

Marine Corps Core Values

Generation after generation of American men and women have given special meaning to the title United States Marine. These same men and women live by a set of enduring Core Values which form the bedrock of their character. The Core Values give them strength and regulate their behavior; they bond the Marine Corps into a total force that can meet any challenge.

HONOR



Guides Marines to exemplify the ultimate in ethical and moral behavior; never lie, cheat, or steal; abide by an uncompromising code of integrity; respect human dignity; and respect others. The qualities of maturity, dedication, trust, and dependability commit Marines to act responsibly; to be accountable for their actions; to fulfill their obligations; and to hold others accountable for their actions.

COURAGE

Is the mental, moral, and physical strength ingrained in Marines. It carries them through the challenges of combat and aids them in overcoming fear. It is the inner strength that enables a Marine to do what is right; to adhere to a higher standard of personal conduct; to lead by example; and to make tough decisions under stress and pressure.



COMMITMENT



Is the spirit of determination and dedication found in Marines. It leads to the highest order of discipline for individuals and units. It is the ingredient that enables 24-hours a day dedication to Corps and country. It inspires the unrelenting determination to achieve a standard of excellence in every endeavor.

As a future Marine, reaffirm these Core Values and ensure they guide your performance, behavior, and conduct every minute of the day.

Marine Corps Leadership

LEADERSHIP

Definition: The sum of those qualities of intellect, human understanding, and moral character that allow a person to inspire and control a group of people successfully.

Purpose: The purpose of Marine Corps leadership is the creation and maintenance of an organization which will loyally and willingly accomplish any reasonable task assigned or indicated, and will initiate suitable action in the absence of orders.

LEADERSHIP: PRIMARY AND SECONDARY OBJECTIVE

Mission Accomplishment: The primary objective of Marine Corps leadership is to accomplish the mission — (get the job done). Good leadership gets the job done in the quickest, most efficient way. Mission accomplishment, when achieved, really stands for protecting the American people and protecting the welfare of our nation. Placing mission accomplishment before troop welfare merely means that all responsible military personnel must be prepared to risk their lives for the lives of those they have taken an oath to defend.

Troop Welfare: The secondary goal of leadership is to provide for the welfare of Marines. Troop welfare pertains to physical needs which include food, clothing, and shelter and security. Your security is also a physical need. Moral welfare includes a well-developed sense of right and wrong, the right kind of friends, and a wholesome outlook on life. Finally, your mental welfare addresses recognition, a chance to learn and grow, and a proper mix of work and play.

LEADERS AND THEIR MARINES

Spirit of Comradeship: There is the spirit of comradeship which has traditionally existed throughout the ranks of the Marine Corps. It is a vital characteristic of the Corps, and you must help



keep it alive and make it the moving force in your unit.

Teacher/Scholar: There is a very special relationship between officers and enlisted Marines. That relationship is described in the following quotation from the Marine Corps Manual: "The relationship between officers and enlisted men should in no sense be that of superior and inferior nor that of master and servant, but rather that of teacher and scholar. The Marine Corps Manual further describes that officers, especially commanders, are responsible for the physical, mental, and moral welfare, as well as the discipline and military training of the men under their command who are serving the nation in the Marine Corps." If your leaders are to be like teachers, then the relationship implies that you have a responsibility to be good "students" and learn from your leaders, and heed their advice when you have personal problems.

LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES

Leadership principles are general rules that have guided the conduct and actions of successful leaders of the past. Although there are eleven of these principles, you will probably hear the most about the first three; be technically and tactically proficient; know yourself and seek self-improvement; and know your Marines and look out for their welfare.

Principle #1: Be technically and tactically proficient. Simply stated, this principle means that you must



know your job thoroughly. Try to round out your military education by going to Marine Corps schools, participating in correspondence courses through the Marine Corps Institute (MCI), and undertaking other forms of self-study. Prepare yourself for the next higher rank.

Principle #2: Know yourself and seek self-improvement. You have to know yourself in order to be a good leader, and the easiest way to do that is to sit down and honestly think about your strengths and weaknesses. Your immediate supervisor will also provide feedback on your performance. It may take many forms such as counseling, pro/con marks, and advice. Once you determine there is room for improvement, make the effort necessary to improve.

Principle #3: Know your Marines and look out for their welfare. You are probably thinking that this principle is only for those leaders senior in rank. You have to know the Marine you work with just as much as senior leaders must know their subordinates. Even as a Private or PFC in a fire team, you must know the other Marines in your team and look out for their welfare. They must do the same for you. Teamwork is the name of the game in the Corps, so make every effort to become better acquainted with your fellow Marines.

Principle #4: Keep your Marines informed. Everyone needs to know what's going on. When knowledge is shared, it encourages teamwork and enhances morale. Therefore, you should pass the word when you can.

Principle #5: Set the example. Marines instinctively look to their leaders for patterns of conduct which

they may either follow, emulate or use as an excuse for their own shortcomings. Others will look at the pride you show in the Corps and in being a Marine. Set the example for your fellow Marines with your personal habits. Don't use profanity just because others do. Be loyal to your seniors, peers, and subordinates. Most importantly, set the example of moral courage.

Principle #6: Ensure that the task is understood, supervised and accomplished. The leader must give clear, concise orders to avoid confusion or misunderstanding. Issuing the order is the easiest part of a leader's responsibilities. Far more important is the supervision on the leader's part to see if that order is properly executed, and the assigned task is properly performed. The leader must strike a balance between not enough supervision and too much. Too much supervision tends to destroy self-confidence, initiative and the sense of responsibility. Equally important, the subordinate is responsible to do the work without continual supervision and prompting.

Principle #7: Train your Marines as a team. You must not only know your own job but the job of the other team members as well. A unit working as a team generally gives a good account of itself. The reason is that each member is carrying his share of the load. The leader trains Marines to perform and react, to assist one another and ensure the mission is accomplished.

Principle #8: Make sound and timely decisions. Once decisions have been made, your responsibility is to initiate action and get the job done. You should anticipate that changes may have to be made to even the best plans, so you must be prepared to adapt quickly and get on with the business at hand. You also have a responsibility to make tactful suggestions to your seniors so that they can have the best possible information upon which to base their decisions.

Principle #9: Develop a sense of responsibility in your subordinates. The leader of a unit is responsible for everything the unit does or fails to do. The leader can and should delegate authority, but can never delegate responsibility. Any effort to evade responsibility will destroy the bonds of loyalty and respect which exist between the leader and subordinates.

Principle #10: Employ your command in accordance with its capabilities. To expect a unit to do more than it is reasonably capable invites disaster. To ask it to do less is poor economics and is detrimental to accomplishing the mission. Recurrent failure may bring about a collapse of morale, esprit de corps, and efficiency. On the other hand, when the situation demands, Marines may sometimes have to be pushed far beyond their normal capabilities in order to exploit a victory or to avoid a costly defeat. Marine Corps history is abundant with examples of small units accomplishing the seemingly impossible.

Principle #11: Take responsibility for your actions. Take initiative and look for more responsibility. Use the chain of command when you have problems or need advice. Don't get hot under the collar if someone corrects errors in your work or questions in your judgment. Accept it as valid constructive criticism and learn from it. It will help you avoid making the same mistake twice. Your leaders will be watching to see if you can handle increased responsibility, so prepare for it and be ready when they give it to you. Remember, each Marine is responsible for the effectiveness of the unit.

LEADERSHIP TRAITS

The 14 leadership traits are qualities of thought and action which, if demonstrated in daily activities, help Marines earn the respect, confidence, and loyal cooperation of other Marines. It is extremely important that you understand the meaning of each leadership trait and how to develop it, so you know what goals to set as you work to become a good leader and a good follower.

Bearing

Definition: Bearing is the way you conduct and carry yourself. Your manner should reflect alertness, competence, confidence, and control.

Suggestions for Improvement. To develop bearing, you should hold yourself to the highest standards of personal conduct. Never be content with meeting only the minimum requirements.

Courage

Definition: Courage is what allows you to remain calm while recognizing fear. Moral courage means having the inner strength to stand up for what is



right and to accept blame when something is your fault. Physical courage means that you can continue to function effectively when there is physical danger present.

Suggestions for Improvement. You can begin to control fear by practicing self-discipline and calmness. If you fear doing certain things required in your daily life, force yourself to do them until you can control your reaction.

Decisiveness

Definition: Decisiveness means that you are able to make good decisions without delay. Get all the facts and weight them against each other. By acting calmly and quickly, you should arrive at a sound decision. You announce your decisions in a clear, firm, professional manner.

Suggestions for Improvement. Practice being positive in your actions instead of acting halfheartedly or changing your mind on an issue.

Dependability

Definition: Dependability means that you can be relied upon to perform your duties properly. It means that you can be trusted to complete a job. It is the willing and voluntary support of the policies and orders of the chain of command. Dependability also means consistently putting forth your best effort in an attempt to achieve the highest standards of performance.

Suggestions for Improvement. You can increase your dependability by forming the habit of being where you're supposed to be on time, by not making excuses and by carrying out every task to the best of your ability regardless of whether you like it or agree with it.



Endurance

Definition: Endurance is the mental and physical stamina that is measured by your ability to withstand pain, fatigue, stress, and hardship. For example, enduring pain during a conditioning march in order to improve stamina is crucial in the development of leadership.

Suggestions for Improvement. Develop your endurance by engaging in physical training that will strengthen your body. Finish every task to the best of your ability by forcing yourself to continue when you are physically tired and your mind is sluggish.

Enthusiasm

Definition: Enthusiasm is defined as a sincere interest and exuberance in the performance of your duties. If you are enthusiastic, you are optimistic, cheerful, and willing to accept the challenges.

Suggestions for Improvement. Understanding and belief in your mission will add to your enthusiasm for your job. Try to understand why even uninteresting jobs must be done.

Initiative

Definition: Initiative is taking action even though you haven't been given orders. It means meeting new and unexpected situations with prompt action. It includes using resourcefulness to get something done without the normal material or methods being available to you.

Suggestions for Improvement. To improve your initiative, work on staying mentally and physically alert. Be aware of things that need to be done and then do them without having to be told.

Integrity

Definition: Integrity means that you are honest and truthful in what you say and do. You put honesty, sense of duty, and sound moral principles above all else.

Suggestions for Improvement. Be absolutely honest and truthful at all times. Stand up for what you believe to be right.

Judgment

Definition: Judgment is your ability to think about things clearly, calmly, and in an orderly fashion so that you can make good decisions.

Suggestions for Improvement. You can improve your judgment if you avoid making rash decisions. Approach problems with a common sense attitude.

Justice

Definition: Justice is defined as the practice of being fair and consistent. A just person gives consideration to each side of a situation and bases rewards or punishments on merit.

Suggestions for Improvement. Be honest with yourself about why you make a particular decision. Avoid favoritism. Try to be fair at all times and treat all things and people in an equal manner.

Knowledge

Definition: Knowledge is the understanding of a science or art. Knowledge means that you have acquired information and that you understand people. Your knowledge should be broad, and in addition to knowing your job, you should know your unit's policies and keep up with current events.

Suggestions for Improvement. Increase your knowledge by remaining alert. Listen, observe, and find out about things you don't understand. Study field manuals and other military literature.

Loyalty

Definition: Loyalty means that you are devoted to your country, the Corps, and to your seniors, peers, and subordinates. The motto of our Corps is Semper Fidelis!, (Always Faithful). You owe unwavering loyalty up and down the chain of command, to seniors, subordinates, and peers.

Suggestions for Improvement. To improve your loyalty you should show your loyalty by never discussing the problems of the Marine Corps or your unit with outsiders. Never talk about seniors unfavorably in front of your subordinates. Once a decision is made and the order is given to execute it, carry out that order willingly as if it were your own.

Tact

Definition: Tact means that you can deal with people in a manner that will maintain good relations and avoid problems. It means that you are polite, calm, and firm.

Suggestions for Improvement. Begin to develop your tact by trying to be courteous and cheerful at all times. Treat others as you would like to be treated.

Unselfishness

Definition: Unselfishness means that you avoid making yourself comfortable at the expense of others. Be considerate of others. Give credit to those who deserve it.

Suggestions for Improvement. Avoid using your position or rank for personal gain, safety, or pleasure at the expense of others. Be considerate of others.

Because it is important to always be able to remember the basic leadership traits, the acronym “**J.J. DID TIE BUCKLE**” is used. Each letter in the acronym corresponds to the first letter of one of the traits. By remembering the acronym, you will be better able to recall the traits.