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Center for
Personal and
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Development

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Leading the Way in Sailor Development

Message from the CO



In my journey through the land of "soft skills" these last three years, a paradox has crystallized for me: The more open individuals are to personal reflection and leader development, the less they need it provided in a structured format. The opposite is true as well: The more resistance to dedicating time to personal development, the more individuals tend to need it. Call it [Emotional Intelligence](#), call it self-awareness, call it whatever you want – there is clearly a relationship between one's willingness to live an "examined life" and one's likelihood to lead a professional life of character, integrity and enlightened leadership. You can imagine, then, my concern every time I hear one of my shipmates, especially my fellow officers, express that they are too busy (meaning it's not a priority) to take the opportunity to sit in a seminar and reflect on leadership – the very foundation of what we are about in the military.

There are two distinct aspects of this dynamic worthy of reflection. The first is the Navy and warfare community perspective, and the second is the individual perspective and personal attitude.

The Navy formally acknowledges the value of leadership training opportunities. [OPNAV guidance](#) and associated [MILPERSMAN articles](#) stipulate participation in leader training at designated milestones for officers and enlisted personnel. How are we doing on meeting these? The prospective XO, CO and Major Command courses at [Command Leadership School \(CLS\)](#) are well supported by the line officer communities. (There are staff officer communities still lagging to meet this requirement.) On the other end of the officer career spectrum, the same general observation is true of the Division Officer Leadership course. Because it is built into line officer pipelines, the attendance percentages are high. Our lower percentage of participation is at the mid-career, Department Head level. This is when "pipelines" and career paths are diffused, and it becomes incumbent on the officer and BUPERS to ensure it happens en route. The enlisted leader continuum is now command delivered, so units have a focused opportunity to greatly influence the tenor and delivery of this training. The challenge is to create a priority wedge in the daily whirlwind to ensure that it is conducted appropriately. (I have seen a wide spectrum of delivery for this, from excellent to nonexistent ... see the CMC's column.)

Just as important as our organizational commitment to leader development is one's personal perspective on self-assessment and individual growth. Even at CLS, among those identified by our selection system as the "best of the best," we have a disturbing number of leaders who arrive unconvinced that CLS (or ANYONE for that matter) has anything to offer them. They have somehow slipped the shackles of mere mortals and have "arrived." Perhaps it is because performance and egos have been rewarded throughout a career based on the technical mastery of a war-fighting capability. But this narrow view of performance, without a balancing force of introspection, leads to what can only be called arrogance. We've all known leaders felled by their failure to realize mission success doesn't always reflect the best leadership practices. [Vice Adm. James Stockdale](#), the namesake of most of the Navy's points of leadership excellence, challenges us in his writings to balance our commitment to technical proficiency with regular intervals of exposure to deep thought and self-reflection, often primed by the study of classic humanities and philosophy. [Joint Professional Military Education](#) is a natural opportunity for such reflection, but not all get this opportunity, and quite frankly, it needs to be more regular than once or twice in a career. With limited windows for formal self-development, we should embrace every opportunity and challenge ourselves to a mindset of trusting that we can always improve; we can always learn.

I depart CPPD with a sense of satisfaction in what this command does to foster the development of these intangible "soft skills" in the Navy, yet I know we can do better. As we relentlessly continue the pursuit to provide better developmental opportunities for our workforce, I challenge all -- especially those in positions of leadership -- to a renewed commitment to personal reflection and growth. Make it a mindset and a lifestyle, not a single "event." Intentionally model it to others, and your impact will be more far-reaching than you know. Fly, sail safe!

– CAPT Chuck Hollingsworth

CMC Corner

As we approach another advancement cycle and a new crop of Petty Officer and Chief Petty Officer (CPO) selectees, let's review [leadership training](#) and the leadership continuum. As we all know, leadership is the cornerstone of our success as a service, and leadership training is the foundation on which we build our leaders. Our courses in the enlisted leadership continuum are command delivered, leaving a tremendous responsibility within each command to ensure training is executed and documented properly. That responsibility falls squarely on the backs of each and every [CPO Mess](#) and its top leaders. Command Master Chiefs and Leading Chief Petty Officers are the leaders whose efforts are required to ensure that the quality of training is superior. CPPD is currently working on revising future courseware, but without the energy of key leaders within the Mess, our Sailors will not have the best opportunity to succeed at the expected level. I ask that each and every one of you in the CPO ranks play a role, commensurate with your position, to ensure we are affording our Sailors the training they deserve. This will be my last column before turning over with CMDM Ken Schmidt from USS KEARSARGE and heading back to the fleet. Serving as CMC of CPPD has been a distinct privilege and honor. Best regards, and good luck to all who serve.

Hooya!

– CMDM Stephan Fontenot

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