

“I AM A SOLDIER!”

A former Brigade commander of mine was the only leader I have known to formally brief his Leadership Philosophy. It took place within an hour after his change of command. As a young company commander, I had my own “Leadership Philosophy” that I verbalized...but was very impressed when he briefed his to his commanders and staff.

One thing stuck out from his talk. He told us that when someone asks a teacher “What do you do?” they respond with “I am a teacher.” When someone asks a doctor, the reply is “I am a doctor.” He then asks us “What do you say when someone asks you? Do you answer ‘I am in the Army’ or ‘I am in the military?’ Well, I don’t. I say with pride ‘I am a Soldier.’”

My leadership philosophy is based on that...I am a Soldier. As are you, reading or hearing this. That’s how I expect you to act, it is how I expect you to *expect me* to act. As far as the rest of my philosophy, I won’t lecture, I won’t write a book. I like bullet comments (see bullet #3) and have collected them over the years as I learned lessons, in preparation to lead you.

Be a leader, act like a leader, do what a leader does.

- Right Place, Right Time, Right Uniform
- “I don’t know.” Is an acceptable answer. But you better find out quick
- Brevity is your friend. BLUF (Bottom Line Up Front)
- Set priorities - reevaluate constantly
- Use common sense routinely and regularly
- If it doesn’t make sense...then maybe you don’t have all the facts
- Always assume there is another side to the story
- Don’t do stupid
- If you are always yelling, it’s lost its effectiveness
- If it’s a Charlie Foxtrot...then tell me it’s a Charlie Foxtrot
- Bad news doesn’t get better over time
- “Bodies” are dead. (Sir we need two more bodies to complete the mission...)
- Act ethically at all times
- You are here to make Soldiers lives better. Don’t ever forget that
- Enforce the standards, ruthlessly if needed (see “common sense” above)
- NCO business is NCO business! Officer business is Officer business!
- Don’t abuse RHIP (Rank Has Its Privileges)
- Do what your Soldiers do along with them...but give them time AWAY from you too
- Delegate, delegate, delegate (follow-up, follow-up, follow-up)
- Allow your leaders the opportunity to make mistakes
- Failure isn’t an option, but it happens anyway
- Keep your subordinates informed, especially your 2nd in command
- Don’t yell about things you need done if you haven’t explained what was needed initially
- Know who has your six...and make sure they know you have theirs
- Don’t mess with the Pack Order...it’s there for a reason
- Don’t throw someone “under the bus.” If you are forced to do so, tell them ASAP!
- **Do unto others....**

LTC Banta's Leadership Philosophy – Military based generalities, mixed with civilian attributes. Lead a Soldier the way a Soldier needs to be lead. Make those that work for you successful and those above you will be successful. Primary objective is to mind the mission and fix the issues. Career aspirations are secondary.

What I expect of you, what you should expect from me:

- Teamwork & Communication
- Common Sense Approach
- Mission Focus
- Personal Growth
- Professionalism
- Honor, Integrity, Ethical Behavior
- Responsibility
- Safety
- Setting the Standard
- Do unto others...

Readiness is #1 Priority

- Customer Service is the focus – the Soldier is our customer.
 - “Check the attitude at the door!”
- Secondary customers are those that act on behalf of the Soldier.

Additional Priorities

- “Soldier Issues”
- Advise and Assist
- PMCS (Preventative Maintenance Checks and Services)
- Property Accountability
- Funds Management
- Inspections/Reviews

“The capacity of Soldiers for absorbing punishment and enduring privations is almost inexhaustible so long as they believe they are getting a square deal, that their commanders are looking out for them, and that their own accomplishments are understood and appreciated.”

- GEN Dwight Eisenhower, 1944
“Crusade in Europe”

