

Go, Be Great! My Leadership Philosophy

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Personal Leadership Philosophy

Leadership, to me, is about getting a group of individuals genuinely invested in a common goal while ensuring that I, as a leader, look out for their professional growth and success. Leadership is not about the status of the office you hold but rather the influence, trust, and shared purpose toward a goal. I spent 10 years in the Navy, where I developed a leadership philosophy surrounded by the values of Determination, Loyalty, and Professionalism. These values, combined with lessons from my mentors and personal growth through challenges, have shaped the leader I am today and the one I aspire to become.

Core Beliefs and Values

My family's motto is "Go, be great." Displays my daily approach to leadership. Determination drives me to set high standards for myself and my team. Being a leader, you need to approach each day with intent, regardless of what may be happening around you. You are the leader, and your team needs you to be determined to be great every day. Loyalty builds trust and strengthens team cohesion. I believe that when people know their leader is loyal to them, they are willing to give their best in return. Ultimately, I believe that professionalism serves as a foundational element for a leader. Professionalism can be applied to many other leadership traits, such as discipline, work ethic, communication, and overall performance in your day-to-day as a leader.

Through my experience, I have found that the best leadership style is one that is adaptive and fluid, so I do not adhere to a single approach to leadership. Adjusting my approach to the people and situations around me. This flexibility allows me to lead effectively in both high-pressure and collaborative settings.

Leadership and Mentorship

I have developed into an incredibly observant person, particularly when analyzing the effectiveness of the leaders around me. I have been fortunate to be surrounded by both great and not-so-great leaders, which has helped shape the foundation of my philosophy. Two mentors have had a profound influence on my development as a leader: Commander Sandifer and Lieutenant Parrot. Both exemplified the balance between firmness and understanding, showing me that effective leadership requires both structure and compassion. Commander Sandifer taught me the importance of accountability and holding people to high standards while also recognizing their humanity. Lieutenant Parrot demonstrated how a leader can foster trust and unity through effective communication and genuine investment in others.

Early in my Naval career, I thought I was a good leader, and oh boy, was I wrong about that. I took a more authoritarian approach to leadership, believing that strict control and personal effort would produce the best results. I often preferred working alone because it ensured a higher-quality outcome. Now, obviously, this approach as a leader defeats the purpose of the title. The turning point came when I realized that leadership is not about individual performance but about collective success. Whenever I started investing in my people by understanding their strengths and motivations, the team's performance improved in every facet. I learned firsthand that teamwork truly “makes the dream work” and that investing in people pays dividends.

Leadership in Practice

One of my most recent leadership appointments was as the Company Commander of the ODU NROTC Company, where I was directly responsible for the officer development of 36 personnel. This position challenged every part of my leadership ability, from communication to emotional intelligence. I quickly learned that successful leadership requires flexibility and a deep

understanding of people. Every person on my team had a different personality, background, and motivation level. A leadership style that works for one person may not work for another. This pushed my personal requirement of knowing my people and understanding what motivates them. Ultimately, I found success by approaching situations with a questioning attitude rather than making assumptions.

A challenge I faced early on with my new leadership philosophy was to trust the leaders around me and delegate responsibility. Initially, I believed that doing everything myself would ensure the best results. Still, I eventually realized that this mindset not only limited my effectiveness but also hindered the development of those I led.

I also discovered the importance of balance. Being firm when needed but approachable enough that people felt comfortable bringing problems forward. This balance is essential for any successful leader. I learned that people do not follow you simply because of your rank or position, but rather they follow you because of the trust in your intentions and respect for your actions.

Growth and Future Leadership Goals

Two of my greatest strengths are my ability to remain calm under pressure and my people-first mentality. Composure in stressful situations gives others confidence, while focusing on people ensures they feel valued and supported. Still, I recognize the need to improve my follow-up on taskings and my ability to motivate those who may not share the same level of drive. I plan to continue growing by taking on leadership positions that challenge me, even if it means learning through failure. Growth comes from being uncomfortable and reflecting on those experiences.

Conclusion

My leadership philosophy will continue to evolve, but it will always be grounded in determination, loyalty, and professionalism. Leadership is not about rank or authority; it is about service, trust, and shared purpose. I have learned that investing in people yields the greatest results and that ethical leadership means respecting and caring for everyone you lead. As I move forward, my goal is to lead with consistency, humility, and a drive to help others reach their full potential. Leadership is a journey, and I intend to keep learning and improving every step of the way. As always, GO, BE GREAT!