

United States Naval Academy



Life and Leader Points (LLP)

2nd 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 Commandant of Midshipmen identified the need to introduce life skills training to augment the robust military and academic development to enable Midshipmen to excel at life and 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 and 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.

This booklet condenses information from the larger Life Skills Handbook, specifically focusing on topics related to moral development. We hope this booklet will help aid discussion in less formalized and more personalized settings (e.g., “gray space”). Keep it in your pocket as a handy resource.

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ACTIVE LISTENING

How do you incorporate listening to be a better leader?

What is it?

Active listening is a powerful communication technique that is used in counseling, training, and conflict resolution. It requires that the listener fully concentrate, understand, respond and then remember what is being said.

Steps to Active Listening:¹

- 1) Face the speaker and maintain eye contact.
- 2) Be attentive, but relaxed.
- 3) Keep an open mind.
- 4) Listen to words and try to picture what the speaker is saying.
- 5) Don't interrupt and don't impose your own "solutions."
- 6) Wait for the speaker to pause and ask clarifying questions.
- 7) Ask questions only to ensure understanding.
- 8) Try to feel what the speaker is feeling.
- 9) Give the speaker regular feedback.
- 10) Finally, REMEMBER that body language is 80% or more of effective communication.

Active listening techniques include:

- Building trust and establishing rapport.
- Demonstrating concern.
- Paraphrasing to show understanding.
- Nonverbal cues which show understanding such as nodding, eye contact and leaning forward.
- Brief verbal affirmations like “I see,” “I know,” “Sure,” “Thank you,” or “I understand.”

Are there any ways I might practice or work on active listening?

The best way to work on active listening is to practice. When engaged in a conversation, focus your attention on what the other person is saying. Often when we talk to others, we are too busy thinking about ourselves or other things to really listen. Some people are so busy thinking about what they want to say, that they fail to listen to the words being spoken at that moment. So as you are listening, summarize in your mind what the person is saying. When you have a chance, reflect back to them what you are hearing. This type of reflection not only lets the other person know you are listening, but it conveys to them that you really understand.

Practice Exercise: Talk to three people throughout the week using the above mentioned active listening techniques. How is it different from the way you usually interact with others?

¹ Diane Schilling, Ten Steps to Effective Listening, Forbes, Nov 2012

Leadership Quotes:

“Leadership is a two-way street, loyalty up and loyalty down. Respect for one's superiors; care for one's crew.”

~Admiral Grace Hopper, from a *60 Minutes* interview

“Leadership is solving problems. The day soldiers stop bringing you their problems is the day you have stopped leading them. They have either lost confidence that you can help or concluded you do not care. Either case is a failure of leadership.”

~General Colin Powell, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and Secretary of State

“Learn to concentrate on what those around you are saying. Enter as deeply as possible into the mind of each speaker.”

~ Marcus Aurelius, Roman Emperor

“Effective communicators focus on the people with whom they're communicating... it is impossible to effectively communicate to an audience without knowing something about them.”

~ John Maxwell, from *The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader*

HEALTHY INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

How do you develop great relationships?

Healthy Relationships

“No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main...” John Donne highlights a basic truth: we are connected and our lives can either enrich or deplete one another. The foundation of a healthy relationship is friendship. Aristotle defined friendship as two people with goodwill for each other, consciously being aware of and contributing to that goodwill. Cicero described friendship as a mutual identity of understanding and compatibility of views and actions, *“an identity which is strengthened by mutual goodwill and affection.”* He went on to declare: (1) friendship is based on virtue; (2) one never asks a friend to do something wrong or dishonorable; (3) one never looks down on a friend; (4) friends make one another better, are willing to tell the other his/her faults, and are willing to hear about one’s own faults.

The 60-40 Rule. Relationships should be balanced. Any relationship that has one person feeling degraded, used, manipulated by, or lied to, is not healthy. Any relationship which brings shame or pain needs to be critically reviewed, changed and/or ended. A simple way to assess the balance in a relationship is to apply the 60-40 rule: a healthy relationship should be *at most 60%* ‘about’ one of the people and *at least 40%* ‘about’ the other.

Qualities of healthy relationships: Mutual Respect, Trust, Honesty, Kindness, Mutual Goodwill, Good Communication, Compassion, and Fairness.

Forces destructive of healthy relationships: Anger, Jealousy, Dishonesty, Manipulation, Meanness, Narcissism, and Abuse.

Strategies for Success in Healthy Relationships: Intention versus Impact

In relationships, the impact one's words and/or actions have on the other is often different from what was intended. Conflict can arise because we judge our own actions based on our intentions, while we judge another's actions based on their impact upon us. One way to reduce conflict is to have the patience and courage to tell others the impact that they are having on us without making accusations. Conversely, when other people communicate the impact that we are having on them, have the patience and courage to listen, without defensiveness and self-justification based on our "good intentions." Accept responsibility for the impact of your actions and be willing to say "*I am sorry, that is not what I intended, and what can I do to correct or improve the situation?*" A positive and courageous habit of communicating about *Intention and Impact* provides an excellent foundation for a healthy relationship.

Conversation Starters:

1. What are your strengths and weaknesses as a friend? What are the "Good, the Bad, and the Ugly" qualities you bring to a relationship?
2. What virtues can you cultivate that would make you a better friend?
3. Why do people sometimes ask a friend to do something wrong or dishonorable?
4. Why do people in relationships sometimes ask the other person to do something that makes him or her feel uncomfortable, used or degraded? What were they thinking?
5. If you are experiencing conflict, consider some of the following: What are your intentions? What impact do you think you are having on the other person? What impact is the other person having on you? Being as generous as you can be, what do you think are his/her intentions?

Leadership Quotes:

Speaking about his years as a POW in Vietnam, *“From this eight year experience, I distilled one all-purpose idea, plus a few corollaries. It’s a simple idea, an idea as old as the scriptures, an idea that is the epitome of high-mindedness, an idea that naturally and spontaneously comes to men under pressure. If the pressure is intense or of long enough duration, this idea spreads without even the need for its enunciation. It just takes root naturally . . . That idea is you are your brother’s keeper.”*

~Admiral James Stockdale from a 1981 commencement address at John Carroll University

“Leadership is intangible, hard to measure, and difficult to describe. Its quality would seem to stem from many factors. But certainly they must include a measure of inherent ability to control and direct, self-confidence based on expert knowledge, initiative, loyalty, pride and sense of responsibility. Inherent ability cannot be instilled, but that which is latent or dormant can be developed. Other ingredients can be acquired. They are not easily learned. But leaders can be and are made.”

~General C. B. Cates, 19th Commandant of the Marine Corps

“A healthy relationship doesn’t drag you down. It inspires you to be better!”

~ Anonymous

CIVILITY

How can we all get along?

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." In this deeply insightful sentiment, poet Maya Angelou captured the fundamental reason why civility, a demonstrated habit of treating other people with sincere respect and dignity, is such a crucial practice for effective leaders. Individual intentions matter because our intentions motivate our choices, shape our actions, and inform our habits. However, how one chooses to externalize intentions also matters. Civility and incivility is in the mind and heart of the recipient. Winning over and shaping the hearts and minds of followers should be one of the key goals of any good leader. Much can be learned from considering historically celebrated leaders like Sir Ernest Shackleton. He saved the lives of all 27 men stranded with him (for TWO YEARS) in the Antarctic. The majority of their time marooned was spent in very close living conditions and they were in peril constantly. It is easy to understand how and why civility would break down. From reading accounts of their time, lessons emerge that remain crucial today:

Do's:

- Challenge yourself to relate to others as a human being, not just as a Midshipman.
- Tolerate others quirks and foibles in the same manner you hope your strengths and weaknesses will be appreciated.
- Make yourself accessible to people so that you can genuinely get to know them and broaden your perspective, i.e., leave your comfort zone for others.
- Embrace hierarchy when it promotes order and routine, but do not rely upon it as a privilege or leadership crutch.

Don'ts:

- Publically mock or belittle others in a way that communicates a devaluation of the other.
- Remind others/subordinates of their standing or “roles” within our hierarchy in a thoughtless or purposeless manner.
- Tease people in ways that are personal, sarcastic, or that “sting” emotionally.
- Take credit for a team win, but point out teammates’ flaws when difficulties arise.

Strategies for Success

1. Realize and embrace the truth that treating other people consistently with civility requires work.
2. Incorporate non self-centered questions and reflections into your daily thought patterns.
3. Engage with people outside your comfort zone and really listen to their perspectives and stories.
4. Be kind simply for the sake of kindness. Even the small ways count! Hold the door for people as a way to practice considering others. Say “please,” “thank you,” and pass the time of day because it is nice; not only when you feel you must or sporadically, but all the time.

Discussion Questions

1. What leads you to be less than civil?
2. Do you think that being civil will cost you something?
3. Do you find yourself struggling with your emotional responses at certain times of the day?
4. What sorts of factors cause you to be less than your best (examples might include competition, stress, hunger, arrogance, unfair treatment, etc.)?
5. How do you hope others regard you?

Leadership Quotes:

George Washington's Rules of Civility

- *Every Action done in Company, ought to be with Some Sign of Respect, to those that are Present.*
- *Sleep not when others Speak, Sit not when others stand, Speak not when you Should hold your Peace, walk not on when others Stop.*
- *Shew not yourself glad at the Misfortune of another though he were your enemy.*
- *When a man does all he can though it Succeeds not well, blame not him that did it.*
- *Wherein you reprove Another be un-blamable yourself; for example is more prevalent than Precepts.*
- *Undertake not what you cannot Perform but be Careful to keep your Promise.*
- *Speak not Evil of the absent for it is unjust.*
- *Labor to keep alive in your Breast that Little Spark of Celestial fire Called Conscience.*

“The greater person is one of courtesy.”

~ Alfred Lord Tennyson

COMMUNICATIONS AND NEGOTIATIONS (CONFLICT RESOLUTION)

How do I resolve conflicts in a professional manner?

“To listen well is as powerful a means of communication and influence as to talk well.” John Marshall, famous Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, nailed the key to effective communication: listening is of equal importance to speaking. Regardless of our profession, education, or background, how we communicate is often the key to our success, professionally and personally. There are common ingredients to Communication, Negotiation, and Conflict Resolution.

Do’s:

- Actively listen, restate what was said, and ask if you heard/understand the point(s) clearly; show you are seeking to understand the other side.
- Work to: solve a problem, resolve a conflict, and find mutual agreement.
- Stay calm and remember body language is 80+% of communication.
- Be honest, transparent, respectful, and open to questions.

Don’ts:

- Don’t get personal; stay focused on reaching an agreement.
- Don’t make a hasty decision, or respond in anger or in reaction.
- Don’t ignore the other side, repeating the same thing over and over.
- Don’t view communication as a battle to be fought and won.

Strategies for Success:

- 1) Ask friends/company-mates if they consider you a good listener, communicator, or negotiator?
Build on what is effective, and if need be, change what is not.
- 2) Practice being a more effective communicator; actively listening, restating what you heard, and asking if you have understood the other person's point(s) accurately.

Conversation Starters:

- 1) Why do people "lose it" in professional and personal disagreements?
- 2) How do you want to be treated in a discussion, negotiation, or disagreement?
- 3) What have you experienced as the biggest obstacles to resolving conflicts or to reaching a mutually agreeable solution to some disagreement?
- 4) What personal qualities could you cultivate to be a more effective communicator, listener, and negotiator?

Leadership Quotes:

“Optimism and pessimism are infectious and they spread more rapidly from the head down than in any direction.”

~President Dwight Eisenhower

“Never give in, never give in, never, never, never, never in nothing, great or small, large or petty never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense.”

~Sir Winston Churchill, Former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom

“Things are not always right because they are hard, but if they are right one must not mind if they are also hard.”

~Sir Winston Churchill, Former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom

“If one gives answer before hearing, it is folly and shame.”

~ Proverbs 18:13

“The most important single ingredient in the formula of success is knowing how to get along with people.”

~ President Theodore Roosevelt

FRATERNIZATION

How do you manage interpersonal relationships in a professional manner?

Fraternization can sometimes be a confusing topic. Our MIDREGs state that it is circumstances prejudicial to good order and discipline that call into a question a senior's objectivity, result in actual or apparent preferential treatment, undermine the authority of a senior, or compromise the chain of command. What does this really mean? Admittedly, this can be a gray topic that warrants discussion. Fraternalization can tear apart a unit in ways those involved would have otherwise thought as harmless.

Fraternalization is not always sexual in nature—an undue relationship can permeate any work environment and it can be a result of three factors: 1) Perception and a “quid pro quo” relationship, 2) It can be associated to power—top down or bottom up, and 3) Professionalism and the lack thereof in the work place. At the USNA, and most certainly in the fleet, fraternization is a subject that you WILL face, and you must know what it is to be an effective leader. It is a *relationship* and not necessarily a single act.

Official USNA Position:

MIDREGs breaks down fraternization between four categories:

1. Upperclassmen—4/C relationships.
2. MIDN—USNA Staff.
3. MIDN—Enlisted.
4. MIDN—Officers.

Fraternization can apply across the four categories. The conduct system states that Fraternization of a non sexual nature is a major offense. Fraternization of a sexual nature is a 6k level offense. The bottom line is that the perception or actual act of an unduly familiar relationship that disrupts the good order and discipline of the organization is fraternization—whether in the operating forces or at the USNA.

Strategies for Success:

1. If you are ever in a questionable/gray situation always inform someone – your SEL/your superior.
2. If you can answer yes to the following questions you will mitigate fraternization:
 - Is the act/relationship right for yourself?
 - Is the act/relationship right for your subordinate?
 - Is the act/relationship professional in nature?

Think about the perception in every situation. If it can be perceived as fraternization, think of ways you can mitigate the situation (refer to step 1!).

Conversation Starters

1. Are there situations that may be perceived as fraternization, but in reality is a leader's attempt to understand his subordinates?
2. What are situations that fraternization is black and white? Situations that are gray?
3. What are ways you can mitigate fraternization within the brigade? In the operating forces?

References:

- (a) COMDTMIDNINST 5400.6T (MIDREGs)
- (b) COMDTMIDNINST 1610.2G (Admin Performance and Conduct System Manual)

Leadership Quotes:

“Associate with men of good quality if you esteem your own reputation; for it is better to be alone than in bad company.”

~ President George Washington

“The supreme quality for leadership is unquestionably integrity. Without it, no real success is possible, no matter whether it is on a section gang, a football field, in an army, or in an office.”

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

“The first and best victory is to conquer self.”

~ Plato, Philosopher

“Before you act, ask yourself: ‘What are the likely consequences of this act? Will I later have cause to regret it?’”

~ Marcus Aurelius, Roman Emperor

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