

DEVELOPMENT OF LEADERSHIP SKILLS AMONG MILITARY PERSONNEL

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Abstract: *In this article discussed about how to development of leadership skills among military personnel and given some important recommendations*

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1: Be Open Minded: Everyone stresses the importance of being open-minded. I believe it is much easier said than done. We all have our own paradigms and set of beliefs about how things should be. I see many military leaders get left behind because they can't adapt and change with the times. They're still stuck on how things were done five, ten, or even twenty years ago. They can only think of things from their own perspective.

One of the best ways to be open-minded is to accept that you don't know it all. None of us do. You must admit that there are many ways to do something. You must admit you don't have all the answers. And guess what? Sometimes you're wrong!

Don't be one of those "my way or the highway" type of leaders. Admire and respect the creativeness and ingenuity of your team members. Seek input from the people that work with you and advise you. They are a wealth of information.

Also, be a sponge. Make it a goal to learn something new every day. Be intentional about doing this.

2: Take the Tough Assignments. Take the toughest jobs you can find in the military. Seek out the jobs no one else wants. Seek out the jobs that challenge you and force you out of your comfort zone. This is when and where the real growth happens.

You won't learn much about military leadership sitting behind a desk or in a staff position. But you will learn a lot about military leadership as a Team Leader, Squad Leader, Platoon Leader, or Company Commander.

3: Learn from Every Experience. Everything you do in life should be a learning experience. Your successes and failures are both learning experiences. The people you admire and the people you can't stand are both learning experiences.

Make it a point every day to evaluate your day. What went right? What went wrong? What would you have done differently? What could you have done better? Conduct your own daily internal AAR your performance, attitude, work ethic, and skills.

Making the time to evaluate every event and learn from each experience will definitely help you grow as a person and as a military leader.

4: Read Daily. Reading is what has helped me develop my leadership ability the most. Early on in life, I hated to read. It wasn't until I was about 25-years old that I started to read on a regular basis.

If I could only credit one thing with developing me the most, it is my passion for reading. It's true, leaders are readers. What I love most about reading is that you can study a successful person's life in just a few short hours. What took them a life-time to figure out you learn in four to ten hours! Chew on that.

Also, if you have a problem or challenge you are going through, there is probably a book on the subject. If you are trying to learn something new, there is a book on the subject.

Make it a point from this day forward to read at least 20 minutes per day. You take time every day to feed your body, so why not feed your brain? Feeding your brain will pay you a lot more than feeding your body. Feeding your brain will help you level up your military leadership skills.

Read books on leadership, communication, conflict resolution, personal finances, relationship building, people skills, management, and a variety of other subjects. Read Field Manuals, regulations, and information about your MOS or branch. Even if you don't enjoy reading, do it anyway! That's what leaders do.

Build up your leader's library. Start building your collection of 100-500 personal development books.

5: Keep a Journal. Keeping a journal is a smart move to develop your military leadership skills. Very few people do it, but it's one of the fastest ways to level up your leadership ability. Every night, spend 15 minutes before you go to sleep and think about the day. Write down what went well, what went wrong and what you learned. What were you thinking? What challenges did you experience? Do this every day and never stop.

If you are wise, you will document these AARs in your journal so you can refer to them in the months and years to come. Think of this information as your personal memoirs.

6: Ask for Feedback. Get feedback whenever possible, even if you don't like what you hear. Try to get feedback from your boss, your peers, and your

subordinates. Find out what people think about what you do right and what you can improve upon.

If you don't feel comfortable getting feedback face-to-face, ask people to fill out a simple, but anonymous form.

7: Take a Personality Test. There are lots of different personality tests you can take online. I think every military leader should do this. Learn more your personality, mindset, and what makes you tick. Find out your natural strengths and weaknesses.

Use this information to your advantage. It will also help you work better with your peers, boss, and subordinates. I highly recommend the book *Personality Plus* by Florence Littauer.

8: Work on Your People Skills. Like it or not, the Army is a people business. It always has been and always will be. One of the smartest moves you can make to level up your military leadership skills is to improve your people skills.

There is a book I recommend to everyone. This book changed my life. It's called *How to Win Friends and Influence People* and it's by Dale Carnegie.

Before I read the book, I was ignorant. I only thought of things from my own perspective, I had a bad attitude, and I just couldn't get along with people very well. This book changed the way I think about my relationships with others. I learned "how to get along with people" and "how to see things from other people's perspective."

You must realize that talent will only take you so far in the military. At the end of the day, you have to learn how to get along with others if you want to move up, get promoted, or get ahead.

Tip 9: Associate with Successful People. As parents we understand the power of association. We don't want our kids to hang around bad influences. We know that one bad apple can ruin a barrel full of good apples.

As adults, things shouldn't be any different. Who we spend most of our time with has a big impact on who we become and what we accomplish.

Spend time with positive, supportive, uplifting people. You can't control who you work with in the military. I get it. But, you can control who you spend time with when you're not at work.

One of the best things you can do is develop your own mastermind group. This is a group of people working together toward a common cause. The people in the group share ideas, help each other solve problems, and encourage each other.

Consider forming your own military mastermind group. Find a few "squared away" service members at different ranks (ideally outside of

your chain of command) and meet up once a month or once every 90 days. You can have your meetings on Zoom or Facetime or face to face.

Tip 10: Attend Workshops & Seminars. As a military leader, you should attend workshops and seminars every year. Yes, you should attend your military leadership training. In addition, you should also find events, workshops, and seminars in your local area that will teach you about leadership, influence, motivation, people skills, etc.

You should make it a point to attend at least one or two workshops or seminars every year. This will teach you new skills, help you meet other influential people, and make you a better leader at the same time.

Most of these seminars are fairly priced. Some are even free. In either case, it's hard to lose money when you invest in yourself.

If you want to develop your military leadership skills, I saved the best tip for last. Here it is. Be a servant leader. Take the focus off of you and instead focus on the mission, your unit, your boss, and your subordinates. The Army is a team sport. Be a team player. Help anyone and everyone.

Leaders serve others. They work for the people they lead, not the other way around. Read that again so it sinks in. The best leader puts the needs of the people they serve above those of their own. If this is the only piece of advice you implement from this training, I know you will be a better military leader.

In summary, these are 10 ways to develop your military leadership skills, so you can be a better military leader. None of these tips are one time things. Instead, these are things you should do on an ongoing basis throughout your military career.

I believe anyone can become a great leader. No one is born a leader. If you DECIDE that you want to be a great military leader and develop world class military leadership skills, I know you can do it. It won't happen overnight, but it's possible, if you follow a plan and are intentional about your personal development.

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