Leaders are all around us. We find them in corporations, sports teams, schools and the armed forces. Leadership styles in any organization are as varied as the personalities of the individual members. There is no agreed upon style for effective leadership, but there are some tried and true methods we can employ. This paper is written for young leaders and provides a conceptual groundwork for effective leadership. You will not find all the answers here, but you will find the first step on the road to your own leadership style.

The five main principles I present in this paper (Know Your People, Care About the Mission, Lead by Example, Be Selfish and Be Prepared—the sixth principle is discussed at the conclusion of chapter 5) are based on my experience as the Cadet Wing Commander of the 640th Cadet Wing, Air Force ROTC. In the fall of 2002 I was responsible for training 125 cadets to become officers in the United States Air Force. There were several general principles and many specific tactics I employed throughout the semester. I believe there was a certain formula to my leadership during those fifteen weeks I was in command. I began by getting to know my people and listened to their concerns. In turn I showed them enthusiasm for our training mission and helped the cadets find value in everyday tasks and duties. I worked alongside my subordinates to show them I was only superior to them in rank and authority, not in personal value. I chose the best cadets/people as my top advisors and reaped the benefits of our balanced personalities. I prepared diligently for public appearances and as a result effectively delivered my thoughts and expectations to the cadet wing.

These principles worked for me and will provide a solid base for any young leader. Use this manuscript as a springboard to more effective leadership, and remember even the slightest bounce will propel you to a higher place.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Chapter 1 – Know Your People……………………………….p.1

II. Chapter 2 – Care About The Mission…………………………p. 12

III. Chapter 3 – Lead By Example………………………………p. 24

IV. Chapter 4 – Be Selfish…………………………………………p. 37

V. Chapter 5 – Be Prepared/Conclusions………………………p. 49

VI. Afterword……………………………………………………p. 57

VII. References……………………………………………………p. 58
CHAPTER 1: KNOW YOUR PEOPLE

The road to effective leadership has several distinct stops. The first step to being an effective leader is to simply know whom you are supposed to lead. This concept seems simple enough but it is often overlooked. Most leaders find themselves in a proverbial ivory tower, looking down on their subjects. The tower is their newly acquired position of authority and their subjects are those subordinate to them. There is no shame in finding oneself in this place. Virtually every leader finds themselves here upon promotion, election, etc. A good leader recognizes this and descends from the tower. Positions carry with them a vested formal authority, regardless of who holds them. Our job as leaders is to handle this authority responsibly.

Some may ask why it is important to know their people. They feel as if their orders are sufficient and any additional contact between authority and subordinate only wastes time. This is a gross misconception. It is critical to know your people and converse with them, even at times, about topics unrelated to work. This is not to say work should be sacrificed for socializing, but rather a necessary break in the everyday discussions of task and duty. No one likes a taskmaster or a bully. It is certainly easy to dole out assignments with little regard for the welfare or wishes of your subordinates. It is even easier still to throw duty to the wind and be the “cool boss” everyone invites to happy hour at the end of business. Neither of these types are leaders. They are at best managers of resources and at worst “one of the guys”. Organizations supervised by these
people will see low production and high disenchantment. An effective leader can be both a boss and friend but must know the appropriate face to wear in a given situation. He must know his subordinates well enough to earn their ear but maintain enough professionalism to keep their respect.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the one exception to the above. Times of conflict call for a different style. This style is meant to overcome the conflict, not make friends. A battlefield commander does not have time to chat with a subordinate while mortar shells explode around them. The commander’s job is to make decisions and give orders. The subordinate’s job is to follow them without question. This is a necessity to avoid hesitation. Indecision can cost lives in a battlefield situation. A good commander has to build up a solid relationship with his subordinates prior to battle so they trust his orders implicitly. I have no experience in war or conflict. I will not pretend to know more about battle then what I briefly stated above. I only introduce that situation to show it as the one exception to my discussion of leadership in the following pages.

American presidents have met adversity when dealing with big problems. Certainly Franklin Delano Roosevelt met adversity head on when he tackled the Great Depression and introduced his New Deal. He led the country into war against the Axis Powers and battled Hitler at the same time he waged his own war on polio. George Washington inherited a nation in need of guidance. Founders/framers squabbled over a federal v. state government. He gave the nation an identity and poured his soul into the newly independent country. Harry Truman grappled with his decision over the controversial atomic bomb. He eventually chose to save the lives of countless American
soldiers by unleashing the most powerful weapon known to mankind. John F. Kennedy stood down the communist threat during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Woodrow Wilson spearheaded the formation of a League of Nations, although it was rejected by his own congress. Our current president, George W Bush is responding to the first large-scale terrorist attack on our mainland. He faces an opponent that opts for deception and underhanded tactics in place of conventional war. All these men contended with great hardship, conflict, and opposition. They are cemented in history because of their resolve and determination. We would do well to study their actions and follow their examples. However, there is one man who rises to the top as our nation’s greatest leader; we would do well to study his example. Abraham Lincoln was faced with the greatest challenge of any American president. The nation, which he inherited in 1861, was for all intents and purposes no longer a nation.

There is certainly precedence for the value in getting to know your people. Abraham Lincoln is perhaps the finest example of this. His style has been described as “roving leadership, being in touch, or getting out of the ivory tower” (Phillips, 1992, p. 14). As president he firmly believed in getting out of his office and putting his finger on the pulse of the American people. He set the precedent for this earlier in his life as a lawyer in Springfield, Illinois. Lincoln the attorney “spent a great deal of time away from home, not only riding the circuit, but also seeking facts and information pertinent to any case he may be working on at the time” (Phillips, 1992, p. 15). Lincoln saw people as an invaluable resource during his time as a lawyer. The 16th President would have scoffed at any leader who questioned the importance of getting to know people. He
“realized that people were a major source of information and that to be a good leader he had to stay close to them” (Phillips, 1992, p. 15). Donald T. Phillips, author of Lincoln on Leadership writes, “Without question, Lincoln’s visibility and open-door policy as president constitute an exemplary model for effective leadership” (Phillips, 1992, p. 15).

We can look to President Lincoln’s example for an answer to the question, “How can I be an effective leader?” Abraham Lincoln knew where to start. He began by trying to know his people. The President’s “basic philosophy was that he would see as many people as often as he possibly could” (Phillips, 1992, p. 16). This is a fine theory, but Lincoln backed up his philosophy with action. He did not close himself off in his ivory tower but rather spent his time talking with advisors, citizens, troops, etc. In fact, “John Nicolay and John Hay, his personal secretaries, reported that Lincoln spent 75 percent of his time meeting with people” (Phillips, 1992, p. 16). He was able to do this by establishing an open door policy to his office. He often allowed many more visitors than his secretaries thought the president had time to see. One Indiana man wrote to Lincoln asking for an audience with the president. The Chief Executive did not scoff at this rather bold request but instead replied, “I do not often decline seeing people who call upon me; and probably will see you if you call” (Phillips, 1992, p. 17). His office policy was unprecedented at the time and will unlikely be duplicated. It is no wonder he has been dubbed “the most accessible chief executive the United States has ever known” (Phillips, 1992, p. 17). It should be noted that following Lincoln’s example too strictly may lead to overextension. At some point you must shut the office door and work alone.
You will note even Lincoln did not spend 100% of his time meeting with people; he allowed time for himself and private work.

President Lincoln’s open-door policy is only half of his leadership style. The other half dealt with his desire to lead by wandering. This style has since been titled MBWA (Managing by Wandering Around). Lincoln of course had no concept of this title since he served as president a full 100 years before Tom Peters and Robert Waterman wrote their book about MBWA titled *In Search of Excellence*. But this is no surprise since like many great leaders Lincoln was ahead of his time. The president extended himself to his subordinates in several ways.

The Chief Executive’s advisors and cabinet members were treated to regular visits. Lincoln “preferred, whenever possible, to interact with people when they were in a more relaxed, less pressure-packed environment” (Phillips, 1992, p. 16). His ultimate goal was not to intimidate or impress his subordinates with power and prestige. His goal was simply to get the job done. Lincoln’s job was to reunify the North and South. He wisely chose to do this by any means necessary with little concern for his personal reputation or popularity. If it was unprecedented yet practical and efficient to meet in his advisor’s office, then so be it. Lincoln would not wait for his regular Tuesday and Friday cabinet meetings but often went to meet his members in their respective offices. This is a lesson any leader or authority figure can take back to his organization. The more contact you have with subordinates on an individual level, the less time will be wasted giving individual direction during group meetings. The group meeting should be comprised
mostly of information pertinent to the whole group or organization, not specific to one member.

Lincoln did not only travel to see his advisors, but also ventured out to meet the very men who fought in the Civil War. Fresh recruits always came through Washington D.C. during the early years of conflict. It is estimated President Lincoln spent parts of as many as 16 days out of his office during one month in 1861. On average he spent a little under half his days each month on the move. It was said, “Wherever the soldiers were, there was Lincoln” (Phillips, 1992, p. 16). He would inspect, greet, speak to and converse with the troops as they made their way to the battlefront. It is likely Lincoln thought little of these encounters. He undoubtedly saw them as his duty and more likely as a pleasure. To the troops they meant much more. Fighting for reunification was certainly a noble cause, but the union soldiers faced confederates fighting for independence. Lincoln provided the union soldiers with a face and persona to rally around when the battles dragged on and the cause looked hopeless. The great leader instilled courage in his troops by saying “it was they who rendered the hardest work in support of the government…it was they who should be given the greatest credit” (Phillips, 1992, p. 19-20). He was trying to convey how important they were to the vision of a unified America. He made the soldiers believe they could defeat an enemy fighting for freedom and protecting its own land. Conversely, neither the King of England nor Lord Cornwallis was able to inspire their redcoats to defeat the colonists a century before.
Lincoln’s visits to his men did not end at the Potomac River. He traveled to the front lines to offer support and guidance to his troops. Often “he’d ride his horse along the lines of troops, waving his stovepipe hat as the men cheered wildly” (Phillips, 1992, p. 19). He didn’t stop at the camp either, but rather accompanied his troops to the front where he exhorted their efforts and sometimes took command of the battle. These actions earned him a unique distinction as the only sitting president to be shot at in battle. Lincoln chose to engage himself directly on the battlefield partly because he realized his lack of experience in the martial arena.

As a result of his generals’ collective ineptitude Lincoln oversaw much of the tactical planning during the Civil War. He often went to the front lines not only to lead but also to learn. This is an invaluable benefit of interacting with people. Lincoln’s natural style enabled him to better learn his position as the head of the Armed Forces. He quickly learned the principles of warfare from his advisors and generals and used his newfound knowledge to personally plan many of the attacks against the South. Herein lies the hidden beauty of “getting to know your people”. This principle serves the obvious benefit of warming your troops’ hearts to the cause but it can also teach you something in return. Phillips describes the president’s Civil War leadership style when he says, “[Lincoln] was doing what all leaders should do. He was acquiring new skills gleaned from his followers through frequent personal contact. Lincoln was learning while on the job” (Phillips, 1992, p. 24). Knowing your people benefits all involved. A wise leader pays attention not only to his people, but also to what his people can teach him. Phillips concisely goes on to say, “By entering your subordinate’s environment-by
establishing frequent human contact—you create a sense of commitment, collaboration, and community. You also gain access to vital information necessary to make effective decisions” (Phillips, 1992, p. 25).

Donald T. Phillips is not the only man to observe Lincoln’s example. The wisest leaders appreciate the importance of getting to know their people. Colonel J.R. Richards, USAF, served as vice commander for two different wing commanders at Davis-Montham AFB, AZ. Each commander had his own style of leadership. One chose to remain in the office for the majority of the day writing emails, pouring over documents, and correcting grammatical errors found in staff reports. He liked to know minute details about the day-to-day operations of all those underneath him. This is a daunting task considering there are 8,200 military and civilian employees on base. The other commander chose to spend less time in the office and more time on the flight line and in the various squadrons on base. He spent this time shaking hands and talking to his subordinate commanders and enlisted troops. He left Colonel Richards in charge of the day-to-day operation of the base and asked simply for one-page memos describing any notable events or actions. He saw himself as a more useful leader out among his people than cooped up in an office.

Both commanders probably believed they were doing the right thing. The former thought the more time he spent giving orders and reading documents the more would get done. The latter believed he could accomplish more by interacting with his troops on a personal basis. It is easy to imagine which leader was ultimately more effective in accomplishing the mission of the unit. The troops responded better to the commander who took time to meet them individually and shied away from the one who only dealt
with them through electronic correspondence. In the words of Colonel Richards, “One of
these men made general, one of them did not. I leave it to you to decide which one”. (J.
R. Richards, Colonel USAF, personal communication, January 17, 2003). The ultimate
goal of any effective leader should not be rank progression. Personal achievement should
be a pleasant byproduct of accomplishing the mission and taking care of your people. In
the case of the second commander, he enjoys the respect of an entire Air Force Wing as
well as a general’s star on his shoulder.

A first name goes a long way. As Cadet Wing Commander of AFROTC (Air
Force Reserve Officer Training Corps), Detachment 640, I was responsible for 125 cadets
in the fall of 2002. Simply put, my mission was to train freshmen and sophomores
(General Military Course-GMC) for summer boot camp, and prepare juniors and seniors
(Professional Officer Course-POC) for active duty in the Air Force. I stressed
professionalism and military customs and courtesies throughout the semester. I expected
the underclassmen to call upperclassmen “sir” and “maam” (per AFROTC regulations),
and I expected the juniors and seniors to show the freshmen and sophomores an equal
amount of respect. I ensured that I showed them this level of respect by learning each
cadet’s first and last name within the first two weeks. This may seem like an easy task
and in hindsight it was. It made me wonder why no past commanders had chosen to do
this. Only the commanders I knew socially referred to me by first name. I had no
delusions of hanging out with all 125 cadets socially, but that was no excuse not to know
their names.
It is amazing how seriously people in ROTC can take themselves. The ivory tower phenomenon has been in place at Detachment 640 since I was a freshman. The impression given to underclassmen is they are close to useless because of age and lack of experience. This attitude plagues some but not all of the upperclassmen each year. The way I see it my status is a result of seniority, not because I am a better person or more important than younger cadets. My experience gave me the tools to lead Detachment 640, not the right to rule it with an iron fist. As a result of my style I noticed an interesting response from the 125 cadets below me. Cadet Miller turned his head a little quicker, worked a little harder and hustled a little more when I referred to him as Casey. The look on Cadet Browne’s face when I called her Katie was one of surprise and respect for my attention to detail. Casey, Katie and the rest of the cadets appreciated the relatively little time I took to learn their names. As a result they listened when I asked for 45 stadium ushers (10 more than usual) at the Iowa game. I had gotten their attention as a group, and I knew I had their ears when it was time to get work done. When game time approached, they didn’t let me down. All 45 cadets, plus two extra volunteers showed up at eight A.M. on a Saturday morning to usher 8 hours of Miami football. The money earned from ushering went to all the cadets, not in their 47 pockets. They worked for me, but more important they worked for each other. I couldn’t be more pleased with the performance of all 125 cadets in the fall of 2002.

Abraham Lincoln reunified the North and South. He did this by inspiring his troops through personal contact but also learning on the job with his generals and advisors. The commander of Davis-Montham AFB, AZ earned the respect of his subordinates by
visiting them in their place of work. I got the attention of 125 cadets by simply paying attention to them. A first name and a handshake really do go a long way.
CHAPTER 2: CARE ABOUT THE MISSION

Knowing your people is a good start to effective leadership. I mentioned in the last chapter that using a person’s first name goes a long way. This is true up to a point. A pitcher can excel in high school and college with little other than a strong arm. If he does not take his game up a notch and learn the weaknesses of the opposing batters he will never play professional baseball. A serious athlete cannot rest on the laurels of physical strength, but must become a passionate student of the game. Similarly, a leader must have a passion for his/her mission. This passion fuels their everyday activities. Subordinates can easily spot a leader who does not care about his work or his people. It is a fine thing to shake every subordinate’s hand, but if it is obvious you don’t genuinely care, it is a waste of time. The job of a leader is to motivate his people to achieve the mission. If you don’t exude enthusiasm about the mission there is little chance your troops will.

It is possible to accomplish a mission without caring. Dictating, demanding and browbeating will get the job done for a period of time. Your subordinates will be so afraid of incurring your anger or losing their jobs they will do their work. A combat squadron’s mission may be to drop ordnance on a target in order to take out an enemy’s line of communication. The mission can be considered a success if the bombs fall on target, but the commander should have an additional goal in mind. He should be concerned for the welfare and morale of his pilots and troops.
By nature people have needs and one of those is to feel worthwhile and accepted. It is part of a leader’s job to ensure this need is satisfied for his people. This is not to say the commander must act as psychologist to his subordinates. He must however tie these needs to mission accomplishment and everyone completing their job to the best of their ability. The easiest way to do this is by fostering it in him. A leader’s enthusiasm and genuine concern for the organization and the mission is infectious. Management can be taught with the proper schooling and or training. Someone can learn how to run an organization in textbooks and seminars, but these cannot teach someone how to feel or regulate their emotions. This challenge is ultimately left to the individual. You must have a desire to see your organization succeed and you must instill that same fire in your subordinates. Numb, anesthetic leadership is really just management. Leadership requires emotion. Positive emotion motivates and invigorates an organization. A motivated organization efficiently accomplishes both operational and morale-oriented missions.

Dwight D. Eisenhower served as Supreme Allied Commander for Operation Overlord during World War II. He was responsible for planning and executing the invasion of Normandy and liberating the French from Hitler’s army. His task was more complex than most of us can possibly imagine. The commander was not only responsible for planning the tactical and operational missions for the entire European theater; in addition, he had to appease the egos of all his subordinate generals (British and American). Eisenhower also had to achieve timely progress in order to satisfy his superiors in America and their counterparts in Great Britain. There is no doubt the
general had much on his mind as he spent a great deal of his time poring over maps and meeting with advisors. He slept little and smoked a great deal of cigarettes each day. He was under constant stress to perform and defeat the enemy. It would have been very easy for Eisenhower to see the war as a map game. He was required to spend so much time planning the attacks that he didn’t have as much time as he would have like to meet the men going into battle. It would have been easy for him to become detached from the reality and brutality of war and see each casualty as a statistic instead of a life. No one could have faulted him for devoting so much time to planning Hitler’s defeat.

Eisenhower would have faulted himself. The general was a driven and ambitious man, but he was not without compassion. He could not detach himself from the blood shed during the war. When the allied troops broke the stalemate at Falaise and won the battle for France, Eisenhower toured the battlefield. He did not have to walk among the dead soldiers, but he chose to. He saw firsthand how hellish war could be. The general commented, “It was literally possible to walk for hundreds of yards at a time, stepping on nothing but dead and decaying flesh” (Burk, 1986, p. 85). It is obvious that Eisenhower cared enough to see the sacrifices his men made on the battlefield. It helped him remember that the X’s and O’s he moved around the map were human lives. As a result, human casualties were always a consideration in the general’s battle plans.

Eisenhower always had to be wary that his superiors were satisfied and his general staff was pleased with their roles in battle planning and execution. He could have found himself bogged down with these considerations and lost sight of the overall mission. He realized above all his job was to win the war on the front, not gain favor
with his superiors or engage in the petty squabbling of his subordinates. He showed a true commitment to the defeat of Hitler and Nazism. In fact “it was Eisenhower, in perhaps his finest hour as a field commander, who most quickly grasped the possibilities of counterattack presented by the German gamble in the Ardennes…it offered a fresh opportunity to destroy the Wehrmacht once and for all in open battle” (Burk, 1986, p. 88). He did not want victory for personal glory. He wanted to defeat Nazism. His satisfaction over its defeat was evident after the liberation of a Nazi death camp at Ohrdruf Nord, Gotha. He displayed his compassion for the millions who died in concentration camps at the hands of the Nazis. This was no easy task, for the “sight and stench of corpses were everywhere; so revolting was the scene that battle-hardened soldiers turned ashen” (Burk, 1986, p. 91). General Eisenhower was able to see firsthand exactly what he had been fighting against since his arrival in Europe. The commander, “aware as perhaps never before of the full extent of the Nazi horror, refused to yield to his nausea and willed himself into viewing every inch of the camp before finally agreeing to leave” (Burk, 1986, p. 91). Eisenhower had a huge responsibility as Supreme Allied Commander. He accomplished the military objective when Germany surrendered on May 7, 1945. He achieved this by not losing sight of the men who would bring this victory to Europe. He did not overlook the loss of human life and showed he genuinely cared about their sacrifices and the spirit of their mission. As a result he defeated the Germans and returned to the United States a hero. No hero has ever been a manager first, but always a leader.
During his time as president (1861-1865) Abraham Lincoln exhibited a deep concern for preservation of the Union. He refused to allow the southern states to secede. He had sought office of the United States, not merely the north. He did not want to teach the south a lesson when he authorized the engagement of union troops with southern rebels. He was not trying to hit the south with an iron fist but rather coerce them to return to the union with the only means remaining. Debate and diplomacy had failed to convince the south to remain and they saw secession as their only means of survival. Lincoln understood their concerns but did not see a split in the union as the proper solution.

Throughout the war the president made his concern for northern victory quite evident. He realized he was fighting for the future of a great nation and embraced this burden head on. Not only was Lincoln heavily involved in the battle plans but also he also vigilantly awaited the results of each conflict. This does not mean he merely sat in his office and waited for a messenger to bring the news. In fact he often traveled to the War Department to hear the news firsthand. “Sometimes during critical battles Lincoln made the trek two or three times a day, and once in a while he even spent the night in the telegraph office waiting for dispatches from the field” (Phillips, 1992, p. 17). A more vivid account of Lincoln’s concern was seen during the Seven Days campaign (June 25 – July 1, 1862). During the battle, “General Alexander Pope recalled the president spending many hours on Stanton’s sofa waiting for news and looking depressed and anxious” (Phillips, 1992, p. 17). These are just a few examples of the president’s vigilance. The description of a depressed and anxious president paints a picture of a man
who genuinely cared about his cause. Lincoln behaved much like a family member who sits in a hospital waiting room for any news of their loved one. The president saw the union as his family and waited anxiously for any news of its condition.

Lincoln also showed his compassion on an individual level. He cared not only for the reunification of the states, but also for the people involved in this endeavor. He not only met the soldiers as they marched through Washington, but also visited the very same men after they fell under the sword of the South. As president, “Lincoln visited the wounded in hospitals and private residences and attended funerals any time such an occasion presented itself” (Phillips, 1992, p. 20). Lincoln saw the importance of supporting those troops who died or were wounded fighting not only for the cause, but also for him. He extended this attention to everyone from common foot soldiers to his most direct subordinates. After Lincoln verified the surrender of Richmond he made his return to Washington, not under the banner of triumph and glory, but with the intent to visit his advisor, William Seward. As was “typical of the man…he had to visit is friend, the secretary of state who, while Lincoln was gone, had suffered an accident and was bedridden” (Phillips, 1992, p. 25). These acts of compassion certainly had their impact. Lincoln’s “striking visible display of compassion and caring…inspired trust, loyalty, and admiration not just from the soldiers but also from his subordinates” (Phillips, 1992, p. 20). By caring about the cause and about his people he instilled the type of morale and motivation that is necessary to success in any organization. Lincoln’s success is remarkable in that it resulted in the reunification of the United States of America. His example can be applied to accomplish any mission, big or small.
Billy Mitchell is a great example of a man who cared more about his cause than himself. Mitchell served as a Brigadier General in the Army during the First World War. He commanded 850 planes devoted to seeking out lost battalions. His command’s impact on the war was minimal on a grand scale, but it left a lasting impression. “Battle had ignited the spirits and inflamed the imaginations of Mitchell and other ambitious young officers” (Perret, 1993, p. 5). Mitchell became the most adamant supporter of the Air Service. He carried his dedication to new heights. This fervor cost him much in the ensuing years, but he refused to be silent. He devoted himself entirely to promoting the Air Service and eventually lobbying for its separation from the Army as an independent branch of the military.

Mitchell strongly believed the key to winning the next war would lie in air superiority. He believed “the primary objective had to be the enemy air force. Once you’d wrecked that, you could observe, bomb, attack, whatever” (Perret, 1993, p. 7). Most Army foot soldiers disagreed with this brash statement and Mitchell’s own boss, the director of Air Service, called for the pilot’s dismissal. Mitchell was allowed to stay and spent much of his time visiting the various flying squadrons to inspect aircraft. It was a difficult time for the Air Service though and the General’s main goal became keeping the service alive (Perret, 1993, p. 6). Billy Mitchell was the perfect spokesman for the Air Service. Mitchell’s popularity among other pilots was unmatched. “Most pilots either worshipped Billy or, if they were feeling iconoclastic, settled for some less enraptured state, such as admiration” (Perret, 1993, p. 8). Despite his controversial nature, other pilots respected Mitchell not only for his skill in the cockpit but also his deep passion for
the advancement of their profession. The pioneer’s “greatest contribution in these years was sustaining morale.” (Perret, 1993, p. 8)

Mitchell used not only his charismatic personality but also his superior flying ability to rally the spirits of other airmen. He put on heart stopping aerial shows, which “whipped up excitement and enthusiasm throughout a service that needed to believe in itself” (Perret, 1993, p. 8). Billy Mitchell is the quintessential example of a leader who truly cared about his people and cause.

The controversial aviator did not limit his enthusiasm to other airmen. Mitchell sought support from politicians and the press for an independent air force. He found “no shortage of politicians or journalists ready to take his appeals…beyond the tight little world of the Air Service” (Perret, 1993, p. 6). With such friends on his side, Mitchell began to issue more statements about the importance of air power. He angered the Navy brass when he declared planes were now the first line of defense against coastal attack, replacing battleships. After a series of impressive displays where Air Service planes sunk naval vessels, the prospect of an independent air force was given a hard look.

Unfortunately, just as it seemed Mitchell would finally have his air force, one of his greatest supporters, Warren G. Harding, left office in return for Calvin Coolidge. President Coolidge would not tolerate Mitchell’s outbursts and saw that the aviator be demoted to Colonel and sent away from Washington to command the VIII Corps in San Antonio.

This slap in the face left Mitchell sour. However, instead of shutting him up, the demotion only led to a stronger push for his independent air force. The new commander
of VIII corps wrote a book, *Winged Defense*, and spoke to the media about his dislike for the Army General Staff. He blamed the Staff for the stagnation and near decline of the Air Service. He received a more public forum when he appeared as the first witness in the Morrow Committee’s investigation into the possibility of an independent air force. He ranted on about the future dominance of the air service to the point “even his friends grew bored and increasingly embarrassed” (Perret, 1993, p. 12). Mitchell did not care. He believed so strongly in an independent air force he was willing to risk his reputation for the hope one day his dream would become reality.

As if to pour salt in the wound, Mitchell was also courts-martialed for “conduct prejudicial to good order and discipline” (Perret, 1993, p. 12). Although the trial all but forced Mitchell to resign his commission, it provided he and his supporters another chance to publicly voice their opinions in favor of an independent air force. The airmen’s voices did not go unheard. Their pleas were partially met by the Morrow Committee’s conclusions. The committee did not award an independent service but did create a more autonomous Air Corps, a better procurement program for aircraft and an assistant secretary of war for aviation (Perret, 1993, p. 13). The U.S. Army Corps nearly doubled in size in the five years after its creation in July of 1926. The spirited aviator “had won even as he lost: He’d lost his fight to stay in the Army, but won his fight to get Coolidge and Congress to take military aviation seriously” (Perret, 1993, p. 13). Mitchell sacrificed his career to pave the way for aviators who came after him. The former General epitomized the idea of service before self. He was truly a leader who accomplished his mission with an emotion and passion that spread to those around him.
Geoffrey Perret agrees, “If leadership is the ability to inspire people to do things they think they don’t want to do, Mitchell really had it” (Perret, 1993, p. 17). He inspired his men through enthusiasm and motivation. If Mitchell was a good pilot, he was an even better leader.

Eisenhower, Lincoln and Mitchell faced serious challenges and met them head on with determination and compassion. Their stories can be studied and utilized by leaders at any level. While my mission as Cadet Wing Commander was less than romantic it was nonetheless challenging. In order to train underclassmen for field training I had to instill motivation in the cadets and maintain high morale throughout the entire cadet wing. Just as Eisenhower, et al., accomplished their respective missions with compassion, I too had to be cognizant of my cadets’ welfare. This principle is especially applicable to Air Force ROTC because much of what we do is voluntary. Cadets are only required to spend three hours per week involved in cadet activities. These include a weekly Leadership Laboratory and a leadership seminar specific to their university standing (freshman, sophomore, etc.) However, it takes more than three hours per week to prepare a cadet for field training. There is simply too much information to squeeze into such a small amount of time.

The challenge I faced was to motivate cadets to participate in voluntary activities aimed at better preparing them for field training. The solution to this lies within the explanation. I admitted our mission is not as glamorous as that of a paratrooper dropped behind enemy lines and at times our training seems simplistic and repetitive, but it serves a purpose. Our purpose is not to train with weapons and planes in hopes of being called
overseas, for we are not ready to meet that calling. We are at Miami University to become officers first; upon graduation we are ready to train for combat or mission support. I presented our program as a necessary step on the ladder of national defense, in this way our mission is meaningful. Every quality hour we spend preparing for the next step enables us to arrive there with a full arsenal of knowledge and confidence in our abilities.

When I looked at ROTC in that light I found myself excited about our role, albeit a relatively small one, in the defense of freedom. I did not smirk at the weekly physical training but saw it as a chance to build teamwork and a stronger wing of cadets. I appreciated the value of drill (marching) practice as a necessary building block. You must first be able to command a small group of cadets before you can ever hope to lead the entire wing, a maintenance shop, or fighter squadron. ROTC builds leaders. Those who embrace the training become warriors in their own right.

My enthusiasm for our training mission became infectious. Soon many of the cadets saw a purpose in what they were doing. Esprit de corps continued to rise. When we played the Navy ROTC in our annual football game, 100 of 125 Air Force cadets cheered us on. We had only five supporters the year before. Enthusiasm mounted when we brought four Black Hawk helicopters from Rickenbacker, AFB for Lead Lab. We had to move the Lab to a Saturday in place of the regular Thursday class time, but excitement did not wane. I was very pleased when all but two cadets attended the special event. They did so for the incentive rides but also because of their enthusiasm for the program.
Cadets were willing to volunteer their time and rearrange schedules because they appreciated the spirit of our mission.

While Lincoln, Eisenhower and Mitchell may have embraced exceptional missions; their example can be applied at any level. My staff and I found purpose in our mission at Miami University and were able to rally the troops because we truly cared.
CHAPTER 3: LEAD BY EXAMPLE

In the previous two chapters I discussed how to communicate with your people. I explained the importance of first knowing your subordinates and then inspiring them to accomplish the mission. However, the right words and genuine feelings are only a part of effective leadership. You must also lead by example.

Nothing shows dedication to the organization and your people better than getting your hands dirty. This is a fine line to walk because too much work alongside your people could be perceived as micromanagement and may weaken the boss-subordinate relationship. Micromanagement occurs when you delegate over the head of your top advisors and go directly to their subordinates. It is not micromanagement to work alongside a subordinate as long as you are there purely as manpower and not as supervisor. Likewise, I see no danger from engaging in the same work as your subordinates. Some may say it drops you to their level and lessens your authority. These people suffer from ‘ivory tower syndrome’ and need to get out of the office more. Sharing work with subordinates does not jeopardize your relationship but may actually strengthen the bond.

It is important to show subordinates you would not demand anything of them you are unwilling to do yourself. The flawed axiom “do as I say and not as I do” may be an acceptable way to parent, but not to lead. This does not mean you have to put in the same number of man-hours as your subordinates. Consider a continuum where the number of
hours you spend working alongside your people (x) is directly related to your effectiveness as a leader (y). The continuum forms a steady curve upward as you spend more time with your subordinates. Your people see their leader is willing to get his hands dirty and are consequently more willing to do their job. However, there is a place on the curve called the ‘point of diminishing return’. At this point, x and y are inversely related and your leadership ability suffers as you spend more time working hands on. There is no universal point of diminishing return, rather this is something you must be wary of and discover for yourself.

Leading by example involves more than working hands on with your people. You lead with your words, actions, attitude and confidence. All of these are based on your values and morals. No leader can fake his way through an assignment; his true personality will inevitably show through. Who you are as a person directly influences your leadership style. In order to lead by example you must have a value base to draw from. Someone once said, “A man who stands for nothing, will fall for anything”. Similarly, a leader who stands for nothing will fail regularly. Think of a politician who must take a stand on issues of abortion, gun control, social security, etc. If he merely takes a position for the sake of choosing a side it will be evident to his audience and he will eventually be exposed as a fraud. The same goes for leaders in general. They must base their leadership style on principles and morals instead of relying on quick talk and false posturing. Those methods may bring very immediate success but long-term effective leadership is built on a more solid foundation. Just as a band-aid does not cure a gunshot wound, neither can an unprincipled leader accomplish the mission.
I base my principles on the Air Force Core Values: Integrity First, Service Before Self and Excellence In All We Do. They provide a solid foundation for someone like me just beginning to develop a leadership style. The first core value expects us to do the right thing, even when no one is looking. Noted religious leader, James L. Garlow exhorts young leaders to “above all, acquire integrity” (Garlow, 2002, p. 89). This is no easy task, for often times we are tempted with the opportunity to take immoral shortcuts to temporary success. But you must ask yourself, at what price integrity? For a true leader, there can be no price, unlike charm and wit, integrity cannot be ignored in the first place, nor sacrificed at any time. Garlow agrees, “If you have to choose between charisma and character, choose character” (Garlow, 2002, p. 87). Certainly there are times when a white lie may help your significant other feel good about their appearance or allow your child to believe in Santa Claus for one more year. These are obvious and do not fall under the umbrella of integrity that I speak of. Integrity cannot be sacrificed when dealing with coworkers and/or the mission because once trust is broken, it can never be regained. Mistrust destroys any meaningful relationship, including those between boss and subordinate. Garlow (2002) illustrates, “Mistrust overshadows accomplishments [and] ability” (p. 86). This is to say no matter how talented you are; there is no substitute for integrity. The C.E.O.s of WorldCom and Enron learned firsthand you couldn’t run a corrupt business and expect to be successful for long. This holds true for the leader of any organization. Shortcuts may reap immediate rewards but will soon after lead to mistrust and ultimately failure.
Members of the armed forces pledge to serve the people of the United States regardless of any inconvenience that may incur. We agree to place the needs of the country ahead of our personal needs because we believe the defense of freedom is a nobler cause than any selfish needs or ambitions. This is not an easy sacrifice to make, but it is a necessary one. As Dwight D. Eisenhower said, “We must be ready to dare all for our country. For history does not long entrust the care of freedom to the weak and timid”. The former president nicely sums up not only the need for the armed services, but also the imperative concept of service before self. Sacrifice can come in many forms for a member of the military but certainly the ultimate sacrifice is to give one’s life for their country. This possibility is made abundantly clear to any new member of the armed services. Even though many soldiers, airmen and sailors will never have to make this sacrifice, the willingness to give their life for the mission is at the heart of service before self.

There are other ways to show your commitment to service than by giving your life. Every time a soldier deploys overseas he is making a sacrifice by leaving his family and friends to live in a foreign land and defend the freedom of Americans and our allies. Sometimes these deployments occur shortly after the birth of a child, at the time of a loved one’s illness or during the holiday season. Dedicated soldiers do not look for a way out of this commitment but rather embrace the opportunity to battle oppression and tyranny head on.

Military officers sacrifice the potential for a greater salary in order to meet a higher calling to national defense. As a senior at Miami University I am inundated with
stories about lavish business recruiting techniques and generous salaries. Prospective employers routinely pamper job candidates with limousines and expensive accommodations to entice the graduating seniors. I have heard some students say they will make up to $85,000 their first year in the workforce!! The take home salary for a new second lieutenant is $36,000 per year. I believe those students earned their position with hard work, study and experience. However, I would venture to say they spent no more time in those endeavors than I have spent preparing for active duty through various ROTC training. I am not trying to say that I deserve a higher salary, merely pointing out one type of sacrifice a young officer makes to serve his country. I am comfortable with my decision and hold no grudges against those who make more money in the private sector. To do so would be hypocritical since part of my calling is to defend their right to enjoy a capitalist economy and all its benefits.

Even the smallest sacrifice teaches a valuable lesson to young leaders in the armed forces. Officers must be willing to sacrifice if they truly want to be leaders. Garlow does not mince words when he says, “sacrifice is one of the ‘tickets’ that lets you in the door of leadership. This ticket costs. It isn’t cheap. But if you want in, you must have one” (Garlow, 2002, p. 249). Part of the reason for this lies in the idea of leading by example. Garlow points out, “When the leader sacrifices, so do the followers” (Garlow, 2002, p. 236). What is the likelihood a soldier would embrace overseas deployment if his commander groaned and complained about the separation from his family and hometown? The soldier models his behavior after the officer, and a good officer recognizes “leaders sacrifice first” (Garlow, 2002, p. 236). Francis Asbury fathered the
18th century Methodist explosion in America by encouraging young men to spread the word on horseback up and down the east coast. He was only able to elicit this type of participation because he unselfishly rode as much if not more than his followers through the elements at great risk to his health (Garlow, 2002, p. 236). A good leader is not concerned with personal gain or accomplishment, but makes necessary sacrifices for the good of the organization. Colin Powell agrees leadership “is not rank, privilege, titles, or money. It’s responsibility” (Garlow, 2002, p. 88). Part of this responsibility is the willingness to sacrifice without public complaint. A leader, who sacrifices and lets everyone know it, does not grasp the spirit of sacrifice. Subordinates will follow your actions, so put service before self silently and let your integrity do the talking.

My grandfather had a saying that anything worth doing in the first place is worth doing right. This should apply for everything we do in life, but especially to the mission of military officers. Conversely, the phrase “good enough for government work” should never apply, certainly not in the armed forces. The Air Force strives to achieve excellence in all we do. This is not a goal but a necessity for any military service. If a pilot flies his mission a little sloppy because of poor preparation then he risks not only mission failure but also injury to himself and others. An air battle manager must be able to distinguish between different symbols on his radar or he may direct a pilot to attack friendly aircraft. If the mission calls for an air strike on enemy industry, the pilot must ensure he hits the proper target to avoid civilian casualties. These are not just hypothetical scenarios but real life examples of otherwise competent Air Force officers who failed to excel just once and cost the lives of innocent allies or bystanders.
A corollary to this core value is something known as the “fighter pilot mentality”. It deals more with achieving positive results and less with avoiding negative outcomes. Colonel Richards describes the fighter pilot mentality as “No matter what the mission, time or place, I’m going to do the best damn job I can because that’s my assignment”. (J. R. Richards, Colonel USAF, personal communication, February 27, 2003). Pilots believe every mission is important and it is a matter of self-respect to do the best job you possibly can. This is a great rule for all leaders to live by and you do not need to be a pilot to have this mentality. Anyone who believes in giving their best every time will always do the best job they can. The result of this is positive results and forward progress. A leader who worries about making mistakes will always look over their shoulder to see who is watching whereas a leader who believes in giving all they have for every mission will be looking ahead and achieve success.

History is full of men who led by example, but one man epitomized the values of a great leader, Robert E. Lee. Regardless of what side he commanded during the Civil War, we can learn a great deal from Lee conducted himself and led his troops. The great general started his legacy at the Military Academy at West Point. Lee put much stock in strong character and said “Obedience to lawful authority is the foundation of manly character” (Garlow, 2002, p. 82). This devotion to character carried Lee through a very successful career at West Point (Second in his class and no demerits!) and eventually developed into a strong sense of integrity. His integrity helped Lee make many important decisions concerning the impending Civil War. The general put service to his state before any personal desires when he turned down an offer from President Lincoln to
command the North’s army. It would have probably been more prestigious to keep his commission and command the larger, wealthier North army, but Lee chose to fight on the side of his home state because he couldn’t in good conscience go to war with Virginia (Garlow, 2002, p. 83). The general had his priorities straight and agreed to command the more ragtag rebel army of the South.

History should not judge Lee for the uniform he wore during the Civil War but rather for the type of man he was. To illustrate his character British Field Marshall Viscount Wolseley had this to say about the southern general:

I have met many great men of my time, but Lee alone impressed me with the feeling that I was in the presence of a man who was cast in a grander mold and made of different and finer metal than all other men...When Americans can review the history of the War...with calm impartiality...I believe he will be regarded not only as the most prominent figure of the Confederacy, but as the greatest American of the 19th century. (Garlow, 2002, p. 84-5)

High-ranking generals were not the only ones who thought so highly of Lee. His own men would verify Wolseley’s comments from first hand experience. Unlike early Northern generals who made decisions from comfortable offices, Lee traveled with his troops onto the field and called the shots while literally dodging bullets. He remained on the battlefield in order to make the timeliest decisions, but it also showed he didn’t value his life above that of his troops on the frontline. His men certainly noticed this and took very strongly to their general. One of his generals, Henry Wise once said, “Ah General Lee, these men are not fighting for the Confederacy: they are fighting for you” (Garlow, 2002, p. 84). In a way this is misleading. Lee was himself undoubtedly fighting for the Confederacy and by exhorting the troops to fight for him; he was in essence encouraging
them to fight for the South. No matter how you look at it his men “fought for him because he fought alongside them” (Garlow, 2002, p. 84) and he won many battles on the backs of these hard fighting men. They respected Lee’s integrity, courage and service to his state and were willing to fight to the death in their general’s name. Garlow sums up by saying “He was, in every way, a man worth following. He was the solid rock on which [the troops] stood” (Garlow, 2002, p. 85). Lee is not only the type of leader we should all strive to be, but also the type of man we should all want to become. As Garlow points out, “To be a good leader, focus on being good before you focus on being a leader” (Garlow, 2002, p. 81). Lee certainly did this and took his place among the very greatest leaders in our country’s history.

My grandfather would have loved to hear Colonel Richard’s description of the fighter pilot mentality, partly because I believe he lived their principles but also because he suffered under poor leadership during his first two years of service in World War II. My grandfather served in the U.S. Army Air Forces both in Africa and Italy. His first assignment was as base vehicle dispatcher. He was responsible for signing out jeeps and various other vehicles to soldiers and officers for official and private use. Here is what he had to say about the officers he worked for at Mondolfo-Marotta AB, Italy:

The reason I quit using the typewriter is because I was just pissed off by one of the Officers…Last night a couple of guys had a jeep on a pleasure cruise & came in a little late. Well right away they took their names & put them on a shit list as a far as jeeps are concerned. So tonight I dispatch a jeep with 4 other guys on a trip & the dirty bastard wouldn’t sign the ticket. You see what he is doing is just screwing up everybody instead of just the guys that came in late. This Officer is Capt. Litt, a guy from New York who…never had a break in his life I guess…The thing that gets me is that the Officers are still allowed to go riding around regardless of what time they come in. He once said if he had his way the enlisted wouldn’t have any trans. because they are only here to serve the Officers. It’s the same way all over. All they think we are is a bunch of rotten scum too
dumb to do or be anything. Boy, all I want to do is get out of the Army so that I can do what the hell I please. (E. Z. Szczepanik, personal communication, July 8, 1945)

I presented the letter in its near entirety because I think it is the best example of poor leadership I have ever read first hand. My grandfather worked for a man who represented the antithesis of leading by example. As a result, Captain Litt fostered the type of workplace that led not only to serious discontent but also drove my grandfather to hate the institution as a whole. Sometimes we learn best from other’s mistakes. There is much to learn from Capt Litt’s ineffective leadership and lack of concern for his troops. Fortunately my grandfather had a much better impression of the Army when he worked aircraft maintenance. In a different letter he wrote “I feel sorry for a poor officer like him when this war ends. He ought to be one of the officers like we have. He would soon change. These pilots are just like regular fellows and not some stuffed shirt, salute happy jerk” (E. Z. Szczepanik, personal communication, August 7, 1944). If we hope to be effective leaders it would be wise to follow the example of those officers my grandfather respected and resist any urges to behave like the arrogant Capt Litt.

From our first year in ROTC we are taught to, above all, lead by example. The underclassmen look up to the POC as their main source of information and behavior. The challenge to the POC is to set the standard for the underclassmen (General Military Course – GMC) and then adhere to it. There are many events at which we encourage or require underclassmen participation. Some of these events include ushering football games and attending physical training. We make most of our money by ushering home football games during the fall semester. The athletic department asks our detachment to
supply 35 cadets for each game. The Command Staff (the cadet wing commander and his
five advisors) randomly assign cadets to usher each week. We take a fair amount from
each class so the upperclassmen share an equal burden with the freshmen and
sophomores. Ushering is not the most desirable job since it requires the cadets to arrive
at Yager Stadium on Saturday morning at eight a.m. My staff and I decided the best way
to motivate our cadets would be to show up each week regardless of whether we were
scheduled. It was the first time in my four years of ushering that we were fully staffed
for an entire season. We never had fewer than 35 cadets and often had as many as 40.

Physical training (PT) occurs every Tuesday at four pm. Although PT is optional
it is highly encouraged that all cadets attend each week. Of course it is unrealistic to
expect perfect attendance for an entire semester so we ask cadets who cannot attend on a
given week to type an official memo explaining why they missed. This is by no means
punishment but was initially used as a deterrent for those who would skip PT. It was
only marginally effective and the memos just became shorter and more sarcastic as cadets
came up with more excuses to skip. PT had always been more heavily attended by
underclassmen, since upperclassmen saw it as their senior right to skip. It was clear the
upperclassmen were not setting the example. PT became mandatory for upperclassmen,
but official excuses were permitted (e.g. work) as long as a memo was submitted. This
sort of solved the problem, but attendance still lacked. Traditionally Command Staff did
not attend PT because they believed their time could be used ‘more effectively’. When
my staff and I took over we made a commitment to each other to attend PT each week
and lend a positive presence to the training. We realized how hypocritical it was to
expect other upperclassmen let alone freshmen and sophomores to attend PT if the highest commanders could not spare one hour of each week to work out with the wing. Our participation took some of the sting out of the mandatory attendance and set a precedent for future Command Staffs.

The upperclassmen example does not end with ushering and PT. Behavior is watched as closely if not more so than attendance. The upperclassmen expect the GMC to treat them as cadet officers and render all the appropriate customs and courtesies. This includes saluting upperclassmen when in uniform, referring to POC as sir/maam, etc. This is part of the training environment in every Air Force ROTC unit in America. How the POC handle this authority differs from one detachment to another. Some units may encourage bully tactics where the underclassmen are treated more like non-equals and expected to complete all the dirty work and serve the upperclassmen. My discussion of leadership by example should tell you this is not an effective way to run a unit.

At Miami University we employ respect and common courtesy. Upperclassmen have earned the right to be addressed as cadet officers, but they do not have the right to treat GMC like garbage. Nothing upset me more than hearing some of my lower commanders refer to freshmen as “plebes” and “knobs”. These are derogatory terms adopted from the Naval Academy and The Citadel. Those institutions operate differently from ROTC, and it is unrealistic to implement their hierarchy in our university setting. We do not have the power to demand much of our cadets at Miami University. Therefore we must motivate them to perform by positive means, not scare tactics. The Air Force traditionally takes care of its people; this must be true in ROTC as well.
We have many examples of how to lead by example. It is our responsibility to embrace the principles of men like Robert E. Lee, learn from the lessons of ineffective leaders and find strength in our own personal values. Once we can integrate all these sources into our own leadership style we can truly begin to set the example for others. All higher callings involve sacrifice, but there is strength in giving to your people and to the mission.
CHAPTER 4: BE SELFISH

I have discussed how learning names, caring about your mission and setting the example will make you an effective leader. However, you cannot do it alone. No leader can run an organization alone and expect to succeed. You will burn out from an overload of work and responsibility. The fourth step on the ladder of effective leadership is to appoint good advisors, but many considerations must go into choosing a productive staff. Every leader has direct subordinates to absorb some of the pressure and work. Each president has a cabinet, every general subordinate commanders and every coach assistants. A wise leader recognizes rugged individualism, while romantic, is not an effective leadership style. You must pick a good staff that works not only with you, but also for you.

First and foremost you must pick people who are best for the job. Before I became Cadet Wing Commander (CW/CC) I received some very valuable advice from then cadet, now Second Lieutenant Steve Baker. He was a former CW/CC and offered these words of advice: “Don’t do anyone any favors. Be selfish”. (S. N. Baker, Second Lieutenant USAF, personal communication, October 15, 2001). This is of course where I got the name for this chapter, but his advice is not unprecedented. It is unfair to the organization and its members to choose people on anything less than merit. Former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani has much to say on this topic. He agrees leaders must “find the person best suited for the job. Period.” (Giuliani, 2002, p. 99). In his particular case
the mayor tried to avoid the perception that political patronage played a part in any of his appointments. He clarified, “Patronage does not mean giving a job to someone who supported you politically. It means giving a job to someone only because he supported you politically” (Giuliani, 2002, p. 99). Surely you will appoint people who support your ideas, this is expected, but that must be the primary reason if there can be any perceived patronage. Likewise, it is unwise to select someone for a position they are totally unqualified for. Giuliani admits “You might think you’re being a nice guy by finding a job for someone who doesn’t measure up. In fact, you’re not helping anyone when your enterprise stumbles or fails because the people working for it are in over their heads” (Giuliani, 2002, p. 100). One school of thought teaches throwing ill-equipped people into positions they would not usually deserve otherwise. The thinking is this challenges people to push themselves and think critically to accomplish an unfamiliar mission. I disagree. This may serve as a valuable training tool in the short term, but over the long run it will ruin an organization’s morale and faith in the system. The best policy is to “above all, [seek] to match the best person available to the job best suited for that person” (Giuliani, 2002, p. 100). This has to be your first rule when considering candidates for subordinate positions.

An advisor’s personal strengths and weaknesses do not always have to match the superior. In fact, it is often in a leader’s best interests to hire to his weaknesses. An important “part of choosing great people is to analyze your own strengths and weaknesses. That gives you an idea of where your needs are the greatest” (Giuliani, 2002, p. 101). A modest leader recognizes they are not perfect and is willing to admit
this for the good of the mission. In Giuliani’s case he accepted his own deficiencies in
certain parts of city management and knew he “needed to balance [them] with the
strengths of other people” (Giuliani, 2002, p. 101). It is hard to imagine a man voted
Time Person of the Year in 2001 could have any discernable weaknesses, but America’s
mayor did not place himself on a pedestal. Perhaps Giuliani’s greatest strength was
accepting his flaws and allowing others to compensate for them.

R.G. LeTourneau is another example of a wise leader. Letourneau initially failed
at business but his heavy machinery company eventually supplied seventy percent of the
equipment used in World War II. The successful businessman had no formal education
after the age of fourteen but he had plenty of common sense and practicality. Part of the
reason he enjoyed so much success is because he hired to his weakness, education.
LeTourneau was not ashamed of his lack of schooling but embraced those who knew
more than he. He described his hiring practices in this way:

When I hire someone, I hire someone smarter than I am. Then I am quiet and listen. If I do all the
talking, then I will learn nothing. I will only know what I knew before I hired him. But if I am
quiet and listen, I will soon know not only what I knew before, but I will know what the other
person knows too. (Garlow, 2002, p. 146)

R.G.’s message sounds simplistic but it is the perfect example of hiring to your
weaknesses. A man with little formal education could have let stubborn pride stand in his
way, but he chose to allow smarter men take him and the company to a higher level
(Garlow, 2002, p. 146). Unselfish hiring practices helped R.G. LaTourneau develop a
good idea into an extremely successful business.
It is certainly wise to hire the best people and accommodate your weaknesses, but it is also important to hire likeminded advisors who will help you accomplish the mission according to your goals. I do not encourage you to hire robots and yes men, but rather subordinates who share your overall values and vision. Just as there is plenty of room for discussion and debate within political parties, there will be an equal amount of wiggle room between you and your advisors. A staff that shares your beliefs will allow for spirited debate over how best to accomplish the group’s common goal. James Garlow speaks of his mentor, John Maxwell, as a man whose people knew him so well, “they could respond to any situation just as John would have, had he been present” (Garlow, 2002, p. 147). You certainly want your people to know your opinions, but they need to be free thinkers as well. Maxwell’s subordinates were apparently not given the necessary room to grow and debate policy with their superior. Your followers should know your mind well enough they can anticipate what you would say in a given situation and be able to act based on their measured interpretation of your wishes. Choose advisors who can accomplish the mission through a union of free thought and steady direction.

It is easy but not always wise to choose the most popular candidate for a given position. Less thought goes into making the ‘obvious’ or ‘popular’ choice, but leaders always have to look past the obvious to ensure they make the best selection. In the world of politics it is traditionally “safer to hire someone with pedigree than one without—if the former screws up, you can always say, ‘Didn’t see that coming-the old boy went to Princeton’” (Giuliani, 2002, p. 115). Rudolph Giuliani made a controversial decision when he hired a police commissioner, who had no college degree. Many critics ignored
Bernie Kerik’s twenty years of experience in law enforcement and berated Giuliani for hiring an ‘uneducated man’. The mayor stood behind his selection because “A leader must have confidence in his own decision-making about people. He has to know he’ll make the right decision eight or nine times out of ten and accept responsibility for getting it wrong a few times” (Giuliani, 2002, p. 115-16). Giuliani made a generally unpopular decision but stood his ground because he believed in his new commissioner regardless of academic record.

President Lincoln also believed in looking past face value. Lincoln suffered through many inactive generals during the first few years of the Civil War. He was infuriated by their refusal to take risks and pursue the enemy. It took several commanders before Lincoln finally found a man who shared his vision of victory through pursuit. After observing Ulysses S. Grant in the field and speaking with the man on several occasions, Lincoln promoted him to Lieutenant General and general in chief of the Army in March of 1864. When reports reached Washington that Grant was allegedly drunk during one of his battles, the president simply responded, “I can’t spare this man. He fights” (Phillips, 1992, p. 114). Grant graduated near the bottom of his class at West Point and was certainly not the most popular candidate for the job, but Lincoln hired the general for his doggedness, tenacity and courage on the battlefield. The president’s critics were undoubtedly silenced when Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox Courthouse in April of 1865. When Lincoln finally deviated from his tendency to choose popular, yet complacent commanders he found a controversial general who achieved victory little more than a year after his promotion.
Once you have a solid staff of advisors it imperative to let them do their jobs. I mentioned earlier that micromanagement is the practice of delegating at the lowest level. This means bypassing your first line of subordinates and directly giving assignments to lower level employees. This may seem more efficient because you can be sure the message was received, but it undermines your top advisors’ authority. You must trust your staff to relay messages and assignments to their subordinates because you cannot run an organization alone. Katherine Harris, former Florida Secretary of State, agrees, “Effective leaders do not set out to prove they can accomplish everything. They know they cannot do all things effectively, so they do not even try. Instead, they delegate responsibility to others” (Harris, 2002, p.163). Delegation is not easy because we often know how to do a job and would rather make sure it is done right then entrust the task to someone else. This thinking is flawed and will not only wear you out, but also aggravate those who work you. Harris admits, “Delegation is one of the most difficult managerial disciplines to learn. It is not so much that we do not want to let go of certain things; it is that we do not let go well” and eventually this “will quash the team’s competency, efficiency, creativity, and motivation” (Harris, 2002, p. 164). You must empower your staff to make decisions and delegate to their subordinates, if not they will become frustrated and withdrawn.

Each semester the Cadet Wing Commander must select a command staff made up of a vice commander and three group commanders, to help him run the wing. I selected Andy Welborn as my vice commander, Josh Thompson as my operations commander, Andy Rhoades as my logistics commander and Evan Maney as my support group.
commander. I can say with complete confidence I chose the very best group possible, and likely the best command staff of my four years in ROTC. There were plenty of candidates for the four positions and I was tempted to give a couple of them to weaker cadets in order to challenge them with more responsibility. But I didn’t, I was selfish. I realized I would hurt the organization by choosing less qualified commanders, and ultimately I would make more work for myself. I chose the best of the best and never looked back. It was difficult to pass over some of my classmates who really wanted a chance to prove themselves capable. However, these same people had not proven themselves in lower positions and I was not confident in their abilities to perform and lead at a higher level.

The four commanders I chose were not only good cadets but also very good people. James Garlow says, “To be a good leader, focus on being good before you focus on being a leader” (Garlow, 2002, p. 81). My command staff had impressed me first with their personal qualities and second with their leadership potential. Their character was a very important factor in my selection process because two of the cadets, Rhoades and Maney, had only been in ROTC for one year, and another, Welborn, had only been in the wing for a semester. Even Thompson had not joined the wing until the second semester of our freshmen year. I passed over cadets with up to three years of experience in favor of relatively inexperienced cadets with good character and great potential. Rudy Giuliani sees the wisdom in this practice and knows “any leader will have team members with more seasoning than others. The effective leader will encourage such people to impart their wisdom to those less experienced. Talking and sharing advice can do that, but it can
be done even more effectively by example” (Giuliani, 2002, p.108). Each commander brought some different quality to the table and shared it with the rest of the command staff. Although we all had our own strengths and weaknesses, the one bond we shared was a great amount of enthusiasm for our mission and for working with each other.

From September to December 2002, Josh Thompson brought intelligence and a cool head to our staff. As my operations commander, he was responsible for planning Leadership Lab each week and ensuring we met all the AFROTC objectives over the course of the semester. Operations commander is perhaps the most frustrating position in ROTC because you are constantly forced to rearrange the schedule, activities and location of events due to unforeseen circumstances. Josh’s assignment was not for the faint of heart, but he never lost his composure in front of the wing and rarely lost his cool behind the scenes. I also live with Josh and had plenty of opportunities to observe him during much of the weekly planning. I often came to his room with last minute suggestions or changes fully expecting an angry look or hysterical reaction. I never saw one. He certainly did not fit the stereotypical operations commander running around with their head on fire followed by a trail of smoke and papers. Instead, he took my comments in stride and made the necessary adjustments. He made my job easier by running the operational side of Lead Lab allowing me to think on a strategic level without worrying about the details of each week’s Lab. Josh took care of me by briefly running through the day’s schedule a few minutes before Lead Lab to ensure I knew the basic order of the day. He only gave me the essentials, which allowed me to spend time talking with the other 123 cadets in the wing. I did not ask him to do this, he just did.
Evan Maney offered a calm personality to a command staff that often needed some perspective. He also oversaw the planning and execution of our annual Dining Out. Each fall the cadets invite parents, dates and friends to a formal military dinner paid for and planned by the cadets themselves. To put in perspective how large this event is; of our $9,000 fall budget, $4,000 went towards Dining Out! This is a huge amount of money to spend on one night and the amount of time spent planning this single evening is equally staggering. Evan acted as a liaison throughout the entire planning process. He was responsible for making sure the Dining Out commander understood all my expectations and had all the resources, money and people she needed to plan a successful dinner. I oversaw a similar event as group commander my junior year and am fully aware of the many components that go into a formal dinner (decorations, invitations, table assignments, catering, guest speakers, etc.). It is easy to lose one’s cool when planning such a complicated, ever-changing event. However, Evan kept a level head and never lost his composure throughout the entire planning process. Even when told by others he should be nervous about such a big responsibility Evan remained calm and his demeanor never changed. The dinner was a success and my support group commander proved a clear head prevails amidst demanding circumstances.

Andy Rhoades had an uncanny attention to detail and ability to encourage his subordinates. He organized not only the largest event of the semester, but also the largest at Miami since I joined four years ago. Andy coordinated Black Hawk helicopter rides for all 125 cadets in the wing. His brother, Steve Rhoades, is the commander of a Black Hawk flight at Rickenbacker AFB, OH and secured five helicopters for a flight to Miami
on November 15\textsuperscript{th}, 2002. Cadets at Miami had seen many aircraft on past base visits around the country, but never had military aircraft made the trip to Oxford. This was certainly a rare occasion and we were very fortunate Andy had connections through his brother. We were even more fortunate that Andy accepted the responsibility of organizing this complex event. The assignment was tailor made for my most task oriented group commander. Andy thrived on direction and instruction. He was excellent at communicating with his subordinates throughout the semester and got more out of his already hard working staff heads than I would have expected. He handled the Black Hawk orientation flights with the same attention to detail and persistence characteristic of all his work.

Andy was responsible for contacting the Oxford police and fire department, university airport and physical facilities as well as the office of the president. He created a completely new organizational chart for the wing that placed cadets in newly created positions (e.g. safety, communication, logistics). On top of this he had to find a way for all 125 cadets to receive an orientation flight in the limited time allowed (approximately one hour) without showing preferential treatment (although stellar cadets were discreetly rewarded with earlier flights). The landing site changed three times during the final week of preparation and my logistics commander spent countless hours talking with his brother and meeting with his staff. Not surprisingly the event was a huge success for the cadets and Black Hawk crews alike. Andy made the connection with Rickenbacker AFB, but did not rest on his laurels and instead coordinated the most exciting and complex event in the last four years at Detachment 640.
As indispensable as Josh, Evan and Andy were, Andy Welborn was my “savior”. Mayor Giuliani believes, “some bosses hire only those of like mind. A leader has to surround himself with a complementary staff” (Giuliani, 2002, p. 110). Andy was the perfect complement to my leadership style. We agreed on many issues and so had a healthy work relationship from the beginning, but where I was weak technically he was strong and where I preferred to speak in front of the wing he enjoyed the satisfaction of working diligently behind the scenes. Although he had only been in the wing for a year prior, he had no shortage of experience. At the same time he served as my vice commander, Andy also worked as the vice president of his fraternity and sat on the executive board of Habitat for Humanity. He had many obligations but never showed fatigue or lack of enthusiasm for his job or for ROTC. We met each week for an hour to get our bearings and make decisions about the corps. These meetings were unprecedented and certainly not mandatory, but he arrived each week and even took the initiative to request written weekly updates from each group commander.

Our relationship strengthened each week as we worked together, problem solved and discussed topics far outside the world of ROTC. I came to trust him implicitly. It seemed the more responsibility I gave Andy, the better he responded and performed. I remember several occasions on which I asked him to send an email or prepare a document only to find out he had already done it without my direction. Andy Welborn is one of many good friends I have had at Miami, but I am entirely confident not one of them could have done a better job than he as my vice commander and right hand man.
Giuliani, Lincoln, Garlow and Harris believe in selecting the best person for the job regardless of feelings or other influences. This method is in the best interests of the organization and yourself because favoritism and narrow thinking only hurt morale and create more work for you, the supervisor. I was fortunate to work with four outstanding staff members but their selection was not by accident. I was openly selfish and chose not only the best cadets, but also the best people for the job.
CHAPTER 5: BE PREPARED/CONCLUSIONS

Every leader is faced with difficult decisions and public appearances. Each decision and appearance will be undoubtedly unique, but it is imperative to prepare as well as possible for each event. You can prepare both generally and specifically for any occurrence, and it is wise to do both.

General preparation is easily done through reading books and absorbing news, but is becoming a lost art in today’s world. As Katherine Harris says, “Our electronic age has spawned a host of distractions to keep us from the intellectual life. Meaningless sitcoms, the Xbox, and endless hours of surfing the Web soak up much of the time we might otherwise devote to more challenging pursuits.” (Harris, 2002, p. 135) Her thinking may seem a bit antiquated for our time, but she is entirely correct. In our fast-paced world of cell phones, internet and PDAs there seems far too little time for reading and the pursuit of knowledge.

In my experience the average college student hardly gives him/herself time to read their textbooks much less a book for pleasure. The time is spent attending sorority/fraternity functions, watching television, playing video games, visiting with friends and often partying on the weekends. I am a firm believer in experiencing all college has to offer both inside and outside the classroom. I am guilty of cramming for exams and reading only as much of a textbook as a study guide tells me to. I earned a 3.7 GPA in seven semesters at Miami by essentially doing what it took to get an A. I am not
proud or ashamed of this fact, but mention it as a real life example of what Katherine Harris preaches against in her autobiography. It was not until this semester (Spring 2003) when I realized there might be some value in learning simply for the sake of learning. I realize it is impossible to make up for seven semesters of indifference, but better to start late than never. Fortunately I have learned much from my time in ROTC and used that knowledge base to begin work on this paper. All of the principles I have discussed come directly from my personal experiences, the books I have read since only reaffirm my beliefs and values.

My purpose in writing this paper was twofold. First, I wanted to share my thoughts on leadership and what I believe it takes to be a successful leader. Second, I took advantage of an opportunity to learn more about my profession while finding support for my own opinions. What I found is that while my experiences are limited, there is a way to connect many examples from Lincoln, Eisenhower, Mitchell, Giuliani, etc. to experiences I have had in ROTC. I try to do this at the end of each chapter not just to share my own views but also to show even the most unlikely parallels can be made with great leaders. They are great because their advice is timeless and their example multilateral. I have learned from them while I may be on the right track, I still have much to learn. Harris concurs, “For a leader, all talk of education must serve as a reminder that we have only just begun to learn” (Harris, 2002, p. 134). The poet and historian Francois Fenelon said it well when he proclaimed, “If the crowns of all the kingdoms of Europe were laid down at my feet in exchange for my books and my love of learning, I would spurn them all” he went on to say, “I would soon be bereft of the crowns anyway,
because to rule long and rule well, one must continue to grow in knowledge and understanding” (Harris, 2002, p. 135). This is certainly an extreme example, but it serves the point that knowledge is the base for any good leader, and ignorance of this will eventually lead to stagnation and ultimately failure.

Perhaps the reason books are losing some of their popularity is because people are more interested in a quick fix or a sure thing than they are in building a solid knowledge base. In a world where promotions and salaries depend on performance and production there is often little premium placed on personal quality and character. A supervisor must look inside himself to discover a need for self-enhancement and personal improvement if he ever hopes to be an effective leader and not just another manager. Rudy Giuliani is a strong believer in self-education and attributes much of his success to a desire for knowledge. The former mayor believes the secret to leadership is not expertise in every field but rather a well-rounded knowledge of many topics. These topics include not only municipal concerns but also extracurricular activities he believes make him a better person. He speaks of his newfound love for golf as an escape from the pressures of executive life but took his interest to a new level. He explains, “Once I realized my interest in golf would last, I did what I always do when I take up something new – I read a dozen of the best books I could find” (Giuliani, 2002, p. 287). While his knowledge for golf may not have necessarily solved the 9/11 crisis, his thirst for knowledge and dedication to learning formed the basis of his exemplary leadership during those trying times.
He extended this commitment to education into his professional life when he joined Patterson Belknap law practice in 1977. He realized his lack of experience in private law “so [he] went out and bought the relevant texts – on antitrust law, civil procedure, commercial paper, the works – and read them cover to cover” (Giuliani, 2002, p. 292). This type of tenacity is often unheralded, but nonetheless remarkable. It may not be popular to read for the sake of personal enhancement, but it is the right thing to do. Giuliani had a “habit of buying books, to read up on whatever challenge I was facing. Having my own independent knowledge of a subject has helped me run organizations that I didn’t understand before” (Giuliani, 2002, p. 292). If there is still any doubt he had the right idea, look to what Time had to say about the mayor in January 2002, “For having more faith in us than we had in ourselves, for being brave when required and rude where appropriate and tender without being trite, for not sleeping and not quitting and not shrinking from the pain all around him, Rudy Giuliani, Mayor of the World, is TIME 2001 Person of the Year” (Giuliani, 2002, Dust jacket). The qualities described by TIME did not find Giuliani by chance; he found them in books and used them to lead his city through the most devastating terrorist attack on American soil. Rudy Giuliani did not care what anyone thought of his reading habits, he knew the value in his efforts and proved their worth when it counted most.

No matter how much you read and learn on your own there are occasions where you must prepare more specifically and focus your efforts on a defined topic. This is perhaps most true in the public speaking arena. To be an effective leader you must “master the art of public speaking” (Phillips, 1992, p. 145) if you hope to motivate and
communicate with your subordinates. Abraham Lincoln showed a strong commitment to effective public speaking throughout his professional and political career. Lincoln the attorney explained how critical communication was to his success when he wrote, “Extemporaneous speaking should be practiced and cultivated. It is the lawyer’s avenue to the public. However able and faithful he may be in other respects, people are slow to bring him business if he cannot make a speech” (Phillips, 1992, p. 145). His ability to speak not only made Lincoln a successful lawyer but also played a large part in his presidential election. The Cooper Institute address on February 27, 1860 “was perhaps the most important speech of his career” (Phillips, 1992, p. 147) and he delivered it flawlessly. It was Lincoln’s custom to “write out every word of his address and then read from the text during the presentation. He spent hours, sometimes days and weeks, researching his subject” (Phillips, 1992, p. 147) and his hard work paid off. In the case of the Cooper Institute address Lincoln had done his research and found evidence to refute Stephen Douglas’ proslavery arguments and then awed the crowd with his presence and passion. Lincoln would later “comment how important that particular speech was and how he felt he became president largely because of its success” (Phillips, 1992, p. 149). Lincoln took his preparation to the extreme, but he earned the highest office in the land and continued to deliver great speeches (Emancipation Proclamation, Gettysburg Address, e.g.) after his election. Part of Abraham Lincoln’s legend is how so ungainly a man could mesmerize a crowd with little more than his words. This remarkable talent was no accident, and was developed through years of diligent study and tenacious preparation.
As cadet wing commander I often had the opportunity to speak in front of the wing either to motivate, inform or discipline. I almost always had advance notice of these speeches and ample time to prepare. Regardless of the topic, my speeches were always delivered either very well or very poorly. At beginning of term I wasn’t sure why I could throw strikes on one speech then miss the plate altogether on the next. The answer dawned on me one day as I was preparing to address the wing about their lack of professionalism. I had gone through the speech several times in my head and felt very confident my message would hit home. I realized this confidence came from my preparation and not necessarily with the message I wanted to convey. I sat down and wrote out my speech, even incorporating other senior cadets into my discussion of professionalism. We worked out a script where I asked a question regarding customs and courtesies and they gave a rehearsed correct answer. I carried the script with me and kept it close as I admonished the wing on their slipping professionalism. My senior leadership answered the questions in turn and I could see light bulbs beginning to go off. We then stayed in the front leaning rest until I was satisfied by the wing’s unrehearsed answers to a series of questions about customs and courtesies. When I was convinced they knew their mistake we all stood up and moved on with the day’s events. I made this speech in the third week of the term and never had to do it again during the remaining 12 weeks of the semester. I had my speech with me the whole time for reference, but the simple act of writing it out beforehand committed the whole address to memory.

This difficult speech was one of only a few I had to deliver during my term as corps commander. The majority of my speeches were either informative or motivational
and I tried to give the same attention and thought to each address. When I didn’t put the necessary preparation into a speech it really showed and I stepped away feeling foolish or dejected. The speeches I felt were successful followed a very simple pattern. I first made sure I knew all the facts about whatever topic I was speaking on (professionalism, uniform wear, honor flight, etc.) so that false statements did not weaken my overall message. No one will listen to a passionate leader who cannot at the very least get the simple facts right. I would then run through the speech in my head to hear what it would sound like in front of the wing. Once I was sure the address had a good flow I would write it down to commit the words to memory. By this time I would have read about the topic I wanted to discuss, said it aloud in my head and written it on paper for easy reference. This allowed me to digest the information through research, visualization and my own written words. As a result I felt much more confident when speaking in front of the wing because I felt as if I was a sort of “pseudo” expert on the topic at hand. I was never officially critiqued or given a grade on any of my speeches, but my success was measured in the faces and reactions of those I was trying to motivate, teach, or inform. I only wish I had read Lincoln’s advice last semester then maybe all my speeches would have smoked across the center of the plate.

The title of this work indicates there is another step to effective leadership. This sixth step is the easiest to discuss but no less important than the other five. It is simply this: there are no rules to effective leadership. Just as each person owns a unique personality so too does each leader foster his or her own individual style. Leadership is not a math problem governed by theorems, but rather a life long challenge ruled by your
personal beliefs and willingness to learn. I have merely laid the groundwork; it is your job to take what abilities you have to the next level.

The five principles of effective leadership (Know Your People, Care About Your Mission, Lead By Example, Be Selfish and Be Prepared) are what worked for me as Cadet Wing Commander of the 640th Cadet Wing. They are based on my limited experience in Air Force ROTC, but backed up by the examples, actions and principles of great leaders. Abraham Lincoln, Dwight Eisenhower, Billy Mitchell, and Katherine Harris embody many of the leadership qualities I hope to cultivate throughout my career and it is encouraging to know I am on the right track. However, there is a great deal I can still learn from the successes and failures of those who came before me. Perhaps the most valuable lesson I have learned is to never stop learning. Take my words to heart, apply them to your mission and you will succeed. But like a promising tennis player who seeks more advanced training, you will outgrow this text and require more sophisticated guidance. Read about Lincoln, Eisenhower, Mitchell, et al., observe contemporary leaders, form your own principles and ultimately realize your potential.
AFTERWORD

Looking back on this project I realize there may be one step I left out of my discussion. I considered this step an intangible necessity for any good leader, but it warrants a brief discussion here. Prior to knowing their people, leaders must first know the mission. I believe my principles led to effective leadership, but not without first knowing what it was I needed to accomplish. I spoke frequently of the ROTC mission and of its importance, but I failed to mention the importance of first learning the mission.

All my interactions with cadets would have been superficial had I not known the greater purpose of ROTC. The purpose is not to glad hand, attain rank, or pursue awards, but rather to train future officers for the United States Air Force. I spoke with my subordinates, showed enthusiasm for ROTC, worked alongside cadets, chose the best advisors, and toiled over public presentations in order to mold better leaders. Simply put, know the mission first and let it guide you through whatever leadership challenge you face.
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