planning office and somebody came running in and said, "Fellas, you are not going to believe this. A plane just hit the World Trade Center." So, we jumped up and went into the scheduling office where the TVs were. At the time, I wasn't thinking much of it. I was the flight safety officer in the squadron and there are a lot of mishaps, especially with small planes. But, then you saw the initial wreckage. I was actually on top of the World Trade Center two weeks earlier with my family. Living in Connecticut, and working in New Jersey, I was driving back and forth through New York every couple of weeks. Now, you see the skyline smoldering. I remember, there was

a Master Sergeant standing next to me, and he said, "Can you imagine if somebody did this on purpose?" We were thinking, "Why would anyone do this on purpose?" Then, the next thing you know, we saw the second explosion, and before you know it, we were flying combat air patrols over mid-town Manhattan. You are watching this skyline fall apart and reflecting on your life, what it means, what it means to serve, and knowing that everything is going to be different now.

One of the most amazing memories is from the next morning on September 12th, when I was in the air watching the sunrise over New York and that iconic skyline was gone. The Trade Centers were gone. I remember having such a deep-rooted belief that we

As a leader, we started learning that for our aircrews, our job was to be a stress absorber for the crew.

would get through this. I wasn't sure what it was going to be or what the next day was going to be like, but it was a deep-rooted belief that we were going to get through that. I think that is because you are surrounded by a group of people that all share that sense of team, purpose, and belief.

Post September 11th, I spent a lot of time in the Middle East. We were in that generation that kind of straddled those two different eras. A lot of what I learned in the Middle East helped to shape the way that I lead today. One of my favorite sayings, and everyone shudders when I say it, is I don't believe there is more than 100%. It is one of my biggest pet peeves when someone says that they will give 110%. From my perspective, if you can give 110%, then that is actually your 100%. We can't give more than that. The reason I believe that so strongly is because when we went through that the experience post-September 11th, if you suddenly believe that you have more in your tank beyond what 100% is, then that allows you to believe that you can deplete other areas of your tank and make up for it somewhere else. I just



don't think that is true. As a leader, we started learning that for our aircrews, our job was to be a stress absorber for the crew. When something goes wrong, if the pilot is freaking out, or if one of the crew members is freaking out, we can't be at 100%. We can't be at our best. So, if 20% is stress, then 80% is our best. People will say, if I can just give 120%, then I can make up for that stress. You actually can't. As a leader, you have to find a way to minimize or eliminate that stress so that your people can be at or near 100%.

I flew with some incredible folks and met some incredible leaders while I was there. Those three years kind of formed my resilience, grit, and determination. But, most of all, it shaped my understanding that a leader cannot succeed without putting their team in a position to be at their best and to build them up. Our job is to get our team to a place where they can be outstanding. Where they can achieve and we can get out of the way. It is about empowering the team.

My career kind of took a big left turn in early 2004. I had started to develop acid reflux. They call it GERD (gastroesophageal reflux disease). At the time, the only medicine that worked for me was Nexium and the Air Force had not approved it for pilots yet. So, I was given a choice. I can either be the ground person and fly a desk for two years and see what Nexium does to pilots. Or, I could have an honorable discharge and go do something else with my life. At the time, I went with choice number two. Suddenly, I found myself in 2004, a bit earlier than my commitment, having no idea what I wanted to be when I grew up. The plan was always to keep flying and maybe go over to the airlines when I retired. At the time, that was a terrible move because the airlines were decimated. We had so many pilots that were furloughed from their airline jobs that were coming back to the Guard.

So, I did what many people do when they don't know what they want to do when they grow up – I went to law school. I went to Duke and fell in love with the

campus and the team centered spirit among students, faculty, and alumni. Duke is known for its team first mentality. I spent my first year of law school at Duke and really enjoyed it. I spent my first summer working with a huge litigation firm and I realized that summer that being a lawyer might not be what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. So, when I came back to school that fall, I took the GMAT, applied to, and got accepted into Duke's School of Business at Fuqua and enrolled in a joint degree JD/MBA. I got out of school and started practicing law here in Atlanta for an international firm called Paul Hastings, focusing primarily on commercial real estate. I really enjoyed the development side of real estate when I was in law school. I thought that was a good way to stair step into the business side of development. Terrible timing again in that I started in 2008 about a week before real estate finance basically collapsed. So, I went very quickly from doing development work to doing things like restructuring and kind of seeing the world fall apart. My firm in particular at that time, laid off about 2/3rds of the team. I was fortunate enough to keep a job. But another life lesson was to watch how leaders handle adversity. Whether they take care of their team or they take care of themselves. Whether they can be transparent and of high integrity. Unfortunately, in my experience it was much more of a black box. We would come in to work and you would see someone coming out holding their box of desk stuff and crying. That went on for months not knowing whether it was your day or not. I was lucky. I kept my job, but I wasn't fulfilled.

I started to moonlight in startups. I was introduced to a biotechnology startup out of Connecticut focusing on stem cells. Not embryonic stem cells, but adult. They asked me to step in and help them out as an advisor and then within about a month or two they asked me to be their CEO. I did that at the same time I was practicing law during the day. That particular opportunity didn't ultimately pan out, but at that point, I had the business bug. I was ready to get out of law, it was 2011/2012 and things were getting a bit better. I got a call from a



headhunter about an opportunity at Bain & Company, which was a consulting firm. I went through the interview process, met a lot of great people and I was energized. I took the job. It was one of the most educational times of my life. At Bain, everything was fast paced, high impact work. You are trying to make a difference in an industry you have never worked in, very quickly. I loved the work that I did there in private equity in particular. Those are short term projects of two to four weeks. You wake up and find out you are working on a case with a new team in an industry you have never worked in. For example, you are going to work on a potential credit bureau sale, so you need to learn everything that you can about credit bureaus because in two days you are going to brief the CEO of this private equity company on whether or not they should buy the credit bureau. Or, it could be a project on plastic fruit cases. You know nothing about it but as a team, you are working until two in the morning, but you are having such a great time trying to figure out these problems. I was at Bain for about three years doing that as a case team leader. I loved the team atmosphere and the highly effective teams solving those problems. I just wanted to learn. Eventually, however, that is what made me leave Bain. That high speed and high pace was a lot of fun, but the challenge was that the moment you got to the point where you had the solution or the strategy and you were about to implement it, the client would look at you and say “Thank you very much. We appreciate it, we loved working with you, but you are just too expensive. We can take it from here.” You realize that while the strategy part was fun, it was the impact part that was actually motivating and inspiring. That was the part that mattered.

I wanted to find a company where I thought I could have an impact and I could be part of their long-term solution. I didn't want to keep forming these relationships only to move on. I wanted a place to call home. One of the people who worked with me on a case team suggested I look into IHG. They had an opening in their strategy group. So, I started looking into it. At the time, I was industry agnostic but I had three qualifications that

I was looking for. I was looking for a company with a culture that put people first. A company that was about making sure the team was more important than individual accolades. One that was highly externally competitive but internally collaborative. That was the number one thing I was looking for.

Number two, I wanted a company that touched people's lives where the end product wasn't just a thing - it was something that made a difference in the fabric of people's lives. Number three, I wanted a company that was in the position to be disruptive. At the time IHG was the third largest hotel company in the world. Third is a really good place to be if you are wanting to be disruptive. Number one has no reason to change. Number seven has no impact on the industry. Number three is in the perfect position. I thought as long as we have leadership that was willing to take the above approach, this could be a good place to be. I found all of those things with IHG.

I joined IHG in 2013 and while I have been there, I had the opportunity to get a lot of at bats. I started in the strategy organization. We wound up growing that team and expanding based on the fact that everything we did had impact. All of our projects had some form of top line impact to the company. After about a year and a half in that role, I was asked to step up from Director to Vice President to take over the Americas strategy team, which was a great opportunity. It was something I really enjoyed being able to work with and grow a team. I led that for about a year and a half at which point we decided that we were going to undergo a pretty massive transformation. The business wasn't fit for purpose for what we wanted to do. So, we reorganized to unlock funds to drive growth including for the Americas region where I was most familiar, and I helped lead that transformation.

Coming out of that I was asked to build a new organization called Hotel Lifecycle and Growth, that was designed to drive growth in our business by creating



a centralized organization specifically dedicated to helping our owners actually build and open their hotels. That was my first opportunity to build a large team by bringing together hundreds of people throughout the organization and getting them aligned on a new vision, a new purpose, a new meaning. Then, I was incredibly fortunate after doing that for two years, we had an opportunity where our COO left the company and I was asked to step in as the COO for the Americas region and take over the largest operations for our company. Our region for the Americas is about 2/3 of the profit revenue for our company as a whole. So, I was honored and fortunate to take that role. I think one of the reasons I was able to take that role was because I had an incredible team built behind me in the Hotel Lifecycle and Growth section that was able to take over my role. As leaders, our job is to make ourselves replaceable, not to make ourselves necessary. In that opportunity, I was fortunate to be able to have someone who could take over the reins. Actually, I was prouder of his promotion that I was of mine. That was really fulfilling. And with my incredible luck, I took the reins of this job a week before COVID. So, here we are.

Lindsay: Thank you for walking through that. I think it is especially important to examine those pivot points or those points where we make a change. Some of those occur to us and some of them we control. They cause us to think about what is really important. You mentioned COVID, and in an industry like hospitality and the restrictions that have been imposed, that is a huge challenge. Can you talk a little bit about what it is like to lead though that and maintain a people first culture that you mentioned?

Caiafa: I've talked to a lot of people about this because it went very quickly from hotel operations to crisis management. We were really fortunate in that several weeks before COVID really hit home for us here in this country, we had a region in Greater China that had already been going through it for some time. As a result, we were installing a new crisis or risk management

framework within our organization. In fact, our executive leadership team had our two-day team meeting in January where we sat down and decided to model out what our risk management approach would be if COVID made it to the U.S. At the time, it was still coronavirus. We didn't even have the COVID name yet. We went through this two-day type of war game of how exactly we would stand up the taskforce and what we would have to do. Coincidentally, a couple of weeks later, I had my entire team together in Chicago and I got a call from one of my general managers who said one of their employees tested positive for coronavirus. So, we had the steps ready when we needed it. It was so important to be prepared and think about it in advance. For our industry, we went from a record high occupancy to having 8 out of 10 hotel rooms empty overnight. It was decimating. Most of our hotels are owned by franchisees. They are small business owners whose entire livelihood is in that hotel. The reason I bring that up is because those two things taken together are our true north as we navigate the crisis. Number one, our primary goal was always, and still remains, to keep our hotel guests and our colleagues safe. We do that through our safety protocols and our cleaning protocols. Number two is getting our owners to the other side of this. Trying to build a bridge both in terms of cost generated from the business and our lobbying efforts with the government knowing that the number one thing to those owners was going to be liquidity. It isn't tax breaks. It is liquidity. They need to be able to pay their debt service and they need to be able to pay their employees in order to survive. Those two pillars formed our guiding principles: How do we keep people safe and how do we get our owners to the other side?

One of the things I remember from going through pilot training was when you have an emergency in the cockpit, you have three priorities and they are in this order: Aviate, Navigate, and Communicate. That has always stuck with me. In this situation, that is what we did. The first thing that we need to do is make sure this thing does not hit ground. How do we make sure people



are safe and how do they stay alive? Number two then, is how do we start planning for recovery? What are the things that we think are going to drive business back into hotels? What do guests need to feel to start traveling again? How do we handle first responders because we obviously have a commitment to first responders who are trying to get there and make a difference? They need a place to stay where they feel safe and hotels were that

...you have to anchor on a sense of purpose. Remember why you do what you do.

shelter for them in many cases. Then, the communicate part for us was more about how do we tell our story? How do we bring back travel? How do we ensure our guests and owners trust IHG and want to be a part of that? So, everything kind of went through that lens.

A lot of it goes back to those pillars we talked about with 9/11. A lot of what you try to do to get your team through a moment like this, is first, you have to have to maintain a sense of calm. When people are panicked, you just can't be productive. That goes back to the idea of everyone has a lot of things going through their head and how can I, as the leader, absorb that stress for them instead of amplifying it. A leader can be a stress absorber or a stress amplifier. How do I take that stress away from people so that they can be at their best?

Second, you have to anchor on a sense of purpose. Remember why you do what you do. I am very fortunate that in the industry that I am in, people are hospitality professionals to their core. They are in this business because they love to take care of people and make them smile. It is very similar to the military where people have clear purpose. When you have a purpose and you have bad days, you still know where you are going. You know why you are doing this and why you show up. The third thing is getting people to understand that no one gets through this without a team. No individual conquers crisis. So, how do we make sure we are working together with our owners, partners, and everyone to

ensure that the team and family are strong and able to hold us up? We are all going to have bad days and need to be picked up. How do you really get that environment set?

The final thing is building belief. Like I said, when I saw that sunrise on September 12th, I just knew that we would get through this. It is the same thing with COVID. As a leader, I keep going back to those principles and asking how do I make the organization feel these things? The way that I have been able to do that is by empowering my leaders, people that I trust to continue to build up their people. It hasn't been easy, to be honest. We have gone through some very difficult times, but we have stayed true to the things that matter.

We've made very hard decisions to put off things like furloughs, which we eventually had to do, but not at a rate that many of our competitors had to. We managed to welcome back several weeks ago almost all the people that we had to put on furlough. There was a very small layoff number compared to the rest of the industry. On one side, that gives me pride that we did the best that we could for so many people and we did our best to take care of the people that we couldn't hold on to. We hope someday they will come back. It also gives you discomfort because every person that was impacted, they were impacted at 100%. It is important to recognize that and have that transparency, sympathy, and compassion. It hurts. It is never an easy thing.

Lindsay: Certainly, people have been differentially impacted by what is going on. When you go back to that idea of people first and trying to take care of as many people as you can, that goes a long way in helping your hotel owners and employees know that the organization is trying to look out for them. That they aren't in this alone.

Caiafa: Actually, that's an important point when we consider current events around social unrest and racial



injustice in our country right now. When I look back at 9/11, the one thing that helped us get through that was that as a country, we were so incredibly united against a common enemy as we tried to build back up. Even in the financial crisis in 2008, everyone was mad at banks. We weren't fighting each other and people were helping one another get through it. This crisis is a bit different in the sense that we are in a point of time, regardless of what your politics are or your beliefs are, we are not united. Our country is actually highly divided. We are in a position where it is no longer good enough to not be something. We need to proactively do good. It's not just talking about it. For us, one of the things we always talk about at IHG is how important it is to bring your whole self at work. I'm a strong believer that you should not be a different person at home than you are at work. I don't think we have the bandwidth to do that. We will be unsuccessful at both. Every day I go to work, I bring my family with me. They are part of my life, on my sleeve, and in my heart. I am a father at work, just like I am a father at home. It's impossible to separate those. You can't manage the business side of this without looking at the human side.

We need to think about the importance of diversity, inclusion, and belonging in an organization, and how powerful that is in helping your team be successful. You can't do this without realizing that you just don't know what people are carrying at home. There are countless people that I met that I didn't know were caring for their ill parents at home. They have that burden and maybe now they are being furloughed or not making any money in their hotel. You just don't know what they are carrying. I think one of the biggest challenges we found in leading virtually is that it is actually very easy to manage the business this way. But, as a leader, you can't tell what impact that you are not having. You can't see what your people are carrying in their face or in their eyes. It is hard on Zoom to understand their mental health. How are they doing emotionally? I wear informal clothes to work now, but my schedule is very formal. Everything is scheduled and calendared. So, I

can't walk down the hall and see someone who is having a hard day and say, let's grab a cup of coffee and talk. So, to me, the biggest challenge I have found is how do you ensure that your people are doing okay through this?

Lindsay: Have you found anything that works with that?

Caiafa: Obviously we have a lot of things like town halls and WebEx calls. What I have asked my team to do in particular, is to find one person a day or every two, who you don't normally talk to and reach out to them. Just check in and see how they are doing. Unfortunately, I lost a friend of mine this past year who went to the Academy with me to suicide. He was a beacon of light and just an incredible person. We were so shocked when we heard that he had taken his life. That just goes to the fact that we don't know what people are going through, but maybe that phone call buys somebody a day. And that day maybe turns into a good day which turns into a week. And so forth and maybe we get them through whatever dark period they are in.

Something that has been really important is being transparent and honest. One of the things that people don't always realize is that in being a leader, while your core values shouldn't shift, the way you deliver against them and the way that you engage with people should. When people are in a time of normalcy and calm, they want their leaders to be analytical and unemotional, inspiring, but business oriented. When someone is under stress, they are actually looking for something quite different. They are looking for someone who leads with empathy, transparency, and with recognition of what people are going through. You can have the same leader who is successful in one way, trying to take that behavior into this environment and are completely unsuccessful because that is not what people need to hear and feel. We have tried really hard to have honest conversations. When we have our town halls, we are recognizing what is happening. We are realizing that they also need to hear from those around them, their

colleagues. I can relate to it from my perspective and my lens, but having other voices in the conversation is important so that we have different perspectives. We have had a lot of those hard conversations. Sometimes it is in groups and sometimes it is one on one. They are tearful and, in some cases, awkward and hard. But, they are incredibly important in keeping the conversation going. I've talked to people about the struggles I have in my life. To not talk about that can cause people to sometimes think that they are alone in their fight. Now, we are starting to put into place on my team reverse mentoring to try to help our leadership team to understand where their unconscious biases are. We are trying to do things that are not just what people have defined business as historically, but what it means to be a successful business and a people culture organization in this environment.

Lindsay: That transparency is critical and helps to foster the alignment between what we believe, say, and do. I agree that the current environment has caused some leaders to get out of their "normal" way of doing things and consider how they connect with and value the people on their team and in their organization. The idea of normal has changed.

Caiafa: That is something that people are going to have to get comfortable with. I know some people say they don't like change, but I don't know how you can be successful as a human being if you don't embrace change. Every day is a new assumption. Regardless of what you think about his company or him, Jeff Bezos always names the building in which he works as Day one. Because day one is always a fresh day. You have to go in and attack it with a clean set of eyes and the belief that maybe my assumptions don't matter anymore. Because, if you ever get to day two where you feel comfortable, you are pretty much done at that point. That is true with my career. There is no way I could have planned out my career where it is now. I've held jobs that didn't exist when I started with the company. I never thought I would be in hospitality when I was stepping into Jack's

Valley at the Air Force Academy. You never imagine all of this. You just have to maintain your values and ideals and be willing to learn and evolve.

I think one of the best pieces of advice I've ever gotten was right before I graduated from the Academy. I was talking with a Chief Master Sergeant. I asked him "What would you give me as a piece of advice as someone who is about to graduate? What should I remember and take away from this?" The advice he gave me was to keep a leadership journal. He said, "What I want to you do is write down those things that leaders have done that motivate and demotivate you in each of your jobs. Then, every time you get a new job and get a new promotion, I want you to go back and read your journal and remember

...trust is so important in leadership because without trust, you won't get honesty, accountability, or a working model of what a highly effective team looks like.

what it was like to be in those positions." That was something that I have done through my entire career, because we often need reminding of what it was like when we were there. We are managing people like us, but we don't always remember us then, we remember us now. That is something that I think is really important. Also, to remember that everyone has something to learn and everyone has something to teach. As we think about what is going to stick from this COVID world to what is going to happen tomorrow, I think the important thing to remember is that you and I are not going to figure this out by ourselves. We are going to need our teams and different perspectives through all levels of the organization. That is where that transparency and trust really matter. I don't want the only people taking to be my Vice Presidents. I want it to be everyone in the organization. That is why we set up the reverse mentoring. I want people to be able to feel comfortable. That trust is so important in leadership because without trust, you won't get honesty, accountability, or a working model of what a highly effective team looks like. I think





that starts with honesty up front. If they don't know who you are and what you stand for, what does it matter what your plans for the year are?

Lindsay: That trust is critical and ties back to what you were talking about with respect to change. I think many people have trouble with change because they have been on the wrong side of change in the past. There isn't trust developed with the organization, so they can't trust their leadership or those around them. That creates uncertainty and they don't know what's really going to happen. So, it can be perceived as a threat. However, if I have trust developed, then I may not know what it looks like on the other side of the change, but I do know that I am not alone.

Caiafa: As leaders, it is not only important to set that foundation, but also to recognize what people are going through whenever there is change. It's relatively scientific. To be overly simplistic, there is positively perceived change and there is negatively perceived change. In both situations, people go through a pretty predictable journey. In negatively perceived change, people go through the grief curve. They will try to bargain their way through it and as a leader, you need to help them through their journey. The same thing happens in positively perceived change, it's just a different curve. We used to joke that it's a lot like the marriage curve. It starts with uninformed optimism. When you first get married, you think we get to live together, we love each other...it is going to be awesome. Then, you go quickly from uninformed optimism to informed pessimism. What do you mean I can't watch what I want to or I have to pick up after myself? But, you eventually get to informed optimism and you get through the curve. To your point, when you start getting into those places where you are trying to tell people what you think they want to hear or you are trying to play a different part of your leadership card with them, it is very dangerous to do that. They have to see you as the same person. Whether they like what you have to say or not, they have to trust you, that you are being honest, that you have their best intentions in mind, and that you will control what you

can control to try to help them get to the other side. That is where I see leaders get into trouble. They will bargain with people, tell them not to worry, or that it isn't too bad. Maybe overall it isn't that bad, but to that person it was and now you have destroyed your trust. Once you destroy that trust, it is incredibly difficult to ever earn back.

Lindsay: That trust is along many avenues, like your employees, competitors, and other stakeholders. With an organization as large as yours, a violation of trust, has many second and third order effects beyond the individual. The bottom line is that even though there may be uncertainty all around me, if I have trust in the team and in my leader that gives me a path on how to get through that change. It gives a sense of unity. Otherwise we have divisiveness. When we talk about organizational culture, that unity is important. When we don't have that and we see people working at cross purposes, then it is predictable that negative things happen.

Caiafa: That is important to have trust in the organization as well. What is a brand, but trust in a promise? Every time you buy a product, you trust it to do what you think it is going to do. When you stay at one of our hotels, each of those brands is a promise. If we don't have trust, we are done. To your point about divisiveness, regardless of what side of the line you are with current events, it is clear that as people, many have lost the ability to even be kind to each other. For example, who would have thought there would be a way to be divisive over a pandemic? I think it goes back to integrity. The moment you start to lose integrity or trust, you slip into an area of moral relativism. Once you get into that world, the next thing to slip is accountability. If we have different moral compasses, then who holds us accountable? That not only applies to the world of business, but also with respect to humanity. It is important to remember that we are in a situation where people are impacted from an economic standpoint, they are impacted from a health standpoint, and they are impacted from a morality standpoint in many cases

all underpinned by the greatest public health crisis we have seen in a century. This is challenging and you never know what lever is flashing red for your people that day.

Lindsay: If your people know what to expect from you, then you may not pull every correct lever in the correct sequence, but at least they know you are coming from a place where you are trying to support them and the organization. We don't expect people to be perfect, but we do expect them to care.

Caiafa: This is also where you go back to the leader's responsibility to lifting others. A leader's job is to create a team where everyone has value and everyone matters. If you think about a car, you can put the best engine in the world in that car. However, if the car doesn't have wheels, it is going anywhere. You can't simply replace the wheels with more engines. It doesn't work that way. People need to understand what their purpose is in the organization, understand that they are valued, and they don't have to pretend that they are someone else. So, if that day they are stressed because their mother is sick or they are stressed because they are worried about making their bills, we don't expect them to be perfect either. We expect that we have a team that will lift each other up when we are down and they know that they belong. They know that they are important and that they matter. I think that is something that we are seeing more broadly in society. People are just having trouble telling each other that they matter. That it is okay for them to be who they are. It is about building that environment where people not only trust you as a leader, but you trust the intention of the team so that they can be themselves and offer ideas and offer their view of the world in order for the team to be better. I think if you draw that back to the military and our time in the Air Force, the thing that comes to mind is the debrief. In the flying squadron, you debrief after every mission. That happens and works through trust and it makes the team better. We are now seeing that in business and trying to bring that mentality into a business environment. But, you can't do that without trust.

Lindsay: Based on your vast experience, what advice would you have for young leaders?

Caiafa: First and foremost, being a leader is not an opportunity to be important, it is an opportunity to serve. I think it is really important to understand that perspective. That was an important moment for me when that flipped for me from the perspective of being a leader as an award to one of responsibility. Second, it goes back to the idea of the Golden Rule.

The notion that rank is a symbol of importance, is a mistake. It is important because you need to have a decision-making structure and hierarchy, but it doesn't mean that a General can't learn from an Airman. I think being open about your leadership journey and understanding that you can learn just as much from someone who is following you as you can from someone who is leading you.

The last piece is ensuring you understand what your values are and not compromise on them. I remember going through the Academy and having Contrails out memorizing so many things like the Core Values. I realized later in life how those Core Values have actually defined every team that I have been a part of. Integrity First, Service Before Self, and Excellence In All We Do.

I thought that was something that was just part of a moment of my journey but you realize that some things in life you just can't trade away. Integrity...you just can't get that back easily. Putting others ahead of you will never get you into trouble. Trying your best is important. If people see that in you, you are going to be successful.





NONPROFIT CHARACTER AND PHILANTHROPY

Mike Gould, '76, Lt Gen (Ret), USAF

CEO, Air Force Academy Foundation & Association of Graduates

Interviewed By: Douglas Lindsay

Lindsay: Would you mind sharing a little bit about your journey and how you got to where you are today?

Gould: Reflecting back on my journey, a lot of it has to do with the family that I grew up in. My dad was a vet & mom was a nurse. Dad flew P-51s in the Occupation Forces in the Pacific at the end of World War II. He came back after the war and like a lot of people, he hadn't been to college yet, so he got his degree at Kent State University and then he went on to graduate school at the University of Michigan. That is where my sister and I were born. While he was in school in Michigan from 1950-1953, Korea sparked. Uncle Sam was calling and wanting aviators from the War to come back, so he got recalled back to active duty to go fly. He asked if he could stay and finish his education before he went, and they said okay. He finished his Masters Degree and was straight off to jet upgrade.

About the time he got requalified in the F-89, the armistice was signed, but he had committed to serve again, so he stayed in the Air Force and went up to Alaska in the Air Defense Command. Shortly thereafter, the B-47 became operational and the Air Force needed single seat pilots to go fly this new intercontinental bomber, so that's what he did. He was eventually assigned to the 100th Bomb Wing at Pease Air Force Base in New Hampshire, where I grew up from Kindergarten through 6th grade. I remember visiting Dad as he was sitting alert at Pease and going to the flight line to welcome him home from European reflex missions at the height of the Cold War. I missed my Dad but, in hindsight, I was learning valuable lessons about commitment, loyalty, work ethic – and military families' sacrifices.

In 1965 the Air Force assigned Dad to Kent State University to command the ROTC Detachment. We all know how Kent State played out in 1970. I watched a quiet mid-American campus be overtaken by anti-war rioters, followed by Ohio's governor activating the National Guard, and then four students being killed by gunfire. My Mom, then the head nurse in our local hospital, cared for the onslaught of casualties on May 4, 1970. She shared the stories of removing bullet-proof vests from "peaceful demonstrators" and treating life-threatening wounds

Mike Gould, Lieutenant General (Retired; USAFA 1976) is the CEO of the Air Force Academy Foundation and the Association of Graduates. In that role, he leads all efforts of both organizations in support of the United States Air Force Academy and its many graduates. Gen Gould spent 38 years on active duty where he held such positions as military aid to the President, senior military assistant to the Secretary of the Air Force, was a seven-time commander, and culminated his service as the Superintendent of the Air Force Academy. He is a command pilot with over 3,100 hours in 11 different aircraft.



suffered by police and Guardsmen. There was so much more behind the story of Kent State and many other American cities during those turbulent times. Little did I know, those experiences prepared me well for the world we find ourselves in today.

A year later, as my Kent State High School teammates were scheming how to avoid the draft, I departed home at age 17 for the USAFA Prep School. I came here believing the concept of a “military commitment” applied to all Americans. Once you pay that commitment, you go on with the rest of your life; it was just what you did. Academically, I struggled through the Academy because, in hindsight, I didn’t apply myself right. I loved it though because of the like-minded friends, the chance to play college football, the constant challenges, and the opportunities afforded after graduation. Thanks to the example my parents set, abiding to the Cadet Honor Code was the right, natural thing to do. As for Mrs. McComas’ decorum training, I have to say she couldn’t hold a candle to my mom...

Pilot training followed and while I loved flying airplanes, I was still of the mindset that I would fulfill my commitment, then separate and go coach high school football. On my third assignment, I was an Instructor Pilot at Pilot Instructor Training (PIT) at Randolph Air Force Base. Most members of the 560th Flying Training Squadron were biding their time until the 6-year point when their commitment expired so they could go to the airlines who were seemingly hiring anyone who could fog a mirror. I came home one day with an application for Delta Airlines. Paula knew I had no desire to be an airline pilot & called me on it. She offered, “If you like what you are doing, keep doing it – we’re on board.” Having Paula’s and our two boys’ total love and support helped me realize that the Air Force is my calling and I would keep doing it as long as I could contribute.

As a senior captain T-38 PIT instructor, I got a call saying the ATC Vice Commander, needed a couple

checkout flights in the ’38. The Vice, Maj General Charlie Hamm was a ’56 West Point graduate, an F-100 combat vet and former Thunderbird pilot; the last thing he needed was a blow-by-blow “wingtip-on-the-star” fingertip formation lesson from me, but I learned that lesson the hard way. After my first IP demo, he took the jet, tightened my position by about one half and said, “How’s this look, captain?” Talk about being humbled. After the checkout, he told me he needed a new executive officer and I was it. I’m thinking the last thing I needed was to carry a general’s bag around – not in my plan. I went back to my boss, a Colonel at the 12th Wing and he asked me how it went with the Vice. I said, “He wants me to be his Exec, but that’s not my cup of tea.” The Colonel said, “You have a choice to make; if that is what General Hamm wants you to do, if I were you, I’d go do it and do it well.” A welcome attitude check from a mentor. Paula and I both learned tons from General Hamm and his wife, Jane, and we are grateful for their mentorship and enduring friendship.

It soon hit me that there is something special about being associated with a mission, a cause, a lifetime of service – until, that is, my first staff assignment in the Pentagon when I started second-guessing myself. As a new Major I was running a program that involved Professional Military Education (PME) at Maxwell AFB. I had to travel down to Maxwell to give a talk at Air Command and Staff College (ACSC) and one of my ’76 classmates, Harrison Freer, was in the course at the time. I was singing the blues about my job and how much I detested the staff work. I’ll never forget Harrison’s response, “You should hear yourself whining. Knock it off and apply yourself just like you have in your previous assignments and make something good happen.” Hearing that critique from a peer, a guy that I respected and had grown up with at the Academy, made me realize I needed to make an attitude adjustment. To this day, I’m grateful for my friend Harrison.

As one of the “Iron Majors” in the Pentagon, my job was to dissect the Ike Skelton Congressional Committee’s



report on their year-long study of Professional Military Education. My task was to examine the roughly 70 recommendations that came out of Committee to find out what the Air Force needed to do to comply. I was scheduled to brief the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel Policy on the Air Force's response but first had to pre-brief the three-star, Lt Gen Tom Hickey who was the Air Force Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel. The bottom line of my briefing was that we need to

You can learn a lot of lessons of how to be an effective leader by watching your leaders' decisions, both good and bad.

"stand up and tell these Congressmen to stop meddling in a business that they know nothing about." I had this figured out and I was really going to "tell it like it is." Of course, the General said, "I get your point, but you need to tone this down a bit, Major." It is one of those things that sticks in my mind. You can have an opinion, but the effective way to voice that opinion is probably in a more subtle way than to tell your bosses to leave you alone. I'm grateful for mentors like Tom Hickey.

You can learn a lot of lessons of how to be an effective leader by watching your leaders' decisions, both good and bad. That's kind of how my journey went. When I think about the leadership opportunities that I had in seven different commands and a couple executive leadership positions over the course of my career, I'd like to think many of my good decisions occurred because of great examples I witnessed, and my bad decisions were because I was too slow or stubborn to have applied the lessons I'd been taught.

Lindsay: You highlighted several things in your journey that are so critical. You talked about being open to opportunities, being humble and willing to learn, and paying attention to those around you. During your career you had the opportunity to be the Air Force Aide to the President and the Senior Military Assistant to the

Secretary of the Air Force. As you were developing and growing as a leader, you got to witness some very senior leaders. Can you share a bit about what that was like?

Gould: As you've reminded me, Doug, I've had some incredible opportunities handed to me. During my first tour in DC, after a year on the Air Staff, my boss, Lt Gen (Ret) John Jackson, surprised me when he called to tell me he had nominated me to be the Air Force Aide to the President. When I finished laughing, he told me he was serious and that I'd made it through the vetting and would be headed to an interview at the White House in a couple weeks. Somehow after three interviews, the director of the White House Military Office told me they had selected me. Over the next two years, I had a front row seat witnessing some significant history – like the fall of the Berlin Wall, Desert Shield/Desert Storm, the highly-scrutinized Supreme Court confirmation of Justice Clarence Thomas, a potential enactment of the 25th Amendment when President George H. W. Bush experienced a cardiac episode and more... The main job of the MILAIDE was to serve as an action officer for the President in the event of a national emergency, but because of the requirement for a MILAIDE (one from each service rotating a 24-hour watch) to be in the immediate proximity of the President, we got to hear and see some incredible acts of leadership and character in action.

What sticks with me most is something I think we all long for today – and that was an adherence to at least some sort of civility in the political arena. Where is Will Rogers' wit when we need it? "The man with the best job in the country is the Vice President. All he has to do is get up every morning and say, "How is the President?" My observations of the 43rd President revealed that he was a gentleman and an admirable family man. He labored over tough decisions just like we all do, but often the stakes he dealt with were so much higher than ours. I always thought his deep-rooted character led him not to being on the right side of history, but on the right side of right. There is

a lot we can all learn about character from members of the “Greatest Generation.”

Then there was a two-year stint as Senior Military Aide to the SECAF, Dr. Sheila Widnall, the first woman to serve as a Service Secretary. My primary function was to advise the Secretary on military matters while staying abreast of political factors. One of the first lessons I learned in that job was the importance of loyalty, but I was surprised at to whom one should direct those loyalties. Being the new guy in the SECAF’s office and naively thinking a part of my responsibilities would be to keep the blue-suit side of the Air Staff apprised of civilian activities, I requested a courtesy call with the CSAF, Gen Ron Fogleman. The Chief probably appreciated my gesture, but he made it easy by telling me there would be no need for me to play the go-between role; rather, he clearly stated my allegiances were to my boss, the civilian leader of our Air Force.

During that tour, I witnessed how important civilian control of the military is in our democracy. I learned that the concept of maintaining good order and discipline in a military unit can mean something different to civilian leaders. I learned that giving best military advice to civilian leaders may and may not lead to the optimum outcome for either side, but that the dialogue is important in the decision-making process. Perhaps most memorable and enduring, I learned that bold, decisive and always respectful leadership from senior military leaders can do wonders to set the right culture in an organization. Following several controversial decisions made by his civilian Air Force and DoD leaders, Gen Fogleman stood on his principles by submitting his resignation as CSAF to the Secretary and he did so without fanfare or personal disparagement. By refusing to publicly elaborate on all the factors that led to his resignation, he sent a clear message about character and leadership to every member of the US Air Force. Right after the Chief handed his letter of resignation to Dr. Widnall and departed her office, she called me into her office and holding up his letter asked, “What do we do

with this?” My response was simple: “You accept it and find a new Chief. It’s too late; he has made up his mind.”

Lindsay: It certainly takes some moral fortitude when you are sitting in that room to not worry about your job or your career, but to say this is what we are standing for. With that idea of honor and discipline, can you talk a little bit about the role of character?

Gould: Here is the way I look at it. If you think about leadership as the art of inspiring others to move in a certain direction, or to act in a certain manner, or to speak with conviction about a cause, to me it is obvious that you need something to compliment your leadership. That something is character. It is your mental and moral beliefs, the virtues that you hold dear that back up the leadership piece. If you don’t have a firm grip of what your moral, mental, and internal virtues are, you’re going to have a hard time taking a stand in a leadership position. Some of those virtues are ingrained during your formative years, but not everyone grows up having benefitted from the same value system. I told you about my dad being gone a lot when I was little. For him it was all about integrity and a solid work ethic. That was just engrained in me.

Then, you come to the Air Force Academy where you live under the Honor Code. You have classmates from all different walks of life, diverse backgrounds, and different cultures and you watch and hear the discussions. I remember we had honor lessons where the cadet honor reps would present some dilemmas. For example, you go to the phone booth one day and you notice in the coin return that someone left a quarter behind (oops, I’m dating myself). What are you going to do with that quarter? At first you think those hypothetical lessons are silly, then as the stakes increase, eventually you realize there is value in thinking through simple cases. What are you going to do if you hand a clerk a \$10 and they start making change for a \$100? Are you going to walk out of there and say, that clerk sure blew it, or are you going to do the right thing?



Having those discussions where the stakes are relatively low are invaluable to help find that moral compass.

Lindsay: Two things really resonated with me when you were talking through that. The first was that you have to think about it in advance. You need that preparation. Two, you were talking about knowing what you stand on and for. If we establish a foundation of those moral principles and virtues, the event really doesn't matter because we know how we need to respond because we have that foundation. If we change with every situation because we are worried about someone will think or who we want to keep happy, we will drift all over the place. That is where leaders sometimes fail when they get overwhelmed by the moment and they lose sight of that center. It's that alignment between what we say and what we do.

Gould: Exactly. If you haven't thought about it before hand, chances are, you have a 50/50 chance of making the right call when the pressure is on. It's like continuation training in flying. With the timing of my career, we were commissioned as Lieutenants in 1976, Vietnam was behind us, and we were "fighting" the Cold War. We weren't engaged in combat, but we were training for that day. Continuation training flights can seem repetitive, but the idea is that you keep repeating it so that when you take that bird strike through the canopy or someone is shooting at you, you have already thought it through. The instincts, the muscle memory kicks in and you respond in the right way. It's also like that with sports. One of the worst things you can do is take a golf lesson from your local pro, then read a couple of "how to do it" articles, then head to the course to play a round of golf. You have all these thoughts going through your mind. But, if you read the books, take your lesson and then go to the range and repeat it and you get the muscle memory where things are happening without having to make conscious thought about physical movements, then you get in a grove and you will make good decisions on the golf course later. Likewise in our everyday lives, if we haven't taken the

time to consider character dilemmas and think about resolutions, then we probably aren't going to be prepared to make the right call when it really counts.

Lindsay: That leads me to think about where you are right now. We want to have leaders think about it ahead of time and provide those experiences early enough where they can get the repetitions they need. In your current role as the CEO of the Air Force Academy Foundation you provide resources back to the Academy

...if we haven't taken the time to consider character dilemmas and think about resolutions, then we probably aren't going to be prepared to make the right call when it really counts.

to have those opportunities and experiences. In addition, you are also the CEO of the Association of Graduates where you encourage and develop relationships with Academy graduates to stay connected. What is your message regarding the importance of staying connected and giving back to the Institution? I'm not necessarily talking just about the financial piece, there is also an advocacy piece as well as a time component. I'm sure there are some graduates out there who valued their time at the Academy, but haven't really been connected. Why is it important for all graduates to reconnect?

Gould: That's a really good question. It's important that we, as grads, look other grads in the eye and say, whether it's been 10, 20, or 30 years since you went through the Academy, regardless of where you are right now, if you look really hard at what you are doing, the decisions that you are making, or the success that you have enjoyed; if you are really honest with yourself, you can probably go back and say, "I probably wouldn't be as well off as I am if not for some of those experiences that I had at USAFA." Whether it was the friends that we made, the people that lifted us up when we really needed it, the academic challenges we endured, or the adversity we overcame on the athletic field - all of us





who go through the Academy can look back and say that those experiences helped prepare us for life. Don't you feel some need to connect? To make sure that the cadets here today are having the same or better opportunities? I think that is our role here. It's not about getting in people's pocketbooks. If we are being honest, the Academy did a lot to form our opinions, attitudes, and decision making. I think it is important to help people understand the benefits that the Academy afforded us. Whether every experience was positive or not, we learned a lot about ourselves and life.

I challenge grads to get and stay connected. Read *Checkpoints*, *ZoomieNews*, and *7258*. Follow Academy happenings on social media. Recognize and celebrate the impact that graduates are having all over the world. Understand that funding for training and education runs in a sine curve that follows what the administration and economy are doing. When defense spending is up, there is a little more to go around. In years when it is down, training and education is generally at the tail end of that whip. So, it's up to us to inspire that sense of wanting to give back to our alma mater. Matching graduates' passions with USAFA's needs will lead us to a culture of philanthropy.

We are still a relatively new institution but that is no longer an excuse. If we can help people understand that there are valid needs and that philanthropy is crucial to enabling the excellence in all the Academy does, we will be firmly established on the right path.

Lindsay: That is a great way of looking at it. In a way, all of us graduates have been given something in advance by being able to attend the Academy. It's a good reminder of that value. Thinking about where you are now and the success that you have had, if you could go back and give Cadet Gould a couple of pieces of advice, what would they be?

Gould: I didn't have the wisdom to think about it at the time, but I wish I had taken advantage of the learning

opportunities that the Academy offered. When I was a cadet, I read just enough to avoid trouble in the next day's class, but today, I read whenever possible. I have about four books going right now. They cover topics anywhere from the 1918 flu to Dewey and Truman in the election in 1948. Then, I'm finishing a couple of books about the social issues that we are going through today and of course, the Bible is my best source of knowledge and inspiration. I can't wait to get quiet time in the evening to read. I wish I had applied myself better as a cadet; had I done so, I think I would have been more effective earlier as a Lieutenant, Captain, and a Major. The opportunities are there. It's a maturity thing. I just didn't realize that it was out there for the taking.

In hindsight, I'm eternally grateful for what the Academy experience did for me and our family. That's why I am in this job. Paula and I served for a long time, 30 and 38 years respectively – "lifers" as young Airmen would say. We were ready to retire and take on other challenges, far from more government work. In 2017 when Bart Holaday asked me to consider coming back to lead the Endowment (now, Foundation), my only hesitation was selfish. After Paula and I talked about it and realized how our Air Force experiences had perhaps uniquely qualified us for this role at this time, it just made good sense. Now in this job as CEO of both the Academy Foundation and Association of Graduates, it is important to me that we have a graduate community that understands what is required to make the Academy better for future generations.

Lindsay: Yours is a great example of service and how we can all give back in different roles and different ways. We all have a contribution that we can give back. Anything else that you would like to share?

Gould: Yes, Doug; looking back 10-15 years ago when we were advocating for the need to have a new building to serve as the home of the Academy's character and leadership development work, we talked a lot about the iconic architecture and world-class interior workplaces.

All along, however, the vision was really about the critical work that would take place inside this new facility. Now that USAFA has the new structure, it's activities such as the deep thinking that occurs in the research and scholarship arenas, the professional processes involved in administering the cadet honor system and indeed all the thought, time and effort that goes into publishing the *Journal of Character and Leadership Development* that have moved us toward turning the vision into reality. Our Air Force's and USAFA's Core Values are what define our culture as Airmen. Enculturation in any business is a social endeavor – and in this business of military service, which entails being prepared to lay down one's life in defense of the country, it is imperative that all Airmen, all cadets adopt that culture. Building an institutional culture based upon Integrity, Service and Excellence cannot be done without *character development*. Character is the bedrock upon which our values reside.

Recall General Patton's quote, "If you can't get them to salute when they should salute and wear the clothes you tell them to wear, how are you going to get them to die for their country?" I say we take that sentiment a step further as in, if we can't get cadets to embrace Integrity, Service and Excellence, how can we expect them to lead and make the sacrifices our nation requires. *Living honorably*, a theme championed in 2010-11 by then Commandant Brig Gen Rich Clark and then CCLD director, Col Joe Sanders, lies at the root of the CCLD's character and leadership development framework. I like the Center's direction and applaud the team's efforts to tackle that imperative to focus on character development. All these new ideas, the research and scholarship, the articles that you produce in the JCLD, will make our institution stronger. At the Air Force Academy, we have a platform that can influence higher education across the country. Educators need to understand the latest and greatest and think hard about the true meaning of moral courage. I'm proud of what you are doing and encourage you to keep it going. We in the AOG and Academy Foundation will help any way

we can. It takes resources to do what you do. We are the front company to make that happen, but we need donors to know that this is a worthy endeavor. Keep up the good work.

Lindsay: Thank you. I appreciate those kind words and the generous support so that we can showcase the great work that is happening at the Academy to all institutions and organizations.



BOOK REVIEW

A Review of “Master of the Air: William Tunner and the Success of Military Airlift”



Robert A Slayton, Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press (2010)

Review By: Douglas Kennedy, PhD, Lt Col, USAF (Ret)

“If Tunner was running the Barnum and Bailey circus, the lion would put his head in the general’s mouth.” – As told by Raymond Towne, one of “Tunner’s Men” (p. 141)

Robert Slayton provides a leadership and military professional primer through his investigation of an early Air Force pioneer, Lt Gen William Tunner. For Slayton, Tunner’s leadership and expertise—and all the other elements of his “quirky” personality—were essential to the development of the modern United States’ global military airlift capability. Thus, to Slayton, Tunner is most definitely the “father of military airlift” (p. 2, 250-251).

Slayton gives us a good understanding of Tunner’s role in military airlift in a concise biography. He does a nimble job hustling through Tunner’s early life and career to reveal his discipline, focus, and strong work ethic. This contributed to his hiring by Colonel Robert Olds as the second staff officer to help organize the Air Corps Ferrying Command in 1941, where later Tunner headed the newly developed Ferrying Division of Air Transport Command, ensuring all aircraft moved from factories to the warfighter during World War II. Tunner then moved on to the China-Burma-India Theater in 1943, where he embraced innovation to ensure efficiency and effectiveness for those flying “The Hump.” Most of Slayton’s work then focuses on the strategic victory in the first Cold War engagement—he devotes eight of the fourteen chapters to it—as Tunner’s reputation from the CBI Theater resulted to his correcting and directing the effort during the Berlin Airlift. Finally, Slayton shows Tunner’s continued airlift excellence during the Korean War, mentions his leadership while commanding U.S. Air Forces in Europe (USAFE), and discusses his command of the Military Air Transport Service (MATS)—the precursor to Military Airlift Command (MAC) and later Air Mobility Command (AMC). Slayton’s engaging work makes one’s head nod throughout, recognizing Tunner’s essential role to modern airlift.

More significantly, Slayton’s work also offers a contribution to the challenge facing hierarchical, traditional, conservative institutions such as the U.S. Air Force. These organizations must somehow embrace the “quirky individuals,” the “transformation agents,” the “leaders with genius and determination [who are] pitted against



political officers and embedded bureaucrats” (p. 2). Slayton posits the conundrum that Tunner inspires: “How does the military—the most disciplined and ranked of American institutions—respond to this kind of intense talent and willful independence?” (p. 23) Central to Tunner’s success in this realm of airpower, according to Slayton, was his innovative and genius approach to this mission. Slayton’s presentation of Tunner is that of the ultimate innovator, specifically regarding his zeal for airlift, in which Slayton likens to another airpower archetype, Billy Mitchell. However, as Slayton admits, “But that drive, that vision, that entrepreneurial personality also made him single-minded and even thoughtless, and did not win him any friends in the highly structured air force” (p. 201). These events highlight that even though technology was changing the capability of airlift, it was Tunner who pushed that capability—it was Tunner who politicked for the all-jet airlift platform, which became the C-141 Starlifter—and then instituted the cultural change and the disciplined method of scheduling airlift within the Air Force. But, he stepped on toes while doing it (p. 220).

The two topics that best illustrate Tunner’s innovation and genius are the integration of women pilots into the force and the employment of private business beliefs to the military airlift world. Slayton includes a necessary chapter on “Tunner’s Women Pilots.” During his time as a leader in Ferrying Command, Tunner was always short of pilots. In a serendipitous moment, one of his top pilots introduced Tunner to his wife, a talented aviator herself, Nancy Love. Tunner was not interested in liberal reform, but in practical, logical results; he had to develop this resource to assist the war effort (p. 31). Tunner created the Women’s Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron (WAFS), a precursor to the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs), often over objections of senior military officers.

Additionally, part of Tunner’s innovative streak was that he looked to the private business world for inspiration

in his airlift world. His relationships with C.R. Smith of American Airlines, Fred Atkinson of Macy’s, Robert Smith of Braniff Airlines, and Otis Bryan of TWA are examples of “Tunner’s Men” who created efficiencies and solid procedures within the military airlift world. According to Slayton, this contributed to the “Tunner Approach” that allowed the founder of airlift to be successful in all of the significant airlift events. This leadership approach consisted of being visionary, strong willed, persistent, independent, disciplined, and to gain recognition for his ideas (p. 22). His vision was to run “airlift as a business operation, and his whole approach was to impose the most methodical corporate procedures he could adapt to the institution” (p. 159)—hierarchy be damned.

Slayton’s work justifiably highlights Tunner’s innovative, demanding, and disciplined leadership style but often at the expense of other similarly capable officers. Unlike other accounts, Slayton suggests that Brigadier General Joseph Smith’s initial handling of the Berlin Airlift was “Cowboy Operations.” Other historians, such as Robert Owens in his *Air Mobility: A Brief History of the American Experience*, recognize the deftly-handled urgent situation that required some stumbling and experimenting of initial operations before the Air Force, and the nation, achieved a better grip on events—and thus it sent in the most capable airlift expert. Similarly, Slayton is extremely critical of Tunner’s nemesis, General John Cannon, as they battled during the Berlin Airlift and later butting heads when Tunner tried unsuccessfully to acquire Tactical Air Command’s troop-carrying aircraft for MATS.

Nevertheless, Slayton is correct to highlight this leader. In the words of another one of Tunner’s men, USAF Gen T. Ross Milton, who began his interactions with Tunner in 1948 and then worked in MATS from 1949-1957, Tunner was the “lone prophet” and “a zealot about air transport”—language usually reserved for those advocates of strategic bombing or an independent air force (p. 220). Slayton effectively captures this contribution in *Master of the Air*.

BOOK REVIEW

A Review of "Hunter Liggett: A Soldier's General"



Michael Shay, College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press (2019)

Review By: Mark E. Grotelueschen, PhD, Lt Col, USAF (Ret)

No senior American officer from the Great War, or perhaps even from all American military history, has been more overdue a biography than U.S. Army Lt Gen Hunter Liggett. Liggett was the most experienced corps commander in the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF), and after replacing General John J. Pershing as commander of the American First Army in October and November 1918, he led that massive, modern force—a million men strong, equipped with hundreds of airplanes, tanks, and long-range artillery—to its greatest victories in the final weeks of the war. Michael Shay, the author of a number of books on various AEF subjects, has done readers and scholars a great service by taking on the challenge of writing this first-ever full biography of Liggett.

Shay scoured numerous archives (even tracking down Liggett's supposedly destroyed official service record) as well as many valuable published accounts to assemble this concise but complete account of Liggett's full life. Beginning with a brief family history and Liggett's upbringing in Reading, Pennsylvania, Shay examines his years in the West Point class of 1879; tours of duty fighting Indians on the closing frontier; service in Cuba and the Philippines (twice); his time on the General Staff and at the new Army War College, first as a student and faculty member, and later as its President; service as a brigade commander during Mexican border troubles; his extraordinary contributions in France during the Great War; and his post-war life in San Francisco.

While uniformly acknowledged to be an outstanding officer—hard-working, competent, thoughtful, judicious, respectful of others, as well as composed and courageous when in danger—Liggett's defining characteristic was his extraordinary commitment to mastering his own understanding of the military profession. Liggett was known throughout the Army as a voracious reader and a diligent student of war and military affairs. Disregarding the fear that his professional studies, which earned him a reputation as a man of "studious habits and wide reading," (p. 78) would cause others to think him "a military highbrow," he persisted in his efforts— eventually getting the reputation of having "unusual intelligence" (p. 86) and possessing "one of the finest minds in the Army" (p. 66). While commanding an infantry battalion at Fort Leavenworth in 1908-09, Liggett voluntarily audited, on his own



time, both PME courses then being taught there—the School of the Line and the Army Staff School. To complete these courses, Major Liggett studied under the direction of Lieutenant George C. Marshall, a recent (but phenomenal) student himself, then serving as a new instructor.

Liggett's life-long commitment to reading and professional study—from military history to current doctrine, weaponry, and tactics—yielded that most precious capability in a senior commander: good judgment. Clausewitz labeled this rare but essential capacity "*coup d'oeil*"—the ability to see at a glance, even through the fog of a complex and apparently chaotic situation, what needs to be done. Liggett's colleague in France, Lt Gen Robert Lee Bullard, who served as a division and corps commander before taking command of the new American Second Army late in the war, wrote that Liggett "had the valuable faculty of seeing what was important and what was not; and he did not waste his time or attention on what was not going to count. Faster, and with less concern (yet without offending) than any other that I know, he could dismiss trifles or unimportant things; he just good-humouredly [sic] but effectively passed over them without notice, no matter who brought them up." (p. 104)

The essential question, especially for institutions committed to developing military leaders, is how to cultivate good judgment in its members. Clausewitz stressed the importance of experience in the development of *coup d'oeil*. Liggett appears to have understood that, even in a long military career, one officer would gain naturally from a limited and comparatively narrow range of experiences. The only certain way to increase one's personal experience was to read widely—especially in military history and affairs. As another colleague once privately wrote about Liggett: "No officer with whom I have been associated in the service has so profoundly impressed me with his zeal for the study of his profession, the depth and accuracy of his knowledge of the literature of it, and his practical familiarity with

all its details." For Liggett, this enthusiasm allowed an American officer—whose personal experiences yielded only opportunities to handle problems that arose in a small frontier constabulary—to be prepared to successfully lead the largest and most modern field army in the nation's history against one of the world's most professional and experienced forces on foreign fields that no American of his own generation could have expected to fight on.

While many politicians and pundits, as well as statesmen and strategists, offer predictions regarding the kinds of national security challenges that will eventually confront young American military officers, we cannot be sure which projections will come to pass. But we can be confident that the path taken by Liggett (as well as by other leaders such as George C. Marshall, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Andrew J. Goodpaster, and Brent Scowcroft, among others) will best prepare those officers for whatever the future holds.

Shay begins this work with a quotation from Secretary of State, and later, Secretary of War Elihu Root: "The real object of an Army is to prepare for war." Of course, this is equally true for all the services, individually, and all together as a joint force. Even deterrence, the other great object of a national military, is based on the belief that a military force is prepared for war. But this assertion also is reducible to each individual member of the U.S. military—the real object of the professional military member is to prepare oneself for war, as well as for the myriad tasks along the spectrum of operations that the nation may call those military members to perform. Liggett understood this, and he made the serious study of his profession—its purpose, its tasks, and techniques—the core of his professional life.

BOOK REVIEW

A Review of "Emotional Intelligence 2.0"



Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves, San Diego, CA: Talent Smart (2009)

Review By: Tony Huang, Capt, USAF

The main purpose of *Emotional Intelligence 2.0*, by Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves, is to provide readers with a detailed understanding of emotional intelligence and a personalized strategy for increasing it. For those unfamiliar with emotional intelligence, it is broken into four unique categories; self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management:

- “Self-awareness is your ability to accurately perceive your own emotions in the moment and understand your tendencies across situations” (p. 24).
- “Self-management is what happens when you act – or do not act” (p. 31).
- “Social Awareness is your ability to accurately pick up on emotions in other people and understand what is really going on with them” (p. 38).
- “Relationship Management is your ability to use your awareness of your own emotions and those of others to manage interactions successfully” (p. 43).

Up until about 25 years ago, the main measure of personal success and career success was IQ, the intelligence quotient. However, studies found that people with normal levels of IQ actually outperformed those with the highest IQs 70% of the time. According to the authors, the important missing part is emotional intelligence. “First, people just don’t understand it. They often mistake emotional intelligence for a form of charisma or gregariousness. Second, they don’t see it as something that can be improved. Either you have it or you don’t” (p. xiv). Emotional intelligence - unlike IQ - cannot be precisely quantitatively scored because it is a little different for each of us. However, emotional intelligence tests can provide a good basis on how we stand amongst our peers.

Taking the initial test provided in the book enables individuals to define and understand their current level of emotional intelligence. With the results on hand, the book outlines what the reader needs to ensure, implement, and reflect on to maximize the effectiveness of emotional intelligence skills. This book’s main benefits to its readers is its many unforgettable stories providing situational explanations to illustrate the author’s suggestions. For example,



the authors provide real world examples of individuals with either high or low levels of self-awareness. From the examples you can clearly perceive the positive and negative adjectives used to describe the individuals: “She is open and authentic at all times, and it is so meaningful to everyone that she interacts with” (p.28).

Both authors have a tremendous practical and academic experience in the field of emotional intelligence. Co-author Dr. Jean Greeves has more than 20 years of experience as Talent Smart’s CEO, author, executive speaker, and C-suite executive coach. Dr. Greaves has been cited in in Newsweek, BusinessWeek, Fortune, Forbes, The Wall Street Journal and many more publications. She holds a Ph.D. and M.A. in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from the California School of Professional Psychology and a B.A. in Psychology from Stanford University. Dr. Travis Bradberry, the other author of book, is also a co-founder of Talent Smart, the predominant provider of emotional intelligence tests and training. His books have been translated into 25 languages and are available in more than 150 countries. He likewise enjoys a superb publishing record. In addition to his academic papers, Bradberry often speaks at corporate and public settings such as for Coca-Cola, Microsoft, and Fortune Brands. He received his bachelor of science in Clinical Psychology from the University of California, San Diego.

In our current Air Force/DoD environment better leaders, regardless of rank or position are in high demand. Everyone needs to be a leader. Nowadays it’s not enough to be the smartest person in the room (IQ), but you also need to be aware of your own and others’ emotions (EQ). Emotional intelligence is not the “be all, end all” missing component to be a great leader, but it certainly improves leadership performance. One extensively detailed strategy that I’ve clung to was to “watch yourself like a hawk” (p.74). This strategy boils down to thinking before you act,

but more specifically taking advantage of or creating a “calm before the storm” environment. I strongly urge those at all stages in their lives and careers to read this book, implement the strategies, and then read it again. Emotional Intelligence 2.0 comprises 280 pages of tools, techniques, and skills needed to survive in our fast-paced, turbulent, and competitive military/political/global environment.

PROFILE IN LEADERSHIP



Lieutenant General Lewis H. Brereton: When to Listen to Your Subordinates and When Not to Listen

John Abbatiello, PhD
Stephen Randolph, PhD

General Lewis Brereton can be viewed as the Forrest Gump of the early days of American military aviation. He seemed to be everywhere, at every major turning point, from the first days of air power through the vast air armadas of World War II.

He commanded and flew during the first massed use of U.S. air power, during the 1918 St. Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne offensives, moving up to serve as Billy Mitchell's Chief of Operations in France. After a turbulent interwar period, he served in every major theater of WWII, seemingly in every major action. He was there in the Philippines, serving as General Douglas MacArthur's Air Commander when the Japanese destroyed most of America's air power in the Pacific on the day after Pearl Harbor. From there he was sent to India with his surviving bombers, striking up strained relationships with Generals Claire Chennault and Joe Stilwell and playing a key role in opening up an air route into China. Upon a crisis erupting in the Middle East in 1943, he was redeployed yet again with his surviving forces, to shore up the defenses of the Suez Canal. There, his 9th Air Force executed the costly and essentially unsuccessful raid on the Ploesti oil fields in mid-1943.

Brereton's 9th Air Force then deployed to Great Britain, to provide tactical air support of the Normandy landing and allied ground operations during the breakout. His forces were heavily engaged in Operation COBRA, a massive attack on German defenses that opened the way for the U.S. breakout from Normandy, at the cost of "friendly fire" that killed and wounded hundreds of U.S. soldiers. Three months later, having taken command of the First Allied Airborne Army, Brereton was responsible for the allied airdrops in Operation MARKET-GARDEN the infamous "bridge too far."

Dr. John J. Abbatiello is Chief of the Research and Scholarship Division at the US Air Force Academy's Center for Character and Leadership Development (CCLD). He received an undergraduate degree in history from the Academy in 1987 and completed his master's and doctoral degrees in War Studies from King's College London, UK. He is the author of *Anti-Submarine Warfare in World War I: British Naval Aviation and the Defeat of the U-Boats* (Routledge, 2006) and specializes in airpower and naval history. John served as a pilot and educator in the Air Force for twenty-five years; he culminated his active duty career in 2012 as the Deputy Head of the Academy's History Department. As a Department of the Air Force civilian, he directs research and assessment efforts for CCLD.



Such an extraordinary career could hardly avoid controversy, nor did Brereton ever spend much energy avoiding a confrontation. One subordinate summarized him as follows: “Clipped and final were his sentences, sweeping were his concepts, and sudden were his decisions.” Another commented that “Louis’ Brereton pulls no punches...he is aggressive and quick in sizing up a tactical and strategic situation and he can be frank to the point of tactlessness” (Miller, 2000, p. 6).

His career offers a rich source for the study and assessment of leadership. Among the more interesting questions was his interaction with his subordinates in decision-making. Whether a leader accepts a subordinate’s advice can be a complex equation that goes beyond merely operational choices and risk management. The act of listening to subordinates can promote teamwork, build trust and loyalty, and increase the confidence subordinates have in their leaders. Ignoring advice accomplishes the opposite. These interactions are perhaps most critical in wartime, where leader decisions lead to life-or-death consequences. This profile examines two cases where General Brereton had to decide whether or not to accept the advice of subordinates. In the case of Operation TIDALWAVE, the B-24 raid on Ploesti, he ignored the advice of subordinates. During Operation MARKET-GARDEN, Brereton accepted his subordinates’ advice.

Both cases led to disaster. The Ploesti Raid of 1 August 1943, flown at low level against the advice of Brereton’s subordinate commanders, resulted in partial damage to

the Ploesti oil refinery complex, at the steep cost of 53 of 177 B-24 bombers committed to the operation. Of the 532 aircrew that did not return from the mission, 330 were killed, 70 were interned in Turkey, and the rest became prisoners of war (Rein, 2012).

Brereton’s decisions during Operation MARKET-GARDEN were even more costly. Acting on the advice of his subordinate troop carrier leadership, Brereton decided that each C-47 aircrew should only fly one mission per day and pull only one glider per aircraft. It was a fatal decision, slowing the buildup of Allied forces as the Germans reacted furiously to the airdrop. By the end of the week-long operation, the British and Polish airborne units at Arnhem had lost approximately 1,500 killed and left behind over 6,500 POWs and evaders, about a third of them wounded. Additionally, the two US airborne divisions, the 82nd and 101st, suffered about 3,500 casualties over the course of one week of fighting (Middlebrook, 1994).

In addition to the comparison to Forrest Gump mentioned above, Brereton had an uncomfortable similarity to Ambrose Burnside, the Union general who seemed to play a role in every defeat of the Army of the Potomac during the Civil War. How did Brereton reach these fateful decisions? What can we learn about leadership from these examples?

Dr. Stephen P. Randolph is the Rokke-Fox Chair at the US Air Force Academy’s Center for Character and Leadership Development (CCLD). Dr. Randolph graduated from the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1974, has a Master’s in the History of Science from Johns Hopkins University and PhD from George Washington University. After a successful career in the Air Force, which included flying the F-4 and F-15, he spent nearly a decade at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF) at the National Defense University. Following that, he was appointed The Historian of the U.S. Department of State and a member of the Senior Executive Service. In his current role, he serves as a senior advisor to the leadership of the Air Force Academy and CCLD on issues of honor and leadership, as a scholar of the history of air power and the profession of arms, and as a teacher. His work at the CCLD culminates a nearly fifty-year career in public service, in successive roles as a fighter pilot, policy advisor, strategic planner, professor, leader, and scholar.

Operation TIDALWAVE

As author Christopher Rein relates in *The North African Air Campaign*, after only two weeks into the battle for Sicily in July 1943, Allied leaders pulled Brereton's two B-24 groups, reinforced him with three more B-24 groups from the UK-based 8th Air Force, and began an intensive training program for a planned low-level attack against the Ploesti oil refineries in Romania (Rein, 2012). Low-level attacks were not standard doctrine for American heavy bomber operations in Europe due to a higher vulnerability to ground fire and difficulty in visual navigation. Additionally, the B-24 was a difficult aircraft to fly, and its heavy controls made low-level flying even more challenging.

The Ploesti plan came directly from General Arnold and his Army Air Forces Plans Division, which considered Axis oil production an essential Combined Bomber Offensive target. The lead planner for Operation TIDALWAVE was Colonel Jacob Smart, who convinced General Eisenhower and the Combined Chiefs of Staff of the need for a low-level attack in June 1943. Thus, Brereton essentially served as a force provider for a plan originating from his superiors in Washington and directed from the highest levels of Allied leadership.

As mentioned earlier, the Ploesti Raid was partially successful at best, and resulted in heavy losses of bomber aircraft and crews. A number of factors contributed to the heavy casualties. There was foul weather on the way from their North African bases to their targets that forced the attacking groups to fly higher and therefore into German radar coverage. There were navigational errors by two of the B-24 groups, and an aggressive defense by now-alerted German fighters and flak guns. The 98th Bomb Group alone lost 26 of 31 aircraft that reached their targets. In the end, the raid damaged important facilities at Ploesti, but it is important to note that the complex was not operating at full capacity. The Axis easily made up for the destruction

by increasing production in the undamaged areas, that is, within the existing cushion.

What, then, was Brereton's role in the Ploesti disaster? Christopher Rein blames Brereton for not agreeing with his subordinates that the low-level plan was ill conceived (Rein, 2012). Brereton had the authority to override Smart's low-level concept and develop his own more conventional high-altitude plan for the attack (Schultz, 2007). His subordinate commanders, including his 9th Bombardment Command and 201st Bomb Wing commanders, as well as all five of his B-24 group commanders, disagreed with the low-level concept (Werrell, 2019; Rein, 2012). Two of his groups had been with him in North Africa for several months but three had been assigned recently from 8th Air Force in England. Regardless of their advice, if we are to trust the postwar publication of his diaries, Brereton genuinely believed that the element of surprise would be an important advantage of the low-level concept (Brereton, 1946).

Knowing who to listen to is a vital leadership competency. When considering a technical issue, the opinions of subject matter experts deserve the most consideration. Brereton had considerable flying time in the Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress by 1943 but lacked experience in the Consolidated B-24 Liberator. His subordinate commanders, possessing considerable experience in the B-24, deserved the most attention. He was not, however, personally familiar with most of those subordinate commanders. Instead, Brereton decided to execute the plan endorsed by senior Allied leaders and developed by staffers in Washington and England.

Finally, Brereton's pre-attack briefing to 1,700 B-24 crewmembers in the days leading up to the attack could not have been more morale crushing. As he visited each B-24 group, he told them how important the mission was, potentially shortening the war by starving the Axis of vital fuel production capability. His closing remark, however, jolted all listeners: "If you do your job right it is worth it, even if you lose every plane. You should



consider yourself lucky to be on this mission” (Schultz, 2007, p. 94). He came close to predicting their demise.

Operation MARKET-GARDEN

After North Africa and the Ploesti Raid, Brereton took the 9th Air Force to England, where it would expand rapidly with additional fighter bomber, medium bomber, and C-47 troop carrier units arriving from training. This growing air armada would serve as the tactical air force supporting the Normandy landings. In August 1944 Brereton moved to take command of the First Allied Airborne Army (FAAA). This organization combined US and British airborne divisions with USAAF and RAF transport aircraft to carry them to battle. This was a major responsibility, given the resources invested in the airborne troops and the expectations for their role in the liberation of Europe.

After several cancelled airborne operations following the Normandy breakout, Brereton’s FAAA would finally see action in mid-September 1944. On 10 September, Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery, commanding the 21st Army Group on the northern flank of the Allied advance, convinced Eisenhower to allow him to employ the FAAA in a bold offensive in eastern Holland. Intelligence estimates indicated that German forces were broken and in full retreat; in Montgomery’s opinion the Allies must strike before the Germans could regroup on the German border. In Operation MARKET-GARDEN three of Brereton’s airborne divisions would secure a narrow corridor to Arnhem, capturing several river crossings as British XXX Corps’ 20,000 vehicles advanced along a single road. MARKET was the codename for the airborne portion and GARDEN the name for the XXX Corps ground assault. The final objective, 64 miles inside of enemy lines, was the bridge over the Rhine at Arnhem. From there XXX Corps would make a right turn, followed by the rest of British Second Army, and break out into the north German plain—excellent terrain for Allied armored forces. Montgomery envisioned

an offensive that, if successful, would end the war in Europe by Christmas 1944.

The campaign opened with daytime drops on 17 September 1944. These were extremely accurate with minimal losses of transport aircraft to the enemy. Nonetheless, the operation ultimately failed. The Germans unexpectedly reacted fiercely, rushing in counterattacking forces that pressed—and at times pierced—that narrow corridor. Poor weather, starting on the second day of operations and continuing throughout the battle, hindered the lift of airborne reinforcements, their supplies, and their expected close air support by Allied tactical air forces. On the night of 25-26 September, fewer than 2,000 British airborne soldiers withdrew across the Rhine, signaling an end to the operation.

So again, it is important to understand Brereton’s role in this disaster. The overall concept of the assault belonged to Montgomery and his staff, and again Brereton found himself in a position where he had to make the best of a plan directed from above. At the Army level, Brereton wrestled with the following issues. First, should the drops be conducted during the day or at night? Brereton decided on a daytime drop for a number of good reasons, and this decision proved correct. Daylight would afford more accurate navigation, which had been a hard lesson learned the night before D-day in June. More accurate drops would allow airborne troops to form up quicker and set off for their objectives much sooner, vital when attacking river crossings that needed to be seized immediately.

Routes to the drop and landing zones were another area where Brereton exercised decision-making authority as the FAAA commander. The routes of troop carrier groups had to be carefully planned to avoid German flak concentrations and provide for obvious ground features for visual navigation. These two decisions resulted in unusually accurate drops and minimal aircraft losses on the first day of the operation. However, the low loss



rate came at a high price in combat effectiveness. To achieve it, the allied paratroopers landed far from their objectives, without any coup de main forces designated for a rapid advance and capture of their first-day objectives. Designation of the drop zones, while under Brereton's authority, was a decision that he delegated to his division commanders.

The next two of Brereton's important planning decisions in Operation MARKET dealt with what Brereton chose not to do. These recommendations came from Major General Paul Williams, who commanded Brereton's IX Troop Carrier Command. Brereton and Williams had served together during the interwar years and in England since the pre-Normandy build up. They had developed a close working relationship and presumably a strong level of trust.

Brereton could have directed that his troop carrier units fly two round trip missions on the first day. He decided to execute only one per day. The round-trip sorties to the drop zones were between five and six hours in duration. Two of those in one day, plus the loading process in between, would require some night flying. Williams feared that his crews, notoriously unskilled at night navigation, would not be able to launch and form up during a pre-dawn launch or recover to their bases after dark. He also feared that his maintenance crews, undermanned due to the rapid expansion of his troop carrier forces, would not be able to perform required battle damage repairs and routine refueling and maintenance in time for two lifts. Finally, he was wary of the impact of aircrew fatigue during combat operations; he thought two lifts in one day would be too much to ask of his pilots. And Brereton accepted William's recommendation (Cox, 1985).

Brereton also decided during the planning process to not employ double-tow techniques for gliders. Troop carrier crews had experimented with double-tow, that is, towing two gliders behind one C-47, during the previous year. The double-tow technique worried

Williams, who saw the safety concerns of pilot fatigue and reduced maneuverability as a serious issue (Wolfe, 1993).

If used, either one of these techniques—two lifts on the first day or double-tow of gliders—could have doubled the number of paratroopers, glider-borne infantry, and artillery support for the all-important attacks on the first day. The operation was critically dependent on the rapid buildup of Allied forces, especially for the British 1st Airborne Division at Arnhem and the 82nd Airborne Division at Nijmegen. Both of those formations lacked the strength to take and hold their objectives on Day 1. In reaching his cautious decision, Brereton was one among many senior commanders in MARKET-GARDEN who failed to inject the necessary drive and command urgency that were essential to success (Beevor, 2019). He also shared the overconfidence of other commanders, and their failure to anticipate the vicious and rapid German response to the airdrops.

In these decisions, Brereton chose to listen to the advice of his subject matter expert, Major General Williams. This advice, however, focused on a single aspect of the overall mission: airlift. Brereton's decision ignored the more important consideration, which was the set of objectives facing the airborne forces that would define success or failure for Operation MARKET-GARDEN. As the senior commander, with overview of the entire complex and extended operation, Brereton chose the narrow perspective instead of the larger one. It was a fateful mistake.

Conclusion

So what can we take away from Brereton's decision-making for TIDALWAVE and MARKET? First, experience has its limits. Brereton may have been the most experienced combat leader in the Army Air Forces, but he was much better at some aspects of leadership than others. He was an effective planner and organizer, but was considered by important peers—such as General George Kenney—to lack





attention to detail (Miller, 2001). He was abrasive and outspoken, but also brave and aggressive, understood by all to be an effective operator but often displaying a narrow perspective, as in his decisions in MARKET-GARDEN.

Second, leadership is contextual. Any leadership situation must consider the leader, the followers, and the environment. In both cases above, Brereton had to decide whether to accept or ignore advice of subordinates who were experts in employing their weapon systems and the environments where those weapons systems operated. But he also had to consider intelligence reports showing that the German Army was in full retreat and unlikely to offer much resistance. And he had to make the best of orders flowing in from above. During the planning and execution of MARKET-GARDEN it mattered, as well, that FAAA had been established only the previous month, that Brereton had a very contentious relationship with his deputy, British Brigadier General Frederick Browning, that staff procedures and relationships during the planning cycle were erratic and time-compressed, and that there was high-level urgency to employ the airborne forces, of which so much had been expected (Beevor, 2019). Contexts can be very complicated.

Third, as we look back on these events, we need to understand relationships—who was a trusted agent and how long those relationships had been in place. Some of Brereton's subordinates had been recently assigned and some had been serving with him for a relatively long time. How much does familiarity and length of common service impact trust? As a leader, it is important to remember that a technical decision can have strategic consequences. Details matter. Brereton was known for occasional lapses in attention to detail and a tendency to defer to subordinates on technical questions. These traits left him vulnerable to failure in the cases we have discussed.

Finally, we must consider the stakes at play in these decisions. Senior Allied leaders were of the opinion that both of these operations had the potential to significantly shorten the war. Both also had the potential for heavy casualties. We can assume that Brereton did not take his decisions frivolously, and we know from his published diaries that he considered TIDALWAVE and MARKET “extremely successful” and “an outstanding success” respectively, despite the costs in casualties and the failure to achieve their stated objectives (Brereton, 1946, p. 205; 365). History's verdict has been less kind.

♦ ♦ ♦

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JCLD Submission Guidelines

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

- **Integration:** Knowledge for application. How does what we know/learn impact how we develop leaders of character across different domains? How do we use this knowledge to impact our education, training and development programs?
- **Scholarship:** Theoretical and/or empirical examination of a relevant construct, program, approach, etc., related to character and/or leadership development.
- **Assessment:** How do we know what we are doing with respect to character and leadership development is working? What evidence can we gather to assess the efficacy of the efforts?

Ideal submissions will include discussions of both character and leadership development. Since the purpose of the journal is on examining the development (short and long term) of leaders of character, we are keenly interested at the intersection of these two domains. While we will consider manuscripts for publication that address each of these in isolation, clear linkages between the domains of interest will have more relevance to the JCLD.

Categories for Submission:

- **Conversations:** This category is designed for transcribed conversations with senior leaders/practitioners/ academics/etc. focused on a topic that is related to the purpose of the JCLD. If you are interested in conducting a conversation for submission to the JCLD, please contact the Editor in Chief to make sure that it fits the scope of the Journal.
- **Integration:** This submission category focuses on how topics related to character and leadership are integrated within an organization, team, or other functional unit. The key factor for this category is that we are looking for how both character and leadership can be integrated and not simply studied in isolation.
- **Scholarship:** These submissions will focus on the theoretical and/or empirical analysis of a construct, program, approach, etc. related to leadership and/or character.
- **Assessment:** These submissions will focus on an assessment technique or assessment strategy related to character and/or leadership development.





- **Reflections from the Field:** This submission category will be for leaders who have a relevant perspective to share based on their experience in leadership positions. It is not intended to be used to simply advocate a certain approach (i.e., do what I did, 10 things to do to be a better leader, etc.), but designed to be a forum for meaningful reflections of leadership situations and a thoughtful analysis of what worked/ didn't work. It can also be used to identify trends that a leader sees regarding different domains (e.g., what do future leaders need to be aware of in different domains like the profession of arms?).

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

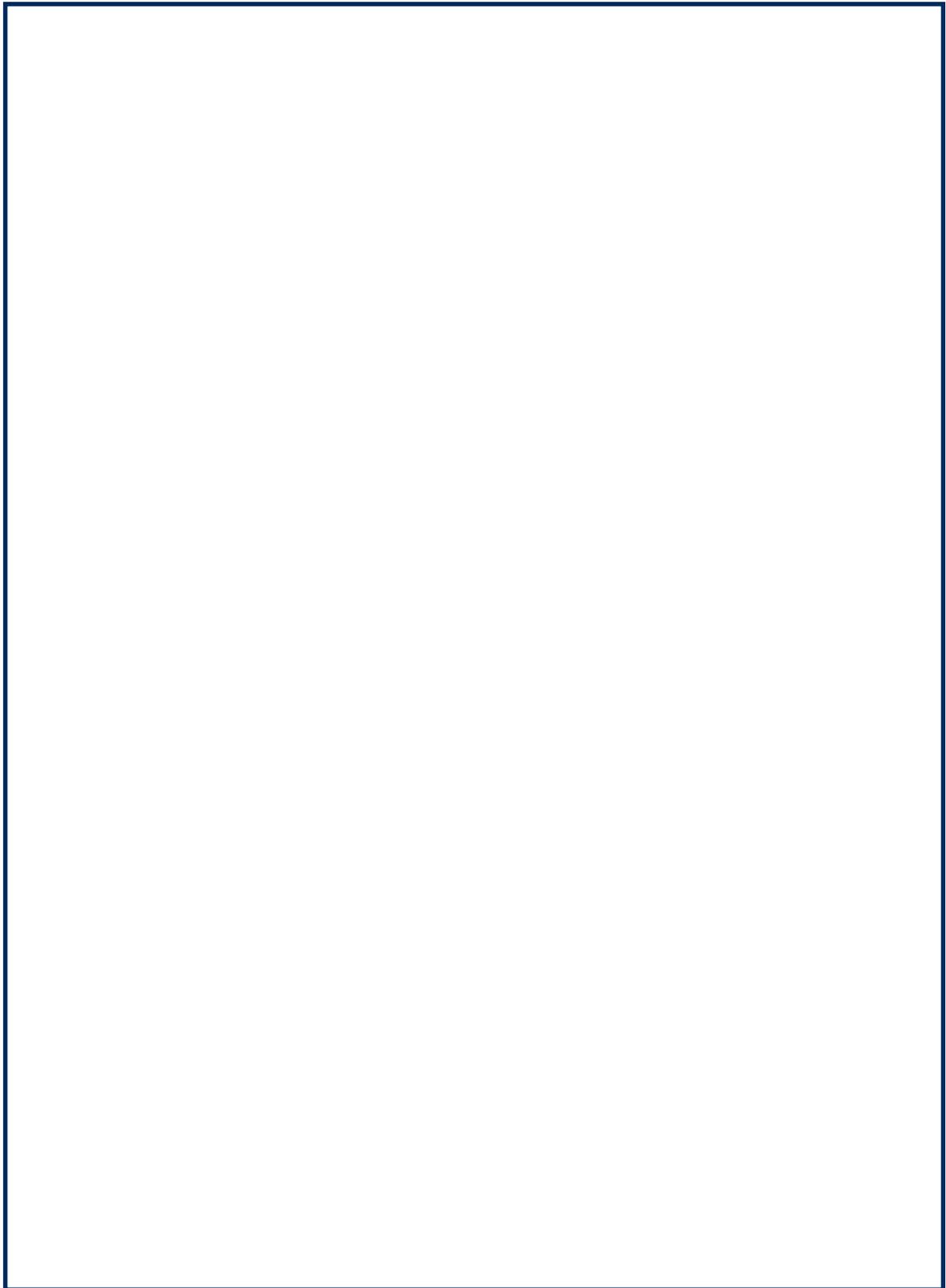
- Manuscripts should be electronically submitted in standard American Psychological Association (APA, 7th Edition) to include proper headings, subtitles, and citations in 12 point Times New Roman font, double spaced, with page numbers and running headers.
- Manuscripts should not exceed 25 pages in length to include attachments, charts, and other supporting material.
- Author(s) guarantee that manuscripts submitted to the JCLD for consideration are exclusive to the submission and is not currently under review for another publication.
- Authors guarantee that they have followed their appropriate institutional guidelines (e.g., Institutional Review Boards, policies, data collection, etc.) and have appropriate clearance (if organizationally required) to submit their work to the JCLD for consideration. USAFA authors will need to get their publications cleared before submission to the JCLD.
- All submissions should include an abstract of no more than 200 words.

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

- Manuscripts should be electronically submitted in standard American Psychological Association (APA, 7th Edition) to include proper headings, subtitles, and citations in 12 point Times New Roman font, double spaced, with page numbers and running headers.
- Manuscripts should not exceed 15 pages in length.
- Author(s) guarantee that manuscripts submitted to the JCLD for consideration are exclusive to the submission and is not currently under review for another publication.
- Authors guarantee that they have followed their appropriate institutional guidelines and have appropriate clearance (if organizationally required) to submit their work to the JCLD for consideration. USAFA authors will need to get their publications cleared before submission to the JCLD.

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.

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