

# Introduction

Since we first met five or six years ago, we have collaborated regularly and repeatedly on leadership issues—on the historic battlefield at Gettysburg, at West Point, at Fort Leavenworth, at the Pentagon, and at the Leader to Leader Institute in Manhattan. Though we come from very different backgrounds—one a nonprofit leader, the other a career soldier for thirty-eight years—we have both come to realize, first, that the Army’s approach to developing leadership is powerful and eminently successful and, second, that that approach is applicable to institutions and organizations other than the military. With that in mind, we and The Conference Board sponsored conferences that brought together Army, corporate, and nonprofit leaders. One would think that leaders from such varied sectors would not have much in common, but they merged into remarkably cohesive groups. Indeed, there are common denominators among all leaders of quality, and Army leader-development principles capitalize on that fact.

Field Manual 22-100, *Army Leadership*, has three words on its cover: “Be, Know, Do.” After reviewing the draft of this Army doctrinal publication on leadership, Frances shared an important insight with a colonel from the Center for Army Leadership at Fort Leavenworth. She said, “Before we review this together, may I say that this manual could be as helpful to the Salvation Army as to the U.S. Army.” She realized intuitively that the Army was about to

publish a leadership manual that would be as useful to a general, a lieutenant, or a sergeant as to a captain of industry, a mid-level manager, or a front-line customer service representative. “Be, Know, Do” is a great model for all who appreciate the power of language and the ideas that language conveys. The implications of those three words—the demands they make—are profound, far reaching, and relevant to any leader.

All people and all good organizations share the same requirements for strong, selfless leadership. And to develop and institutionalize this kind of leadership, the Army does two things each and every day: it trains its soldiers, and it grows them into leaders. The principles and practices of effective leadership that make the United States Army the greatest landforce in the world are relevant, as well, to civilian organizations—businesses, nonprofit organizations, and governmental agencies. Understanding and accepting the validity of this important proposition prompted the Leader to Leader Institute to compile lessons from the Army and publish them in this book.

## **Leader Development Is Essential**

The American way of life and our well-being depends on the ability of Army leaders at all levels to inspire and lead, often under the most harrowing conditions and unimaginable levels of stress. And the Army has long understood that there is no substitute for strong leaders—throughout its ranks. During combat, squad leaders, platoon leaders, company commanders, and battalion commanders can be incapacitated or killed—as can their replacements and their subordinates. The cost of failure at any point in its complex formations could well be catastrophic, as risks are most often measured in lives. Filling the ranks with well-trained, highly motivated, and performance-oriented soldiers who, without hesitation, can and will step forward to lead when victory hangs in the balance is the unrelenting requirement for success in battle. The Army, therefore, makes leadership everyone’s priority.

The Army's record for developing leaders is superb. Today, it is one of the most innovative training organizations in the world. Although many companies in the private sector endorse promoting from within their ranks, contracted executive search firms most often fill top positions by attracting talent from other organizations. This is not an option for the Army; it does not indulge the free agency process. To train and grow effective leaders takes years. And because the Army does not have the luxury of raiding competitors for leadership talent, its top leaders must devote themselves to and succeed in developing new generations of leaders who can cope with uncertainty when preparing for crises yet to be defined. Thus, throughout its history, the Army has found leaders of extraordinary character who have risen to lead the Army and the nation through crisis—Generals Ulysses S. Grant, Robert E. Lee, John J. Pershing, George C. Marshall, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Omar N. Bradley, Creighton W. Abrams, and Colin L. Powell, to name just a few.

### **Growing Successful Leaders for a Changing Environment**

In entering this new century, we have also entered an era of unprecedented change, one that is enormously challenging strategically. Though time-tested leadership practices remain viable, those practices will need to be augmented with new leader competencies that are relevant to the dynamic global environment in which the Army and the nation must prevail decisively. Consider this description of the Objective Force, the vision toward which The Army is working:

The human dimension of warfare will always remain pre-eminent. War is uncertain, mentally complex, physically demanding, and an intensely emotional experience. Objective Force Soldiers must be physically and mentally tough enough to dominate their opponents despite these challenges. Objective Force Soldiers and leaders

must also possess the competence and confidence to close with their opponents in open, close, and complex terrain—and kill them. They must be highly trained in all tasks across the spectrum of military operations. They must be knowledgeable and disciplined in their application of Rules of Engagement. They must be multifaceted, adaptive, and self-aware—knowing how to clear a room, send a digital message, or repair a vehicle—because sustainment in the first 72 hours of a deployment on a non-linear battlefield will be limited. These Soldiers will need demanding, realistic training conducted by leaders who feel a moral obligation to train them correctly and make them tough, disciplined, and motivated. Knowing and adhering to high standards of discipline, fitness, and competency are essential to Objective Force success [“Concepts for the Objective Force,” U.S. Army White Paper].

Physically and mentally tough, competent and confident, highly trained, knowledgeable and disciplined, multifaceted, adaptive, self-aware—these are the characteristics of successful leaders in the twenty-first century. We *can* develop the leaders that our organizations require for an uncertain future, and we believe everyone who aspires to lead or to train leaders can learn from the Army. Since before the birth of the nation and through eras of remarkable change, the Army has been developing leadership principles and practices that speak to the constants of effective leadership—loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage.

The Army must always be ready to fight and win the wars of the nation—it has this duty as a nonnegotiable contract with the American people. In the wake of the War of 1812, Secretary of War John C. Calhoun described the sole purpose for a peacetime Army—“to prepare for war.” To that end, the Army trains to fight every day. And through every period of its more than 228-year history, the

Army has continued to refine its approach to leadership as a matter of embracing relevant change. Since the mid-1970s, the Army has undergone a monumental training revolution. It has refined training doctrine, improved training techniques, raised the bar on performance standards, focused soldiers on individual competence, and focused units on collective performance, all to attain higher levels of warfighting readiness. Army training stresses attainment of competence at individual tasks that are performed repeatedly at increasing levels of difficulty until realistic conditions of combat are most closely simulated. Thus, individual competence becomes the building block for collective team performance of the most complex tasks to the prescribed standard in actual combat. Candid After-Action Reviews (AARs)—a staple of Army leader development—promote and nurture teamwork, strengthen clear communications, emphasize personal accountability, encourage performance to standard, and acknowledge shared risk. The product of AARs is the development of organizational trust and growth in leadership that is effective in any scenario, no matter how the environment may change. This innovative training methodology has been so successful that many of the nation’s most renowned corporations have adopted it.

### **Sharing the Army’s Approach with Today’s Generation**

During World War II and its immediate aftermath, military culture was a familiar part of American life. The Army and its values were integral to our national culture. Millions of Americans in what Tom Brokaw came to call “The Greatest Generation” had fought in World War II, and even those who did not participate directly had fathers, husbands, brothers, and sons—in some cases mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters—who did. They learned about sacrifice, about serving a purpose greater than self, and about determination, teamwork, and trust. While the military draft was in effect, large numbers

of men spent two years of their lives in uniform. Their common experiences provided a shared bond, a shared language, and shared values; but the breadth of this experience began to erode early in the 1970s.

Since the end of the draft and the establishment of the all-volunteer force in 1973, fewer and fewer citizens have been exposed to the Army, its values, and its leadership ethos. Today, a smaller segment of the population is familiar with the Army and Army values. A still smaller percentage has participated in Army life and had the chance to benefit from its focus on leaders of character and institutional values. This is unfortunate because the Army continues to provide a premier leadership development opportunity for the nation. How does it do it? How can we use the principles of Army Leadership to strengthen other parts of our society, of our corporate, governmental, or nonprofit organizations? Exploring and answering those questions is the Leader to Leader Institute's purpose in this book.

## All Leaders Can Benefit

Leadership matters. It matters in the life and death situations in which a lack of trust, teamwork, clear focus, confidence, and motivation could spell disaster—leadership matters in combat. Leadership matters when preparing soldiers for the rigors of combat in realistic training scenarios that simulate combat with inherently dangerous equipment and munitions. And leadership matters during the down time, as well, when soldiers prepare for future missions, plan training, repair and maintain equipment, and spend time with their families. Leadership of successful organizations is not a nine-to-five, five-day-a-week duty. It is a way of life. It underscores every organizational endeavor. Consider that, while advances in materials and technology have changed the face of battle, the Army continues to rely most heavily on strong leaders at all levels—exceptional leaders who are self-aware, adaptive, and agile; leaders who will hold units together in the midst of tragedy; leaders who will achieve their objectives in the face of concerted opposition and

the most overwhelming odds. These are leaders of indomitable spirit who fulfill their obligations to their assigned missions and to their people. Soldier-leaders represent what's best about the Army. They deliver our magnificent moments—noble by sacrifice, magnificent by performance, and respected by all. They make us better than we ever expected to be.

In the post-9/11 world, leaders in all organizations can gain from the Army's approach to leadership. Even if we don't face the life and death challenges of combat, civilian leaders do face unprecedented change, ruthless competition, unexpected threats, and battles for market share—all of which can mean the survival or destruction of products, careers, and companies and can have serious consequences for the people who are the heart and soul of all institutions.

In this book, the Leader to Leader Institute shares the Army's leadership philosophy with leaders from many sectors—business, government, nonprofits, and volunteer organizations. It adapts material from the Army's primary leadership manual, *Army Leadership*, and draws lessons from Army leaders at a variety of levels and across its formations. It offers practical advice to leaders everywhere on how to use Army leadership principles to transform themselves and their organizations into more effective, efficient, and committed teams that work toward common goals. We know firsthand the challenges leaders face, and we have learned how well the Army prepares its people to meet them.

Leadership is most important when the stakes are highest, but it must be continuously developed, patiently nurtured, and tested with uncertainty if it is to be fully ready for those unforeseen crises. In today's turbulent world, Army leadership is being tested daily around the globe in battles that were not envisioned three years ago, and the Army is meeting every challenge.

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