



## Semi-Monthly Leadership Letter

I have a goal this year of encouraging you all to be better leaders and better at your jobs. I am constantly trying to learn and work to be a better leader, team member, boss, and person in my personal and professional life. I would like to share some of what I learn with you purely for encouragement.

Book - ***Extreme Ownership: How U.S. Navy Seals Lead and Win.*** By **Jocko Willink and Leif Babin** (I suggest reading this book if you have the time. It tells crazy and intense battlefield stories from Iraq.

- **Principle #1 – Extreme Ownership** “On any team, in any organization, all responsibility for success and failure rests with the leader.” The leader must own his job completely. Mistakes that happen on your job have happened because somewhere along the line you failed to communicate, or direct, or plan properly for the success of the team. This ultimately flows back to me, and all failures of all teams fall back on me. If everyone takes ownership of your specific job, task, or role then we become that much better.
- **Principle #2 – “There’s no such thing as bad teams, only bad leaders.”** “Its not what you preach, it’s what you tolerate.” By understanding and believing that there are no bad teams we can guarantee that we will not have “bad teams”. If there are bad team members they either need to be trained, or they do not need to be team members. If all team members are good BADASS, then all teams will be badass if they are led well. “Leaders should never be satisfied. They must always strive to improve, and they must build that mind-set into the team.”
- **Principle #3 – Believe** - “In order to convince and inspire others to follow and accomplish a mission, a leader must be a true believer in the mission.” To be a believer in the mission you must know, own and have confidence in your plan. Then you can communicate the team members what the goal is and accomplish it.
- **Principle #4 – Check the ego** “Everyone has an ego. Ego drives the most successful people in life... They want to win, to be the best. That is good. But when ego clouds our judgement and prevents us from seeing the world as it is, then ego becomes destructive.” The risk of our ego is that we do not hear or respect to opinions of subordinates, or that we do not see that there may be a better way of doing something. Always be changing, and always be willing to change the plan when it is clear that another method is better.
- **Principle #5 – Cover and Move.** “All elements within the greater team are crucial and must work together to accomplish the mission, mutually supporting one another for that singular purpose.” “If the overall team fails, everyone fails, even if a specific member or an element within the team did their job successfully.” “Alternatively, when the team succeeds, everyone within and supporting that team succeeds. Every individual and every team within the larger team gets to share in the success.”
- **Principle #6 – Simple.** “Simplifying as much as possible is crucial to success. When plans and orders are too complicated, people may not understand them. And when things go wrong, and they inevitably do go wrong, complexity compounds issues that can spiral out of control into total disaster.” “Plans and orders must be communicated in a manner that is simple, clean and concise. Everyone that is part of the mission must know and understand his role in the mission and what to do in the event of likely contingencies.” “As a leader, it doesn’t matter how well you feel you have presented the information or communicated the plan. If your team doesn’t get it, you have not kept things simple and you have failed.”
- **Principle #7 - Prioritize and Execute** – “Even the most competent of leaders can be overwhelmed if they try to tackle multiple problems or a number of tasks simultaneously.” “The team will likely fail at each of those tasks. Instead, leaders must determine the highest priority task and execute. When overwhelmed, fall back upon this principle: Prioritize and Execute.”
- **Principle #8 – Decentralized Command** – “Human beings are generally not capable of managing more than six to ten people.” “Teams must be broken down into manageable elements of four to five operators, with a clearly designated leader.” “Junior leaders must be empowered to make decisions on key tasks necessary to

accomplish that mission in the most effective and efficient manner possible.” “Leaders must be free to move to where they are most needed, which changes throughout the course of an operation.”

- **Principle #9 – Plan** – **When developing a plan you must understand the end goal.** “Leaders must delegate the planning process down the chain as much as possible to key subordinate leaders.” “Giving front line troops ownership of even a small piece of the plan gives them buy-in, helps them understand the reasons behind the plan, and better enables them to believe in the mission.”
- **Principle #10 – Leading down the chain** – “Any good leader is immersed in the planning and execution of tasks, projects and operations to move the team toward a strategic goal. Leaders possess insight into the bigger picture and why specific tasks need to be accomplished.” **“And it is paramount that senior leaders explain to their junior leaders executing the mission how their role contributes to big picture success.”**
- **Principle #11 – Leading up the chain** – **“Take responsibility for leading everyone in your world, subordinates and superiors alike.”** “If someone isn’t doing what you want or need them to do, look in the mirror first and determine what you can do to better enable this.” “Don’t ask your leader what you should do, tell them what you are going to do.” If I or anyone else in a leadership role is not providing the support, information, men or anything you need it is your responsibility to tell them. I can not read minds and I do make mistakes.
- **Principle #12 – Decisiveness amid uncertainty** – **“Leaders must be prepared to make an educated guess based on previous experience...** and whatever intelligence is available in the immediate moment.” Rarely do I have the time to be 100% certain about decisions, WE ARE GOING TO MAKE MISTAKES.
- **Principle #13 – Discipline equals freedom** – When methods and processes are disciplined and consistent, we have the freedom to apply them across a variety of jobs and be successful. This is a critical part of our success as a company. We will continue to become more disciplined as we grow and get better.

Thank you for your time.

Doug Stelle

\*\* Almost everything above is a direct quote from the book. Please do not give me the credit for the content.