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14. ABSTRACT A Get Real Get Better (GRGB) organization requires a learning culture. The Navy must cultivate an environment that enables and supports self-examination, behavior modification, and relationship building which are essential to creating an organizational learning culture. The Special Operations Forces (SOF) community has incorporated these principles in a way that could benefit the Navy in its effort to implement GRGB.				
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**Investing in service members' personal growth produces more effective organizations:
Lessons from SOF that can inform the Navy's implementation of GRGB.**

By

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I. Introduction

The United States Navy is world-class, but its performance does not consistently match its reputation. Admiral Gilday highlighted that closing the performance gap between its best and worst commands will require a culture change to achieve a naval warfighting advantage¹. His call for the Navy to Get Real, Get Better (GRGB) directs leaders to adopt principles that will help accelerate the service's efforts to adapt, learn, and improve. Although there are silos of excellence, the implication is that portions of the force do not embrace the principles needed for the entire U.S. Navy to be a GRGB organization. To adjust successfully, the Navy must empower its people to identify problems and develop and implement innovative solutions. This requires normalizing the behavior of accumulating shared learning to educate future generations more efficiently.

Implementing a culture change in the Navy will be challenging. The Navy will contend with institutional inertia, lost productivity while implementing change, and even a fear of failure. The Special Operations Forces (SOF) community has contended with similar issues, and the Navy could leverage lessons learned to apply during the transition to a GRGB culture. Some may argue that lessons from SOF are irrelevant since that community has a unique mission with tailored hiring pathways and resourcing. However, any organization can use the principles the SOF community uses to foster a culture aligned with the direction of its leadership. Like the Navy, Special Operations Command (SOCOM) has struggled to meet its full potential in the past. Yet, it has demonstrated a willingness to identify shortcomings, adjust organizational goals and priorities, and develop its service members to better align with its goals.

¹ ADM Michael M. Gilday, Get Real Get Better 2022 Review and 2023 Guidance, February 15, 2023, 1.

At the core of the GRGB call to action is an acknowledgment that the Navy requires a learning culture. Its culture must enable and support its Sailors' personal growth by increasing their self-awareness, self-examination, and ability to understand how their actions impact others. As service members accelerate their learning, they will invest this back into their Sailors and the Navy, which will help achieve the acceleration the CNO seeks.

First, the Navy must understand its own culture to assess how it can improve. Sailors can identify their unit's cultural deficiencies by comparing the existing culture to a learning culture. Second, understanding the mindset at the individual level is essential. By recognizing how people approach, interpret, and respond to situations and challenges, supervisors will be better able to provide the right motivation strategies for their population. Finally, leaders must recognize the value of supporting personal growth in their members. Understanding these principles will enable organizational changes by developing GRGB-aligned procedures, policies, and evaluations, which will help prevent behaviors not aligned with the commander's direction. Additionally, the obstacles that prevent these investments must be identified and mitigated, which requires proactive leadership at all levels. By characterizing an organization's culture, understanding unit members' motivation for learning, and removing organizational roadblocks that inhibit learning, every formation in the Navy can achieve the desired GRGB mindset to unlock its organizational potential.

However, the GRGB concept only works if Sailors adopt it. Sailors must have the motivation to improve, the tools to do so, and the ability to overcome the obstacles to implementing meaningful change. The change starts with Sailors, beginning on their first day in the service.

II. What is Learning Culture, and why does it matter to GRGB?

According to Edgar Schein, the culture of a group can be defined as the accumulated shared learning of the group as it solves problems and teaches its members the lessons from this learning, creating a shared understanding. This accumulated learning is a pattern of beliefs, values, and behaviors that become organizational norms. These norms are the basis of the collective idea of how the organization's members see themselves and help employees understand their role in accomplishing the organizational goals.² However, professional military education (PME) in the military often prioritizes the development of technical skill sets when training service members. Members of a skill specialty often refer to themselves as a member of that specialty first and then as a member of the organization second.³ Examples include pilots, analysts, and radar technicians. They often require unique training and lead Sailors to associate themselves with the specialty in which they've completed the training.

In the Navy, however, each formation consists of many technical experts that are combined to accomplish a mission. The U.S. Navy has at least 20 recognized "communities" that all have technical subsets.⁴ Unfortunately, not all organizations teach their members how to capture lessons learned or codify that knowledge so it can be distributed to others. Few people are trained as teachers or historians, and military units at the O5 level and below rarely have them. Thus, a person who identifies themselves as a radio operator first and as a Sailor second likely does not also identify themselves as having the additional duties of a historian and teacher

² Edgar H. Schein and Peter Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (Hoboken, NJ, NJ: Wiley, 2017), 6.

³ Peter F Drucker, *The Effective Executive: The Definitive Guide to Getting the Right Things Done* (NY, NY: HarperCollins US, 2011), 67.

⁴ "Communities" of the Navy are defined as: Surface Warfare, Submarine Warfare, Special Warfare, Explosive Ordnance Disposal, Aviation, Human Resources, Engineering Duty Officer, Aerospace Duty Officer, Public Affairs, Foreign Area Officer, Information Warfare, Medical, Judge Advocate Corps, Chaplain Corps, Civil Engineer Corps, Reserve Component, Naval Installation Command, Special Surveillance Program, and NAVWAR communities.

or associate their responsibilities of those professions with themselves. A unit with Sailors that are naturally efficient at doing these will, over time, become more efficient than other units. This could lead to a variance in proficiency across the Navy and likely contribute to differences in performance. To remedy this, the Navy must learn to emphasize the importance of capturing and passing on accumulated knowledge in both PME and, eventually, through evaluations and selection for promotion or assignments. By identifying the leaders best at these tasks, the Navy can position leaders in influential positions to have positive effects on the Navy's culture.

It is unlikely a surface warfare officer serving as a ship's captain would be relieved for not knowing how to fix the ship's radar. More likely, a ship's Captain would receive a relief for cause if they fostered a culture where Sailors seek to assign blame instead of making a transparent examination of their conditions or performance to improve themselves. If an organization fails to normalize behaviors that support capturing its accumulated knowledge, it is not fostering an ecosystem that assesses, corrects, and innovates. In a combat-oriented profession such as the Navy, accumulating shared learning and transferring that knowledge to future generations is critical to safeguarding its Sailors and ensuring mission readiness. The 2021 Major Fires Review summarized contributing factors to 15 shipboard fires over 12 years. One of the critical underlying issues identified was, "Lessons learned are not effectively collected and are lost over time due to an ineffective and inconsistent process to collect, analyze, disseminate, and enact critical information and correction actions to include the process to conduct shipboard safety investigations."⁵ This underlying condition provides insight into how certain pockets of the Navy may not be living up to the principles called for in Adm Gilday's challenge to Get Real Get Better.

⁵ Major Fires Review Executive Summary, Commander U.S. Fleet Force Command, Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet, 15 July 2021

Conversely, the same investigation noted several examples of commands excellently maintaining adequate fire safety posture. Those commands displayed a culture built on critical self-assessment, trust, and accountability, firmly in the Get Better half of GRGB.⁶ Those commands demonstrated the ability to learn, capture that learning, and disseminate it to new members. To best leverage the accumulated shared learning of an organization, an organization should strive to incorporate the characteristics of a learning culture. Dr. Peter Senge describes a learning culture as encouraging and embracing learning through systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, and team learning.⁷ The Department of the Navy's own 2018 findings regarding industry best practices and learn culture offered the following definition, "the defined values and set of observable behaviors of an organization that supports open communication and feedback; individual, unit, and organizational-level learning; and continuous improvement; to promote mission effectiveness and organizational adaptability."⁸ Both of these definitions emphasize the learning of the organization (termed "team" by Dr. Senge). However, for the organization to effectively learn over time, the conditions must exist to support individuals to learn about themselves, acknowledge how their actions could improve, and be willing to implement change. An organization must promote personal humility but create a psychologically safe environment where it is acceptable to acknowledge failure because employees are confident that meaningful change is possible.

For an organization to display the characteristics of a learning culture, it must first acknowledge failure to learn from it. "Embrace the red" is how that concept is described in

⁶ Major Fires Review Executive Summary, Commander U.S. Fleet Force Command, Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet, 15 July 2021, 41

⁷ Liz Cavallaro and William J. Nault, "Cultivating a Learning Culture in the US Navy," *The Learning Organization* 28, no. 3 (October 2020): pp. 298-315, <https://doi.org/10.1108/tlo-12-2019-0176>, 3.

⁸ US Navy. "Industry Best Practices and Learning Culture: The Competitive Advantage of Learning Culture." Report of Findings. 2018

GRGB.⁹ As mistakes are made, leverage the strengths of different teams and people involved to identify the problem, develop solutions, and constructively communicate the relevant information across the organization. By embracing the “human factor” of the organization, the team will be more likely to identify the relationship between observable indicators with varying risk levels and develop solutions for risk mitigation.¹⁰ Portions of the Navy likely display the characteristics of a learning culture described up to this point. These organizations leverage Sailors’ strengths in a way that helps the formation identify the root causes of failures while the leadership demonstrates the flexibility required to implement meaningful change. However, this likely only applies to some of the Navy, which is a shortcoming that GRGB means to address. A 2021 review directed by Senator Tom Cotton on the fighting culture of the surface fleet noted a paralyzing zero-defect mentality that inhibits reporting of failure, reducing organizational learning. It specifically calls out the surface community’s unwillingness to rehabilitate Sailors who make one-off mistakes, ending naval careers prematurely, negatively affecting retention, and missing learning opportunities.¹¹ By embracing the aspects of a learning culture at every echelon in the Navy, from the CNO to the newest Sailor, the Navy will be able to accelerate change in a positive direction.

SOCOM’s 2020 Comprehensive Review provides an excellent case study of providing a critical look at organizational behaviors and norms to evaluate positive and negative cultural characteristics. In 2018, the National Defense Authorization Act expressed concern about ethical problems associated with allegations of sexual conduct, drug use, and unauthorized exposure of

⁹ “Get Real, Get Better,” U.S. Navy, accessed 12 March 2023, <https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories/Article/3241402/Get-real-get-better/>

¹⁰ A Report on Engagements with Industry and the Competitive Advantage of Learning Culture, December 27th 2018, 2.

¹¹ A Report on the Fighting Culture of the United States Navy Surface Fleet. Congressional Publications, 2021.

special operations activities through books or media.¹² This document directed the Assistant Director for Special Operations / Low-Intensity Conflict and the Command of USSOCOM to review the conditions leading to these allegations and assess the culture and accountability in SOF to the House Armed Service Committee.

To conduct this review, SOCOM leadership dedicated a SOF General Officer with a dedicated team of proven leaders for approximately four months. With this significant investment of leadership bandwidth, they sought to “gather insights and observations from across the force while drawing upon unique leadership perspectives internal and external to the USSOCOM enterprise to strengthen our values and reinforce trust at home and when deployed.”¹³ The team assessed that SOCOM did not have an ethics problem as was suggested through the 2018 NDAA but identified conditions that led to the prioritization of mission accomplishment over leadership, discipline, and accountability. Over time, these behaviors became accepted norms, but they were not aligned with the culture desired by the SOCOM Commander. SOF developed a cultural bias towards employment which disrupted SOF leader development.¹⁴ The bias toward employment led to a leader’s emphasis on deploying personnel overseas to missions where they are their personnel could add value, but SOCOM did not validate a deployment requirement. These absences created unintended stresses on the force and detracted from leader involvement during the force generation phase of training.

To determine the root causes of the shift in behavior, the Comprehensive Review team examined every aspect of the SOCOM enterprise. No subject was off limits. The team provided findings and recommendations centered around Force Employment, Force Accountability,

¹² 2018 National Defense Authorization Act, Guidance on Assessment of SOF Culture and Accountability

¹³ United States Special Operations Command, Comprehensive Review, 23 January 2020, 4.

¹⁴ United States Special Operations Command, Comprehensive Review, 23 January 2020, 7.

Leader Development, Force Structure, and Assessment and Selection. In each of these areas, members of SOF recognized that their organization's culture had evolved during the Global War on Terror in a way that was not aligned with what was needed for the future operating environment as it shifted towards Great Power Competition. The excerpt below provides an example of how SOCOM was able to examine itself to identify normalized behaviors that did not align with the desired culture.

The normalization of this behavior, in turn, normalized SOF culture, particularly at the organizational and institutional levels, as leaders developed within training and deployment environments focused solely on COIN, CT, and DA core activities. Despite that, there appears to be a lack of leadership and training management emphasis on addressing a perpetuating SOF force structure that focuses on COIN and CT while not developing SOF and SOF leaders for the full spectrum of SOF core activities and Component specific skills and capabilities.¹⁵

The Joint SOF community doesn't always get it right, but this example shows how SOCOM was willing to learn from its mistakes. The senior leadership acknowledged a problem and dedicated a significant investment of resources to define it. Individual service members engaged with the review team with no fear of retribution to provide the most crucial ground-level information used by the review team to generate their data. Support at every level in the SOCOM enterprise enabled this critical assessment of itself to be successful. The entire organization learned to embrace what wasn't working and improve itself to be more effective in the future.

Even after SOCOM released the comprehensive review and began implementing change, senior leaders of SOCOM continued to acknowledge the organization's previous shortcomings and recommit themselves to getting better. This is best encapsulated recently by GEN Fenton, Commander SOCOM, in his testimony to the Committee on Armed Services in the United States

¹⁵ United States Special Operations Command, Comprehensive Review, 23 January 2020, 39.

Senate on 7 March 2023. In his testimony, he emphasizes the importance of personal development to SOF culture.

Our people are the competitive and comparative advantage of our SOF formations. We believe unreservedly that the first SOF Truth endures: "Humans are more important than hardware." Together, we are committed to investing in our people through tailored education and training, leveraging our nation's diverse talent, and enhancing readiness, resilience, and professionalism. GEN Fenton, Commander USSOCOM¹⁶

The Navy's GRGB initiative must transform the service into a learning organization driven by people motivated to identify problems, generate innovative solutions, and capture the accumulated knowledge to accelerate learning. Examples from the SOF community provide an example pathway for the Navy to evaluate its own culture to identify misalignment with the desired GRGB organizational behaviors. After acknowledging the current state of its culture and understanding the required changes, leaders must focus on their people.

III. The mindset at the individual level matters.

Organizational change can be accelerated if the people who make up the organization have the right mindset. For the Navy's implementation of GRGB, a fixed mindset is counterproductive. By influencing a person's underlying beliefs in how success is defined in their environment, an organization can help adjust their Goal Orientation (GO), which will affect how they approach, interpret, and respond to situations and challenges.¹⁷ The concept is to not "tell" your people to behave differently but to create the environment in which the desired behaviors naturally emerge. Establishing the type of goal orientation best aligned with the

¹⁶ General Bryan P. Fenton, Commander USSOCOM, Statement for the Record to the Committee on Armed Services United States Senate, 7 March 2023.

¹⁷ Chadwick, 958.

desired learning culture of the organization could be an effective technique, as achievement goals and organizational learning are highly interdependent.¹⁸

An individual with a fixed mindset believes their abilities are fixed, or at least there is a level they cannot push past.¹⁹ They are likely to be performance-driven, reassured by praise from a well-done job. This mindset can discourage them from pursuing difficult tasks where failure is more likely. Research has demonstrated that people with this behavior, also called Performance Goal Orientation, have a negative relationship with seeking feedback. The potential for negative feedback represents a “high risk” to a person that associates their worth with their level of performance. They seek indicators that validate their strong performance and avoid information contradicting it, which discourages learning as a person may fear appearing incompetent if they ask for help.²⁰ This can damage their self-image or increase fears that incompetency will lead to adverse effects such as missed promotion opportunities, raises, and choice assignments.²¹ Performance Goal orientation is helpful for people who are good at what they do and are not seeking to modify their work function. Unfortunately, this does not align with GRGB like a person with a growth mindset would.

A person with a growth mindset believes they can improve their abilities with effort. This aligns with Mastery Goal Orientation, also known as Learning Goal Orientation, in which people are more likely to seek feedback even if it does not validate strong performance. People with a Mastery Goal orientation construct believe their abilities are dynamic and can be improved or

¹⁸ Chadwick, 978.

¹⁹ Edward D. Hess, *Learn or Die: Using Science to Build a Leading-Edge Learning Organization* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2014), 37.

²⁰ Don VandeWalle and Larry L Cummings. “A Test of the Influence of Goal Orientation on the Feedback-Seeking Process.” *Journal of Applied Psychology* 82, no. 3 (1997): 398.

²¹ Amy Edmondson, “Psychological safety and learning behavior in work teams”, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, June 1999, 351.

increased through development. Research has demonstrated an association between people with Mastery Goal Orientation with the successful acquisition of new skills and a high motivation to succeed.²² This research suggests that highly mastery-oriented individuals seek feedback, learn from their mistakes, and display creativity in their thought processes. An organization that can foster a population learning from its mistakes by viewing them as an opportunity for growth instead of a cue for punishment is more likely to innovate and seek to understand risk instead of avoiding it.

If an organization wants to establish or further enhance a learning culture, creating the conditions in which its employees choose to adopt a Mastery Goal Orientation could accelerate efforts to achieve that goal. Mass adoption of a Mastery Goal Orientation mindset across an organization will create an environment where employees learn from their mistakes, encourage others to help them solve difficult problems, and spread learned knowledge throughout the organization.²³ New Employees are less likely to fear the repercussions of being wrong after they experience an environment where teammates work together to improve each other as normal behavior. They are more likely to trust that others will not punish them for mistakes, thus expanding their knowledge and capabilities faster.²⁴ This behavior is known as cross-understanding. By increasing opportunities for teammates to interact to solve problems and share knowledge gained through the process, they better understand their experience and integrate with others.²⁵

²² Chadwick, 961.

²³ Ingrid C. Chadwick and Jana L. Raver, "Motivating Organizations to Learn," *Journal of Management* 41, No. 3 (January 2012): pp. 960-961, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206312443558>.

²⁴ VandeWalle, 391-392.

²⁵ Chadwick, 970.

As highlighted during Admiral Gilday's remarks at the 2022 Surface Navy Association Symposium, "the navy which adapts, learns, and improves the fastest gains an enduring warfighting advantage."²⁶ Given the advantages of an individual's Mastery Goal Orientation potential to lead to an organization's Learning Culture that aligns with the Chief of Naval operation's goal to assess, correct, and innovate better than the opposition, it is easy to see why an organization would want to foster an environment that encourages it.

The Navy can best take advantage of the opportunity provided by the Mastery Goal Orientation benefits if it can incentivize its Sailors to adopt the behaviors associated with it. If these behaviors become customary for most of the force, they will eventually become part of the identity of a U.S. Navy Sailor.²⁷ Just as in the SOF community, where it is customary to expect teammates to learn from mistakes and expand their capabilities constantly, leaders in the Navy would expect Sailors to demonstrate the same characteristics, and all the communities of the Navy would benefit greatly.

IV. Benefits to personal growth and dangers to artificial limitations.

The "why" behind a person's desire for personal growth varies. Goal Orientation characterizes a person's belief about their potential to increase their capabilities. It does not, however, address the underlying motivation for why it even matters if they can. A person who can expand their capabilities may choose not to if they are not motivated to invest the time or effort. The motivation for a person to seek personal growth varies, and leaders must understand what motivates their people. Research shows that people can be motivated by pursuing status,

²⁶ Admiral Gilday, CNO, Remarks at 2022 Surface Navy Symposium –retrieved from Navy GRGB website

²⁷ Chadwick, 963.

improving self-image, or even out of a desire to shape their own life.²⁸ People inspired by growth generally feel better about themselves if they assess that they have grown meaningfully.²⁹ Cultivating qualities that matter to them produces meaningfulness and leads to a well-lived life as they strive to achieve their purpose.

Employees want their job to contribute to their sense of purpose. Research indicates that most people want their supervisors to provide more opportunities for purpose in their daily work.³⁰ This incentivizes leaders to connect their service members' personal growth with the unit's goals. Those that take advantage of this will increase the satisfaction of their unit members while they experience that personal growth while also increasing the effectiveness of the formation.

“Personal growth” has varying definitions, but one meaning could include increased self-awareness, self-examination, and understanding of one’s impact on others.³¹ In the context of a GRGB organization, this definition aligns with the Get Real portion of the call to action. A GRGB culture needs people who are confident in their ability to grow and have the desire to pursue it. ADM Gilday described “Getting Real” as having the courage to self-assess so people can better understand the areas where they must improve.³²

²⁸ Bauer, Jack J., Sun W. Park, R. Matthew Montoya, and Heidi A. Wayment. “Growth Motivation Toward Two Paths of Eudaimonic Self-Development.” *Journal of Happiness Studies* 16, no. 1 (2015): 185–210. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-014-9504-9>.

²⁹ Bauer, Jack J., Sun W. Park, R. Matthew Montoya, and Heidi A. Wayment. “Growth Motivation Toward Two Paths of Eudaimonic Self-Development.” *Journal of Happiness Studies* 16, no. 1 (2015): 185–210. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-014-9504-9>.

³⁰ Naina Dhingra, Andrew Samo, Bill Schaninger, and Matt Schrimper, “Help your employees find purpose – or watch them leave”, McKinsey & Company, April 2021.

³¹ Adina Smith and Rebecca L. Koltz, “Supervision of School Counseling Students: A Focus on Personal Growth, Wellness, and Development”, 190.

³² During ADM Gilday’s CNO address at the 34th Surface Navy Association national symposium, he further elaborated on his vision of Get Real, “Get Real is about having the courage to self-assess, to build teams that embrace honest, hard, transparent looks at our performance to understand our actual strengths and shortcomings. We must be our own toughest critics.”

However, even if an employee desires personal growth, a lack of psychological safety in the environment may discourage it. Research has shown a high correlation between psychological safety with trusting and supportive relationships with coworkers.³³ By establishing a psychologically safe environment, leaders create an environment where their team members are less likely to fear negative consequences to their self-image, social status, or career from taking risks.³⁴ Reducing these fears increases the chances that employees will share information amongst the team, *even if that information highlights one of their failures*, which can result in shared learning for the entire organization.

People in a psychologically safe environment are prone to exhibit the behaviors one would expect from a GRGB organization. It creates a climate where people are inclined to display vulnerability since they trust their coworker's actions will favor them instead of turning those vulnerabilities against them.³⁵ When employees are not afraid of repercussions, they are more likely to provide candid feedback to supervisors and help develop creative solutions to new obstacles.³⁶ Research indicates that organizations that created a psychologically safe environment were more successful when implementing new technologies.³⁷ This likely comes from the trust individuals place in coworkers, not to punish them for failures but to encourage learning from mistakes and adapting. Promoting psychological safety in a team facilitates the learning culture described in GRGB since it removes the negative concerns for embarrassment or

³³ Newman, 523

³⁴ Newman, p.523 (but it is a combination of works originally referenced from Kahn, 1990 and Edmondson, 1999 – consider going back to the original source)

³⁵ Amy Edmondson, "Psychological safety and learning behavior in work teams", *Administrative Science Quarterly*, June 1999, 354.

³⁶ Newman, 526 but this is a condensed version of references from Tynan (2005) and (Halbesleben & Rathert, 2008)

³⁷ Newman but originally from Edmondson et al (2001)

threats that may come from other team members.³⁸ It is critical that leaders in the Navy understand their role in creating that psychological safety.

Leaders are also critical to developing the organization's methods of facilitating learning. They establish procedures, teach others how to do them, and hopefully emulate positive behaviors that reinforce the importance of those learning methods.³⁹ The leaders have the ability to remove traditional boundaries for communication and generate new connections between different parts of their organization to each other, as well as with external entities. This is especially powerful when people are not concerned with receiving credit and are more focused on the operation's success.

V. Recommendations: Approaches the Navy could use to implement lessons from SOF to facilitate GRGB.

Drawing upon research in organizational culture, goal orientation, personal growth, and lessons from SOF, below are change recommendations for consideration during initial entry, mid-career, and senior leader levels that could assist in producing a GRGB culture. It is important that Sailors of all levels of experience are exposed to the principles of GRGB and identify their role in driving change no matter where they serve in the Navy.

A. Provide the right cadre to train Sailors during initial entry into the Navy.

Establish expected behaviors on Day 1. Sailors will never be as open to learning new ideas as when they are in initial training, making initial entry training the ideal environment to

³⁸ Amy Edmondson, "Psychological safety and learning behavior in work teams", *Administrative Science Quarterly*, June 1999, 355.

³⁹ James Constance, "Designing Learning Organizations", *Organizational Dynamics*, Vol 32, No 1, 2003, 54.

begin normalizing the expected behaviors of GRGB. Select a cadre to receive, teach, and care for these young Sailors that can teach the concept of GRGB but also genuinely believe in it. GRGB requires that the Naval professionals that recruits interact with do not just believe in the core value of honor, courage, and commitment, but they are zealots to the potential GRGB can unlock in the Navy.

B. What to implement at the mid-grade leader level.

Offer training to enhance mid-grade leaders' self-awareness, increase their ability to communicate effectively, and understand their role as a leader in the Navy. The US Naval War College introduced a Leadership in the Profession of Arms (LPA) course to allow students to focus on their leadership development through reflection and understanding.⁴⁰ By creating space for these future leaders to think about the reasons behind their thinking and how their decisions impact others and create an intentional plan for their personal leadership development, the LPA cadre is laying the foundational work for these leaders to carry GRGB behaviors back to the force. However, not all leaders in the Navy receive this training. Not all officers are required to attend intermediate and senior-level PME training, and those selected to attend often attempt to attend training at one of the sister service schools. The Naval War College's investment in this training will have positive impacts on leaders for years to come, but this strategy's effectiveness will continue to be limited if there is not a comparable effort across the Navy.

C. What to implement Navy-wide.

⁴⁰ U.S. Naval War College, College of Leadership and Ethics, Syllabus and Study Guide for Leadership in the Profession of Arms, March 2, 2023, 3.

Finally, the Navy should evaluate its processes for selecting its senior officers who serve in very impactful positions for the Navy. The Army's Command Assessment Program (CAP) evaluates future O5 and O6 officers for assignment into critical command positions. The initial indications are that this program is successfully screening out leaders identified as having toxic behaviors that could have negatively impacted their command.⁴¹ Implementing CAP Army-wide required the Army to acknowledge the need to change (embrace the Red). The Navy has an opportunity to embrace a similar process that meets its needs for Getting Better, developing mechanisms to evaluate future leaders at the Commander (O5) and Captain (O6) level, including feedback from their previous subordinates and peers. Incorporation of psychological well-being, cognitive aptitude, and communication and interpersonal skills will help senior Navy leaders choose the best officers to lead future generations. The Navy should reevaluate its current process for selecting leaders (Get Real) and adopt a new strategy that could produce better results (Get Better).

VI. Conclusion

The United States has the strongest Navy in the world, and the recent efforts to embrace GRGB will ensure its warfighting advantage for years to come. The culture change that will come through the multi-year campaign to generate this advantage will take time and effort. This modification requires Sailors and their leadership to better understand their own culture while embracing its deficiencies to improve. Leadership must change regulations and policies to reward and normalize GRGB-aligned behaviors. They must also embrace the desires of the younger generation by investing in them personally and professionally. When leaders can find

⁴¹ Department of the Army Memorandum for fiscal year 2024 Command Assessment Program (CAP) candidates, September 1 2022.

the overlapping space between Sailor's passion for personal growth with the needs of the Navy, they will create a stronger force that is more motivated to serve. Finally, the SOF community's experience in identifying cultural deficiencies at the highest levels while empowering subordinate commands to drive cultural change in a meaningful way for each unit could serve as an example for the Navy as it moves forward. GRGB will unfold in different ways across the 20 different communities of the Navy. Embracing the nuanced differences of each community while sharing learning between them will strengthen the Navy.

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