

Running Head: LEADERS WITH PROFILES

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Ethics Paper: Leaders with Profiles

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When it comes to excelling as a Soldier, there is one key element in serving our country that cannot be overlooked or taken lightly. The key element is none other than that of leadership. When you are serving in the capacity as a leader, rest assured that all eyes are on you watching every move you make. That subordinate Soldiers in particular always see you with different eyes. Most importantly, they and some of your peers and superiors often turn to you for guidance and information, based on your knowledge and experience. They believe in their hearts that you possess a lot of wisdom and could possibly be that mentor they long to have that would guide them in the right direction.

But what happens to the heart and mind of that Soldier, peer, or subordinate when their leader sustains an injury that would preclude him or her from leading from the front? What about that leader who has been in the trenches and pushing Soldiers for a long time but now can't because of an injury to his or her body. It's a known fact that the human body takes a pounding if you stay in the military for an extended period of years. Our bodies do not heal as fast as it did when we were in our late teens to mid and late twenties. It takes just as long for the body to heal if your age is in the mid thirties to late forties. What used to take two weeks to heal now can take anywhere from two to three months.

At some point and time in the life of a career Soldier, he or she may sustain an injury that will not allow them to be leaders in some particular units. Their hearts and minds are up to the challenge but their bodies will not allow it to happen because of the rigor activities associated with being a leader serving in the best armed and ready military force in the entire world.

An ethical issue in this case would be allowing a leader to lead who has an injury that limits what they can do in the presence of their Soldiers. I have often wondered if it is

possible to be effective with a profile that limits the ability to work. I have seen several leaders with profiles that restricted their capabilities, who were allowed to lead Soldiers. At the senior noncommissioned officer rank (E-7 thru E9); it's imperative that you lead from the front and not the rear. It's virtually impossible for a Soldier not to see a leader who's somewhat limited in their capabilities to lead because of an injury they may have sustained. But the reality is, there are some leaders who are on profile and continue to push their troops forward while they follow from behind. This is leading from the rear at its worse.

It's no secret that as the body ages, it goes through several noticeable changes. Medical research has proven that we are in our physical prime condition at or near the end of our twenties or near the early thirties. Some Soldiers and the average athlete peak in their prime about the same time in age. I like to use the analogy of a professional NBA basketball player with the longevity he may have in the league. Training, pre-season, and 82 games during a regular scheduled season is very demanding and stressful on the body. It's very rare for a player to perform the same physically after being in the league for ten years just as he did when he was a rookie. The same serves true for the Soldier. We perform our most physically early in our careers especially if we're pursuing all kinds of special skill badges and tabs. The body also takes a toll especially doing pre-deployment, deployments, field exercises, mini-training exercises, and numerous hours just planning and prepping.

One thing to consider is that once a Soldier progress in rank, some roles tends to change. I believe it's safe to say that the role shifts somewhat from being that hard charging worker to super mentor and then excellent role model.

In this capacity is where the Army wants its leaders to spread the wealth of knowledge and experiences they've obtain over the years. Make no mistake about it; a leader must be able to lead and walk from the front. Leaders today become more administrative type workers as they progress in rank and hold positions such as Platoon Sergeants, Section Sergeants, First Sergeants, and even some Staff Sergeants Major. The only exception here is the First Sergeant. The First Sergeant is the heartbeat of any unit and absolutely must lead from the front.

I can vividly remember the encounter I had with my very first First Sergeant and Command Sergeant Major. They were somewhat less physically fit and had appearances nothing like the First Sergeants and Sergeants Major of today. The Army needs leaders that are physically fit and able to perform on the battlefield like never before. Soldiers deserve to deploy with leaders that are there with them on the battlefield and not those who are always staying behind on rear detachment. It would be very difficult for me to be in a leadership position and watch my Soldiers deploy without me.

Injuries happen all the time but it is best to let those leaders who are capable to lead from the front, lead the way. The Army is in need of able bodies at all echelons. Our leaders must remain fit and if they become injured, they can still be of use to the greatest military force in the world in other capacities that will benefit this organization as a whole. There is no way they can serve in the role of leading troops if they have a profile. Leaders lead from the front and not the rear.