

Leading a team may be laden with hurdles. You will frequently face various obligations, difficult choices, and have to surmount your self-doubts. However, luckily whether we are leading a team is not something vital to many among us since it is not a Navy SEAL platoon on very dangerous special ops missions we are leading. Yet, the author Jocko Willink actually did it.

Having been the leader of a Navy SEAL platoon previously, Willink utilized a broad array of leadership abilities. And he discerned these abilities have the potential to work for other jobs that involve less risk, such as being the head of a business.

If, in your thoughts, the army is an institution where orders are followed without question, then reconsider these thoughts. These orders are like lectures for training oneself in modesty, leaving your self-esteem aside, and fostering relationships rooted in reciprocal confidence and reverence – we can all grasp something from them.

Chapter 1 - To understand what the situation is like, it may sometimes be a good idea to take a step back from it.

Imagine there is a squad of Navy SEALs on a training mission. Their mission is to charge an oil platform on the sea. However, the plan is deviating from its course.

As they get closer to the platform, the squad suddenly freezes in position with their weapons out, expecting that somebody will give them a call and tell what is the best way to proceed. The issue here is, no one is calling. There are plenty of places where potential enemies can conceal themselves on the platform and very limited places for our squad to cover themselves.

Time is running, and the only thing they can do is to do what they are prepared to do in these circumstances – search around to find targets. However, if you do this, the ones you'll find will be the ones within your gun's view. You won't see out of your gun's sight. To proceed forward, a member of the squad has to step back from the situation to see it clearly.

Fortunately, there was somebody in this SEAL squad who could move forward and take over responsibility: the author, Jocko Willink. He was aware precisely of what to do.

To see what the situation looks like, Willink took a step backward, changed his gun's position to the "high-port", and surveyed their environment, which enabled him to perceive the whole scene. He was able to detect the obstructions that rested before them and the route which the squad should follow. It was then he was able to assume the lead and order, "Hold left! Move right!"

In his daily life, the author has figured that stepping back from a situation is one of the best instruments a leader can utilize. Whenever you feel like you're becoming overwhelmed by all there is to do, take a step back. This is actually also possible for you – move away from your

desk or detach from a conversation and later breathe in and out. Raise your head, look both to your left and right, let yourself get rid of whatever emotions are there and work out to perceive and understand what's actually happening around you. You will then be able to comprehend the moment now and your choices will be more sensible, which means they will be less affected by overwhelming emotions.

After having done some more work in the army, the author deduced lots of other lessons suitable for leadership positions out of the military. In the upcoming chapters, we'll study more of these important lessons.

Chapter 2 - Good leadership arises from two core elements: the Dichotomy of Leadership and Extreme Ownership.

What can leaders running businesses deduce from the army?

You may have seen harsh, military expressions such as "take no prisoners" adopted in the business world. However, if it is about leadership, the most suitable strategy isn't an aggressive one; rather, it's a balanced one.

Working as a Navy SEAL, the author had the chance to see what bad leadership is. In his second platoon, a commander in the platoon rejected to take any opinions other than his into account. This sort of vanity critically hurt the morale of the platoon. Soon after a new commander was needed to replace him.

When the subject is leadership, people tend to anticipate him to explain a pretty simple path to leadership. Their anticipation is to find a path of austere hierarchy, in which they just do whatever the boss tells them to do without questioning. However, the truth of how one becomes a good boss – be it in the army or in the business field – is more complex than this. The route to successful leadership necessitates a dichotomy or balance. There is no way of becoming too aggressive or giving up the control too much, being too chatty or too silent, too disciplinary or too much of a weakling. You can add up to this list.

In essence, successful leadership is about building solid ties rooted in reciprocal confidence and reverence. Nothing except for doing this will help you to command an excited and committed crew to triumph. It is impossible to realize if you're stubborn and won't pay heed to your crew's opinions. A good leader is an esteemed one, and this is possible when the people in the crew also feel esteemed and defended.

When it is about earning this respect, the author pins his faith on Extreme Ownership maybe more than all strategies out there. Extreme Ownership is taking responsibility for all issues, errors, and failures. In other terms, it is owning up for the bad stuff – no matter what it is – that's the reason behind 'extreme'.

If someone from the crew commits an error, comes late at work or doesn't complete their task, you are responsible for it. In the end, when she fails, it mirrors the fact that you haven't given her correct instruction. Maybe it is because you couldn't explain clearly the significance of her position and how crucial her position for the general success of the crew.

Eventually, if a group work fails, the leader is the sole one to own up for this. In addition, avoiding looking for the sources of the failure elsewhere as it reflects a good profile for no one.

Chapter 3 - The essential principles of leadership involve modesty and an eagerness to pick up brass.

There's a common belief saying people either come to the world with particular innate abilities and gifts, or they do not. This view is almost totally wrong. The fact is, everyone can become good at whichever profession they enter into.

It is crucial that you remember this, particularly if you all of a sudden end up leading a team and feel overcome with the obligations. In a worse case, you may be inflicted with imposter syndrome, which makes you think you do not belong to that position.

If it is a similar case for you, don't fret. It's a lot better to think that you should develop yourself than to feel prideful that whatever you do and say is immaculately excellent.

To begin with, what does 'to pick up brass' signify? This expression stems from the mostly unsatisfying position of collecting all the bullet casings dropped on the floor after training with targets. Usually, leaders may think they're too competent to participate in such an unskilled work. Nevertheless, there are not many things as powerful in developing respect as a leader who's eager to contribute to a menial work that still has to be done.

You should not always take part in such low-level works though, yet helping others in such works occasionally wouldn't do harm. It gives a message of unity and reverence. It gives an opportunity to mix and bind with your people. By taking part in such low-level jobs, leaders can discover many things about the people and their characteristics and dynamics within the crew

Never forget, if you are designated as a leader of a team, it usually demonstrates your rank is more important than others'; however, you have in fact superiority over no one. Surely, you should avoid behaving as such. Leadership means fostering ties, and the most reliable path to gaining the respect of your people is to stay meek and not to act as if you have all the information.

People have more predilection to hold high esteem of the person showing eagerness to learn, posing questions, and asking others for help, than the person acting as if they've got all the information to know.

Chapter 4 - In leading them, empowering the people in your crew and let them get the right of their plans.

Many teams consist of designations showing what a member does and ranks demonstrating where one stands in comparison to other members. This is particularly accurate when it comes to the army. However, this is not an indicator of what one does is more significant than that of another.

One thing a leader does is to ensure each member of a team is well aware of how invaluable a task they are doing in order to finish the work with success. Their jobs do not exist just to employ people. After all, we have hierarchies and directives in a structure not because it is fun. If a member cannot fulfill what is expected from him or is insubordinate to his superiors' directives, the cause of this is usually the fact that he was not told the significance of his position in the hierarchy.

In the training of Navy SEALs, there is a thing termed decentralized command. In a decentralized command there are teams, each of which has someone in charge and in teams where there are eight to ten people, the anticipation is that each member will come to fore and take the charge when necessary. Determining how the team will successfully fulfill its objective is not difficult because everyone in the team has the same objective. In reality, a harmonious blend of empowerment and motivation should be included in the decentralized command.

Then, what is the way of blending in this for leaders? Although leaders are the ones who give directives of what to do, it does not require them to be the only one who has to devise plans. Their work is to explicitly define the goals of the mission at hand, however, it is good to let other team members devise the plan, so that the plan turns into teamwork, resulting in an effective urge to complete the task.

Surely, the suggestion they put forward might not be a satisfying one. Yet, it is not an indication that you should not put pressure on others to accept your opinion. Evaluate it in your mind: is their suggestion 70% or 80% as powerful as yours? If the answer is yes, then let them do it and render it better. Is it around 50% or 60% of the ideal? Then make inquiries to help them realize where the issue is so that they can correct it.

Is the plan unworthy of consideration? What you should do is ask them to revise their plan and find a more ideal one.

Chapter 5 - When leading, apply iterative decision-making rather than trying to find solutions for every issue on your own.

Being a leader is a hard task. You might find yourself all of a sudden in a moment where you have to arrive at many decisions at the same time. Most people in charge can feel obliged either to decide on a strategy encompassing every decision to be made or to give it up completely.

However, these are not necessarily the only options for a leader.

Suppose that you got some secret info. The hostile target stays in a deserted place for overnight, a few hours away from your military post. The truthness of this info is not certain, so the hostile may not be there, and perilous menaces lurk around in the region. However, you will be handsomely recompensed if you catch your target.

In such a hazardous circumstance such as this, you may feel obliged to make a decision; however, this is certainly not the most appropriate strategy. What you need in such a circumstance is iterative decision-making. By applying this, you will see what the situation looks like more in detail. You will gradually acquire more intel by means of this before you start taking any action.

If you have vague info such as the hostile target concealing himself in the storehouse, making tiny steps toward the target not only gets your team nearer to the target, but it also will lessen the danger. After each step, you could set up a forward operating base and recheck the intel to see if there have been any changes. If nothing's changed, you can continue moving closer and checking in. If along the way, the intel turns out to be bad, you can safely turn back. But by getting incrementally closer you'll lessen the chance of something going horribly wrong.

Most frequently, two extreme options come up. In applying an even, modest and empowering method to leadership, be sure that you are careful of your urges to be the guy on whom everybody depends.

Overcoming issues is a fabulous quality for every leader, however, when you are too excited to become involved, your crew will wind up missing important possibilities for their own development. If you have the answer to a problem, don't utter it suddenly! Try to direct others to find a solution to the problem by posing your team questions. Ultimately, this will lead to better outcomes compared to being the sole person whom everyone turns to whenever there is an issue.

Chapter 6 - Harness your ego all the time, and try to understand when to distribute penalty.

The ego as an issue occupies the top of the list of most general issues. If somebody takes the charge, it's highly likely that their ego will impede them. Instead of guiding their people to splendor, they start fretting about their own success alone.

The ego tends to turn into especially problematic if leaders have to work either with another person of the same age or with somebody who has the same rank in the team hierarchy.

You may find many hurdles when managing a peer. Eventually, what you want is to make sure you appear as being as successful as him. Stepping in and making him understand who is the leader is not difficult. Avoid doing it, though. Don't let your ego intervene and allow him to devise his own plan. When it comes to controlling whose ranks are under yours, it is not different from managing your peers. If you feel uncertain, the best thing you can do is to ask yourself what you'd expect your manager to do? Don't forget, if you expect, as a leader, from people to have confidence in you and show esteem to you, you have to do the same to your peers and people below your rank.

Usually, micromanagement is not positively perceived. Being a micromanager tells others you actually have no faith in your team to get the work done. There are times when it is okay to do this such as when there is a team member who cannot ameliorate their performance no matter what they do. Then, you perhaps should put some stringent objectives for him. Later, regularly control the member to ensure he fulfills the objectives.

Now we can ask the question: when is it suitable to punish and how much punishment should be given? As is often the case, you should not deviate from Extreme Ownership and if there is something not going according to the plan, your leadership should appear in the foreground to be blamed. Sometimes, some people may intentionally neglect your rules, even if you've made explicit why there are those directions or rules.

You would usually expect that there are some guidelines that define the punishment for intentional disobedience. Still, even if there is such a guideline, it totally depends on the leader's judgment. Think about whether some mitigating conditions exist and consider showing tolerance if possible. If there isn't any, you should order then whatever is required.

Chapter 7 - Good communication paves the way for evenhanded praise, clear direction, and prevents rumors.

So far, we have learned a lot of Navy SEAL strategies for leadership, from which you can take lessons. In the last chapter, we'll examine another indispensable quality: communication.

Let's make the opening with praise. What is a way of praising someone? To begin with, don't be broad in your praise and avoid overboard, keep your praises precise. Praising someone a lot can, in fact, make people gradually give less importance to their works.

Rather than praising the entire team that they all did excellent work, be more precise and tell them something such as this: "Susan, you did excellent work on tidying up that room despite the hindrances."

In praising someone, reminding the objectives to fulfill would be good timing. Trusting on the praises they receive, people may get sloppy in their tasks; so, make sure that everyone is still motivated by making them know you praised them for a small accomplishment in the path towards bigger success.

If you decide to make changes, ensuring everyone is notified is important. You can think of lots of soldiers lined up in a single line. The soldiers standing at the start of the line can be aware of changes and act accordingly; however, the others at the end of the line may wind up nervous because they don't know how to act.

Don't allow it to get in the way. You should have good communication with each member of your team. In the case of where there remain uninformed people, rumors arise. When it happens, they may damage team morale and the team may lose motivation. Solve the issue and always make sure each member is notified. Be frank, even if something doesn't go according to the plan.

In giving directives you should also be honest and easily understandable. Explain to the members the reason why it is essential they carry out the directives. If you fail to provide a sound rationale, this tends to be understood as there can actually be a more useful means to get things done.

Lastly, when there is somebody not carrying out the directives, don't hesitate to put Extreme Ownership to use as you look for ways to fix the condition by inquiring, "Is there anything I can do to help you comprehend the importance of your position in this project?"

Leadership means that your team is successful in fulfilling its objectives and their overall feeling is positive, not only good times but also when the team goes through difficult times. Pay attention to the words of the team members and be mindful of your word preferences. If you stay confident and composed, everybody will see you as a role model.

Leadership Strategy and Tactics: Field Manual by Jocko Willink Book Review

In becoming an influential leadership, Extreme Ownership, which means the acknowledgment of all errors your team commits as an indicator of your skills to efficiently manage—without distinction, is important. In the end, leadership means building solid ties rooted in reciprocal confidence and reverence. This implies you have to have confidence in and esteem for each person on your team. One way of doing it is to allow others to come up with their own plans to achieve the aims you introduced to them, and another is to make your communication explicit and frank no matter whether the times are nice or rough.

No need to be scared of asking for apologies.

You might come across leaders saying that apologizing to someone shows weakness. This is not true. On the contrary, declining to apologize seems to be more probably perceived as showing self-doubt. Apologizing is one of the features of Extreme Ownership and when it apparently needs to be done and is the moral thing to do, it may last very long by the time you gain your team's respect. Every one of us occasionally makes errors and declining to take responsibility for them will affect others' opinions of you negatively.

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