

It's Simple

(But Not Easy)

Leadership Lessons from Admiral McRaven's *The Wisdom of the Bullfrog*



Death Before Dishonor

(Be a person of integrity)

1. Be fair and honorable in your business dealings. It's the only way that you and your employees can leave a legacy to be proud of.
2. Never lie, cheat, steal, or tolerate those who do. The culture of your organization starts with you.
3. Own your lapses in judgment. It happens to everyone. Correct the problem and return to being a person of good character.

You Can't Surge Trust

(Be trustworthy)

1. Engage with your employees on a personal level to show them you are a leader of good character, a trustworthy individual.
2. Only promise what you can deliver. The quickest way to lose trust is to overpromise and underdeliver.
3. Know that trust is built over time. Don't rush it.

When in Command, Command

(Be confident in yourself)

1. Be confident. You were given the job because you have talent and experience. Trust your instincts.
2. Be decisive. Don't take too much council of your fears. Be thoughtful, but not paralyzed by indecision.
3. Be passionate. Show your employees you care about them and about the mission.

We All Have Our Frog Floats

(Have a little humility)

1. Be humble in your demeanor and your expectations.
2. Accept the fact that you will be asked to do jobs that are beneath your status. Do them to the best of your ability.
3. Measure the strength of your employees by their willingness to do the little tasks and do them well.

The Only Easy Day Was Yesterday

(Demonstrate that you have stamina)

1. You must bring energy and enthusiasm every single day.
2. You are not entitled to anything but more hard work. The rank and file are working hard and getting paid less.
3. Attack each day as though it were critical to the organization's success.

Run to the Sound of the Guns

(Be aggressive in solving problems)

1. Be aggressive. When you see a problem, do something about it. That's what is expected of leaders.
2. Move to a place where you can best assess the nature of the problem and provide guidance and resources to resolve it as quickly as possible.
3. Communicate your intent every step of the way.

Sua Sponte

(Encourage your employees to take the initiative)

1. Foster a culture of action, allowing the rank and file to take the initiative and fix problems that need addressing.
2. Accept the fact that this will lead to zealotry and the occasional screwup. This overenthusiasm is better than a culture of inaction.
3. Praise those who attempt to solve problems on their own, even if the results are not as expected.

Who Dares Wins

(Be prepared to take risks)

1. Seek opportunities to take risks. No great leader was ever timid or weak-kneed.
2. Mitigate the risk through extensive planning and preparation.
3. Learn from your mistakes and be prepared to take the next big risk. Don't let a single failure define you.

Hope Is Not a Strategy

(Do the detailed planning necessary for success)

1. Have a vision that says what you are going to do. Make it bold and inspiring.
2. Have a strategy that tells how you are going to do it. Make it clear and concise.
3. Have a plan that shows who is responsible and the details of implementation. They must all be connected.

No Plan Survives First Contact with the Enemy

(Have a Plan B)

1. Always consider the worst-case scenario and plan accordingly.
2. Test the plan to ensure everyone in the organization knows how to react when things go poorly.
3. Be prepared. Murphy was an optimist.

It Pays to be a Winner

(Establish standards of conduct and performance)

1. Establish a winning culture by setting high standards. Your employees want to be challenged.
2. Hold people accountable when they fail to meet the standards. Accountability is the only thing separating the high performers from the pack.
3. Acknowledge those who meet or exceed the standard. It will reinforce the winning culture.

A Shepherd Should Smell Like His Sheep

(Spend time on the "factory floor")

1. Share the hardships with your employees. You will gain their respect and learn about yourself as a leader.
2. Share the camaraderie. Let the employees see you having fun (within reason). They want to know that their leader is human as well.
3. Listen to the rank and file. They have solutions to many of the problems you struggle with.

Troop the Line

(Listen to your employees)

1. Get out of your office and talk to the employees at the far end of the chain of command.
2. Find an opportunity to solve small but seemingly intractable problems.
3. Ensure your senior staff knows that these "little problems" can have major effects on morale.

Expect What You Inspect

(The quality of your work will depend on the quality of your oversight)

1. Identify the core competencies within your organization.
2. Develop a plan to inspect these areas on a regularly scheduled basis.
3. Show up during an inspection to ensure the rank and file understand that you, the leader, value the process and their efforts.

Communicate, Communicate, Communicate

(Communicate your actions)

1. Establish a means for communications to flow in both directions.
2. Confirm that the values and the goals of the organization are understood down to the lowest-ranking member.
3. Never take a significant action without having a plan for informing the rank and file.

When in Doubt, Overload

(Work hard to overcome your shortfalls)

1. Work hard. Everyone expects it from their leader.
2. Work harder. Give the extra effort. It will inspire the rank and file.
3. Work your hardest. It will open opportunities that didn't exist before.

Can You Stand Before the Long Green Table?

(Be accountable for your actions)

1. Ensure that all your decisions are moral, legal, and ethical.
2. Ask yourself if reasonable people would accept what you are doing as good and decent.
3. Sooner or later, you will be held to account for your actions. Always do the right thing.

Always Have a Swim Buddy

(Have a partner in your leadership journey)

1. Find a person you can trust implicitly. Be prepared to lean on them in times of great stress.
2. Accept both their support and criticism with equal grace.
3. Be a swim buddy to others. Someone out there needs you!