



The Most Telling Leadership Quality of a Great Leader is How Well They Treat Others

Leadership is often and mistakenly thought of as the quality of your resume and of the quality of your accomplishments, instead, true and lasting leadership is how well you treat and develop others.

How Do You Truly Measure the Quality of a Leader?

History books and the official doctrine of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines would say that a leader is measured by their rank, the number of command assignments, combat deployments, their awards, and qualification badges.

Implicit in this assumption is that more of any one automatically equates to a better leader.

More rank, more deployments, more awards, and more skill badges and you have a greater leader in front of you. Initially, when I came into the Army, I believed all of this. **Today, I believe none of it.**

I spent my fair share of time in the Army on deployments in Bosnia, Iraq and forward stationed in Korea. I was recently contacted by a former soldier that was now doing amazing things in the Special Operations community.

I assumed that I had inspired him into a successful career in Special Operations with my small array of badges, my physical fitness, or other martial qualities.

People Do Not Respect Others Solely for Their Overt Accomplishments

I was dead wrong about my small role in shaping the direction of his career.

Instead of a Special Forces tab as inspiration, He wanted to talk to me about carry boxes late one night. Come again?

Late one night or early one morning when he was a brand new Private and I was on my third deployment as a Captain, I had helped him carry a bunch of heavy boxes or equipment into a building.

Later, when we were moving another Special Forces unit into a new location, he found me sweat soaked in a building while being laughed at by some junior enlisted as I tried to carry some equipment that was too heavy for me.

What had impressed him, and what he remembered, was that I treated everyone I met with respect and as equals.

Treating Others Well Goes Beyond Being Polite and Respectful

If you truly treat others well, then you are constantly aware of seeking opportunities where you can help others succeed and learn.

My last military unit was with a headquarters unit where we had loads of senior military officers, a few sergeants, and many more enlisted, first term soldiers. When we would go to the rifle and pistol qualification range, many senior officers would shoot first, then depart. I always chose to stay and help the first term soldiers qualify and then shoot better.

The US Army was deep into the fight in Iraq and Afghanistan and every soldier in every Army unit needed to see themselves as a combat soldier and effective with multiple weapons. If you are only nice, that is superficial and not developmental. You must seek ways to help others become what they need and want to become.

Treating Others Well Means Listening & Admitting Your Mistakes

In one of my first roles outside the military, I was put in charge of a call center operation that was there to help customers make reservations for my company's services. The reservation technology was not working well, there was incredible customer demand, and the company's culture did not place listening to customers high on its priorities. I thought we needed more technology.

To confirm my views, I assembled my entire team together off the call center floor and did a military-inspired "After Action Review." An "After Action Review" is when the team talks about problems, agrees on solutions, and the leader sits quietly and listens.

Instead of my solution, the team invented a new solution driven by their ideas, what customers wanted, and they created a better plan than I had. In the end, I told the team they had a better plan than I did, and we set about together turning around the success of the reservation center using the team's plan.

Six months later, customers and management loved us.

Treating Others Well Means Ignoring the Established Norms & Doing What Works

If we read business literature and military history, we would, mistakenly, believe that business and the military needs more visionary, hyper-critical, and aloof leaders that over state humanistic values and under deliver in the treatment of others.

Treating others well, being a co-equal teacher, listening to others, enabling yourself and others to live by fair and equal standards creates a work environment where everyone can and wants to succeed.

People want to come to an environment where there are clear and equal standards, the opportunity to be heard, and where they can contribute their own thoughts and actions.

People do not want easy. People truly want to be valued, included, appreciated, and to contribute their actions to something great with the potential to achieve even more.

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**Embracing The Diversity Of The Rainbow Nation
"Heritage Day 24th September"**

**Spring Has Sprung, Soon We Bounce Into Summer
" Hope Blooms "**



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