Twelve Mentorship Points for Young Leaders

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Twelve Mentorship Points for Young Leaders

- Actively manage your public image
- Dress for success
- Work your boss' boss' priorities
- Nobody cares for your career like you do
- Plan, but bloom where you are planted
- Six steps to success: think, think, think – work, work, work
- HQ vs. Field – know the other side
- Don't "show up and throw up"
- Email sent does not equal task complete
- Death to (undefined) pronouns!
- Listen – people say the strangest things
- What do you REALLY want?
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**Actively manage your public image**

- You broadcast an image 24/7/365
- Others will see and respond to your image no matter what it is
- It will affect your career even if you think it shouldn't
- Don't leave it to chance: manage it!

**Dress for success**

- Subset of previous point
- You are inspected every day by your troops and your peers as well as your bosses
- They know what right looks like
- Every organization has norms, expectations and limits
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**Work your boss' boss' priorities**

- This is a win-win for both you and your boss
- Your part of the organization becomes more valuable to the whole
- Organizational effectiveness is the real goal; sub-optimization can create system losses greater than system gains

**Nobody cares for your career like you do**

- There will be good bosses and bad, learn from both – records get promoted
- The good bosses will take care of you but they are temporary
- Give them all the best career inputs you possibly can – performance reports, promotion / retention forms, awards (military decorations), etc.
Plan, but bloom where you are planted

- Career planning is a must; don't leave this to chance either
- That said, the most important job is the one you are in
- I watched an AF Major I worked for spend all of his time on the phone working career angles and his job fell apart: he got passed over for promotion

Six steps to success: think, think, think – work, work, work

- All six steps are important...seriously
- It takes copious amounts of both thinking and working to achieve your goals
- I learned this from the guy who chewed my butt more than all other bosses combined in my whole life
HQ vs. Field – know the other side

- Headquarters and field units are both necessary and need each other
- Knowing what the other side needs and actively feeding it to them makes you a valuable leader
- Ignoring and/or blaming the other side is detrimental to the organization

Don't "show up and throw up"

- It begins with "Boss, I have a problem..."
- The higher you go, the more you need to bring potential options to the table with analysis in terms of cost, risk, and benefit plus views of others
- Just detailing how wet, chunky and smelly it is doesn't get the organization toward a solution
Email sent does not equal task complete

- This seems self-explanatory, right? Sadly, not always...
- As a senior leader - I expect follow up, effort to get around or over roadblocks, and elevation of issues
- Task complete means just that – and one email rarely gets the job done

Death to (undefined) pronouns!

- This is a problem in American society
- Generally speaking, less pronoun use equals clearer communication
- If/when you do use them, define EXACTLY who it is you're talking about
- Many interpretations possible – kill all that do not apply!
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Listen – people say the strangest things

- Everyone has something valuable to say, even if it's something you disagree with
- Asking open ended questions and taking the time to listen will usually benefit you far more than you anticipate
- Eye contact, non-verbals, take notes, repeat what you think you heard

What do you REALLY want?

- This is a soul-searching question
- Work/life balance; it will change
- Life is a team sport
- Values, ethics, and character matter
- In the end, what will the person in the mirror tell you?
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Questions / Comments