

UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY



LIFE & LEADER POINTS (LLP)
1ST Set Detailers

INTRODUCTION

The USNA Mission Statement tells us that we are preparing Midshipmen morally, mentally, and physically, not just for the demands of serving as a junior officer in the Naval Service, but also for the highest degree of citizenship. The desired end state is to have Naval Academy graduates who are well prepared to tackle life's challenges once they leave Bancroft Hall to become the bedrock of American society.

Not all lessons can be learned in the classroom or inculcated by military training. The purpose of this booklet is to provide a pocket resource for key influencers in the lives of Midshipmen (Detailers, Brigade Leaders, Company Officers, and Senior Enlisted Leaders) who have opportunities to engage Midshipmen individually as they work through the challenges of life and the unique transitions to and from USNA.

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RESPONSIBILITY & LIFE DECISIONS



Mexican Monument, oldest monument built at USNA, honoring four midshipmen who took responsibility seriously and gave their lives for their country in the Mexican-American War, 1846-1848.

“Nothing is more difficult, and therefore more precious, than to be able to decide.”

- Napoleon Bonaparte -

Conversation Starters

Who are the best decision makers you know? TV celebrities, athletes, family members, friends? Who are the worst decision makers you know?

How is it harder to make decisions when you are under pressure?

How do you think an officer should be making decisions? What have you learned so far in Plebe Summer?

Professional Implications

Subordinates who lose trust in leaders based on their day to day decision making will be hesitant to entrust their lives to them. As aspiring leaders, Midshipmen should make all life decisions from the perspective of their role as professional military officers. Poor judgment might be forgiven, but not forgotten. Too much is at stake.

“The price of greatness is responsibility.”

- Winston Churchill -

CHARACTER



The Academy Seal, outside of Bancroft and in front of Tecumseh, is also a compass, and points “true north,” indicating the moral compass all midshipmen should develop.

“The truth of the matter is that you always know the right thing to do. The hard part is doing it.”

- General Norman Schwarzkopf, U.S. Army -

Conversation Starters

Name some habits you are proud of. What habits do you want to work on?

How do you tell right from wrong? What if no one's looking?

Your roommate steals a clean blue-rim from your other roommate's closet, but doesn't say anything. Should you do anything about it?

Why is Character important?

Would any Sailor or Marine want to be led by a cheater, a liar, a coward, or a fraud? Do you want to live up to your potential? Do you want to know what the right thing to do is, or how to tell right from wrong? Develop your character in accordance with your conscience and reason. Your character is

the sum of your habits. We generally know when we have bad habits. Excellent behavior is the product of excellent habits. Do you want to be a person of integrity? Of courage? Of temperance? Then every time you have a choice, select the option that is virtuous. Do this all the time. Not sure what the right thing is? Ask around – ask your mentors, parents, and those with more life experience whom you highly respect. They can help you discern between two apparently equal choices to find what is really in accordance with virtue and in your best interests as you continue to build yourself into a person of Character.

Character & Officership

One of the missions of the Naval Academy is to develop midshipmen morally, but there is no magic course you can take to make you moral. You have to decide to become a person of character. In the future you will be faced with difficult moral decisions and, if you haven't formed your character, then you will fail the test and possibly end up a celebrity... in a bad way.

Strategies for Success

- 1) Have a discussion with someone you respect. Ask them how they formed their character.
- 2) Write down all of the decisions you had to make today. Which choices were good and which ones bad? What can you do tomorrow to make better choices?
- 3) Deliberately choose friends who help you become a better version of yourself. If you want to see your future, look at your friends.

“The challenge of education is not to prepare people for success, but to prepare them for failure.”

- Admiral James Stockdale -

TEMPERANCE



Herndon Monument, named for the captain of SS Central America, lost to sea by hurricane. Valuing his life, he valued his mission and his crew more, and went down with the ship, saving the life of others.

“Discipline is the soul of an army. It makes small numbers formidable; procures success to the weak and esteem to all.”

- President George Washington -

Conversation Starters

Give a few examples of pleasures that have been removed from Plebe Summer. Which one is the hardest?

In what way have you seen people be overly self indulgent?

You see donut holes are available in Mitscher on Sunday morning, and you enjoy a few. If you enjoy too many, what will happen at PEP the next morning?

What is Temperance

According to Aristotle, temperance is moderation with regard to bodily pleasures. It can be seen as the mean between extremes of pleasure. The objects

of temperance generally deal with the sense of touch – eating, drinking, and sex. There are three ways to go wrong in an excess of appetite for bodily-touch pleasure:

1. You can delight in the wrong thing.
2. You can delight in the wrong manner.
3. You can delight in something too much.

Aristotle says that self-indulgent people do all three.

Why is Temperance important to professional military officers?

A cursory look at the reasons why Officers are dismissed for cause and Sailors are separated from the Navy will show you why Temperance is important. Let's begin with sex. Officers who have sex with the wrong people (i.e. adultery, prostitution, infidelity, fraternization) break trust with those closest to them and show themselves unworthy of the nation's trust. Pornography consumption leads one to see others as objects for use, and can create an addiction that can cause one to lose their job. Alcohol, if consumed in a manner that causes one to make bad decisions (i.e. driving, violence, infidelity) can lead to death, embarrassment, or an international incident. Food,

if too much or too little is consumed, or not the right kinds of foods can lead to long term health problems and failure to meet Physical Fitness Standards. Social Media, if not controlled, can consume hours of your day to the detriment of your job and relationships.

Strategies for Success

- 1) Once you've identified an area of your life that needs temperance, identify someone who is already excellent in that area, and talk to them about how they do it.
- 2) Make specific fitness and nutrition goals and keep them.

“Self-control is the chief element in self-respect, and self-respect is the chief element in courage.”

- Thucydides, Greek Historian and Author of History of the Peloponnesian War -

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE



Statue of VADM Stockdale outside Luce Hall. What kind of emotional intelligence did he require to endure the torture of his captors in the Vietnam War?

“You don’t lead by hitting people over the head--that’s assault, not leadership.”

- Dwight Eisenhower, Supreme Allied Commander Europe and President of the United States -

Conversation Starters

What is making you upset/angry/sad/etc? How are you feeling?

You’re being corrected for your rates for the 15th time, and you are starting to lose patience with yourself, and maybe others too. How do your emotions affect you during this moment? Are they helpful or not?

Strategies for Success

To increase emotional intelligence, focus on recognizing your emotions, their causes, and handling them appropriately. Be aware of body language. For example, you are upset at breakfast one morning. You realize you are upset because you did not do well at the interval runs at PEP that morning. It is ok to be upset, but it is also ok

to look forward to the next time to do better. You control being upset, while showing your hopefulness to others. Can you think of the body language that would go with this?

“Whatever is begun in anger, ends in shame.”

- Benjamin Franklin -

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