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*“What did you learn at BLC?”*

When I initially joined the Army I was not anticipating going to BLC or Basic Leaders Course, however I find myself here today and in reflection I have learned a lot in respects to the Army and myself. I have learned that in the Army resiliency and coping are traits taught and expected of NCO's. I also learned that I am capable of both. In this paper I will describe why that is the case.

BLC is an excellent course, my choice to reflect on only two NCO competencies should not be construed or misinterpreted as the scope of the course. As while in attendance I also learned critical skills such as NCOER completion, Counseling's, Memorandum development and use, etc. I did however face the most challenging time of my life with the loss of my father on 1/15/20, while here at the course. The loss of my father was unexpected to say the least and demanded me to make a seemingly one-sided decision, the course or home and family.

In the end the choice to remain resilient and fight through the course was the decision I made. This decision taught me about myself strength both physical and mentally, as well as my ability to cope with adversity and despair. The feelings one experiences when they lose a parent is unimaginable, and largely because it is the complacent thought or lack of ever conceding it even possible, that many of us fail to wargame and prepare for such a disaster. When things like this do take place you have to spring into action, for your family, yourself, and for those who passed.

In order to adequately maintain the course after such a loss it demands resiliency and sound coping strategies. These were competencies taught here at BLC that impacted me and ensured that my decision to stay was not overturned by the immense amounts of anguish and pain I have been experiencing, due to the loss of Dad. Resiliency to me is the ability to stay the course, the ability to maintain when everything is telling you to quit and mourn. The fact is the course will always be here but so will time, I will have time to mourn in a more focused and satisfied manner, knowing that my Dad would have loved to see me succeed and complete the course. Coping is the ability for one to manage vast amounts of emotion. This experience has taught me how to cope through staying productive, disciplined, and focused. I have further coped in recent days by sharing with others the loss, and having others support such as family and friends.

In conclusion BLC has been an extremely informative and knowledgeable course. The resiliency and coping training has had a direct impact on me and came at a time when I needed to be reminded of the methods and aspects of both resiliency and coping. Ensuring that resiliency and coping is incorporated in BLC is critical as all NCO's should be prepared to experience adversity and potentially loss. I am grateful for the opportunity to have had the experience and training especially at this time of personal loss.