



14 June 19

From: Col Christopher A. Tavuchis, USMC

To: Non-Commissioned Officers, Staff Non-Commissioned Officers and Officers

Subj: LEADERSHIP PHILOSOPHY AND GENERAL GUIDANCE

Ref: (a) NAVMC 2795, The USMC Users Guide to Counseling

(b) Marine Corps Manual

(c) MCO 1610.7A, Performance Evaluation System

1. The purpose of this letter is to provide our leaders with some highlights of my leadership philosophy and general guidance.

2. I believe it is essential for a Marine to know exactly what is expected of them. As Marine NCO's, SNCO's and officers it is imperative that you understand that we are a team. I rely on you as you rely on me for support, guidance, advice, correction, supervision and trust which form the basis of the foundation for building a strong team. You will often hear me say that "Familiarity breed trust." Regardless, you will be provided with the requisite guidance and expectations of your job and you will be required to do your job! As such, I submit the following guidance:

a. **Traits and Principles:** I keep a copy of the fourteen traits and eleven leadership principles handy which I constantly refer to in the conduct of my own duties and activities, both on and off duty. These traits and principles are timeless and apply twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, Marine or civilian. As SNCOs and officers, you are bound to follow, apply and teach the traits and principles in your conduct. Additionally, I will require you to constantly self-evaluate and discuss your findings and courses of self-improvement with your leadership.

b. **Leadership by example:** At all times I expect you to lead by example. The Marines see everything and you should remain vigilant to this fact. Therefore, you must be even and consistent in your enforcement of the rules and regulations and that means living within the rules that you are obligated to follow.

c. **Say what you mean!** There have been many instances where Marines offer suggestions, advice, complaints, and guidance to the wrong people. As you may already know, I will try to call them as I see them. You have the responsibility to do the same. If there is something that I have done (policy, suggestion, action) and you don't believe it is in the best interests of the command, you are obligated to speak up. I am not a mind reader and I don't have time to second guess your motives so be forthright in what you say. Ask questions if you don't understand something.

d. **Know the facts before you act:** As leaders, it is essential that before we bring up a problem that we take the time to investigate the facts to the fullest extent possible. If something needs to be done immediately, make a decision, take charge, fix it and report it. Use initiative. Keep me informed in a timely manner. Like the old saying goes "Bad news doesn't get better with age." Tell me what is going on and what you are doing to help the situation. I will afford you the greatest possible latitude to make decisions and act on those decisions - as long as they are done so in an informed manner.

e. **Inspect what you expect:** Make sure you issue clear and concise orders and ensure that they are carried out. If you tell your Marines to do something ensure you are there when it is done so you can inspect the final

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product. Another way I've heard it put is "trust but verify." This concept is closely related to responsibility and accountability. Don't offer up excuses for your shortcomings. Identify them and correct them. Have the humility to take responsibility for your actions or lack of action. Failing to supervise yourself and your Marines will always result in problems.

f. **Zero Defects:** I don't have a zero defects mentality and have little patience for those who do. We are all human and prone to make mistakes by our very nature. If someone makes an honest mistake that turned out bad, I will back you up all the way. Always attempt to use sound judgment and apply simple common sense.

g. **Integrity:** Closely tied to zero defects is integrity. As stated above, if you act in what you believe is sound judgment and common sense and mess it up, you will learn from the mistake. If you deliberately lie about something you will pay the consequences. There is no need to mislead or falsely present something. I will always shoot straight with you and I expect the same respect in return.

h. **Training and Education:** I am a big believer in the role of NCOs, SMCOs, and officers as teachers and leaders of junior Marines. As such, I advocate the efficient training and education of Marines under your charge and will require you to actively correct, develop, and improve those Marines because you can make a difference. Use all the means at your disposal and try like hell to make your training and work innovative, interesting and thought provoking. Don't waste your time or the Marines' time. In this environment, we naturally conduct progressive, mission-oriented, standards based training according to the existing orders and directives. Training is useless without evaluation. Therefore, we will conduct timely and comprehensive (no-holds-barred) after actions for everything we do.

i. **Counseling/Fitreps:** You will write your own fitness reports by the job that you do. Additionally, you always need to know where you stand. This also goes with those that you report on. I encourage a constant discourse on performance that offers constructive criticism and the chance to rectify problems if any should exist. Counseling sessions are intended for both the RS and the MRO and must be a dialog in which your subordinates will be required to participate. If you aren't sure, ask your leadership. This also goes with your Marines. At no time should our Marines wonder where they stand as far as Pro/Cons or Rec/Non-Recs. Keep active files and engage and be involved with your Marines. They will appreciate it.

j. **Physical Fitness and Appearance:** The Marine Corps is physically demanding. I expect the Marines under my charge to be physically fit. There is no excuse for poor physical fitness. You must make time in your day, every day, to conduct physical fitness training. I am of the belief that some Devil Dogs are faster than others and some Devil Dogs are built different than others. You don't have to be a 300 PFT'er but you must try. Additionally, there is no reason to present a poor military appearance, either in body or uniform. You will be expected to maintain your body and your uniforms consistent with the rules and regulations.

3. In closing, remember that we are all one team and we must make sacrifices to help one another succeed in the ultimate end: Make this corner of the Marine Corps the best we can make it.

C. A. TAVUCHIS