

LEAD FROM THE FRONT

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I'm writing this with a sense of responsibility, because the future of the Army rests on the shoulders of our leaders. After reflecting on my Basic Leader Course experience, I regained reason for my original motivation in serving my country. My duty as a future Noncommissioned Officer is clear, and my mission is simple. I must exemplify the leadership skills reinstated by the BLC instructors. For this to occur I must approach the plan realistically, stay open-minded, and stick to short term goals.

I came into BLC feeling unsure of the significance. I prejudged it to be of no value, due to recent questionable NCOs who graduated the Academy. The NCOs that my unit produces are mostly toxic; narcissistic, uneducated, untrustworthy, immature, negative, and unhealthily competitive. I had no faith in my unit, and prematurely projected my disappointment and partial blame onto BLC. Now I have proof that it is not the fault of BLC, but the fault of the individuals who choose to ignore the teachings.

After examining my own faults, once I began the course, I chose to sit back and take in all information and advice from the instructors. I started this process believing that I was ready to become an NCO, but this experience has humbled me. I do believe that I have the potential to become an excellent leader, but I should step up my game in many aspects. I realize that I am wise, but that I lack the necessary knowledge (regulations, laws, how mission command should be implemented, etc.) and drive that is needed to becoming a successful NCO. I have heart, but I must overcome the fear of

consistently taking charge, and practice patience with those are too stubborn to follow. I embody mental and physical strength, but I need to finally focus on my own resiliency and max out my PT score. I'm confident in myself thus far, but I know that I have more to learn and am ready to adapt with continuous changes.

Applying the acquired knowledge into real world situations back at my unit makes me nervous. I am however determined to take on this challenge. I awoken depressed many times, uninspired for work and not willing to deal with my peers and their demoralizing demeanor. The strange social dynamics that I am subjected to daily, are not what I envisioned for myself when I enthusiastically took my oath back in 2016. I quickly pulled the wool from over my eyes in the last 3 years, and I have seen the ultimate abuse of power amongst the ranks during this first contract.

The majority of soldiers within my company I stay away from, and I rarely feel comfortable confiding in my superiors. Attempts to bond with them fall short, due to personality clashes and trivial emotions from them such as jealousy. It seems that some NCOs do not wish to see their subordinates doing better than them. We all should collectively strive to be better, instead of walking over dead bodies as a means to an end. I refuse to allow these obstacles to hold me at bay any longer, and I will lead from the front until others decide to follow.

There are a few NCOs and lower enlisted soldiers that are likeminded, and at the very least try to be efficient leaders. They own their mistakes, never stop learning, and truly care for and mentor their fellow soldiers. These are the individuals that I can relate to, and gravitate towards when all we have is each other. I am excited and determined to collaborate with this handful of great leaders to help remold the Army way of life.

Ultimately our quality of leadership shows in the quality of our subordinates, for what are we without our soldiers? Insignificant, nonexistent, nothing.