



NO SUBSTITUTE FOR VICTORY

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Overview

General Douglas MacArthur is one of the most honored commanders in American history. Though his career is primarily defined by his military service during World War II, his ability to lead the US Army can be applied to leaders of all types. *No Substitute for Victory* discusses the different roles MacArthur held in the military and his leadership skills and techniques. This summary will reiterate 3 fundamental components of long-term leadership: (1) values, (2) vision, and (3) proficiency. It will also provide techniques to hone these components. Achieving the leadership excellence exemplified by MacArthur will lead to organizational triumphs.

Part 1. The Great Commander

One of General MacArthur's most daring military operations was the invasion of Inchon during the Korean War. There, MacArthur applied all his experience, learning, and intuition. MacArthur began by gathering data and observing the conditions of the Korean War, insisting he could not *"fight them if [he could] not see them."* MacArthur based all his actions on being maximally informed – not only by directly examining the conflict, but also by conducting research. Only once he felt he was sufficiently briefed did he begin planning, accounting for all possible outcomes. Once he had a plan, he refused to delay, believing that failure in war resulted from acting too late.

After devising a plan, he used highly effective communication skills to convince his superiors of its merits. MacArthur needed to display confidence in his ideas (both in their execution and presentation), and also needed to understand his plan completely, inside and out, so that he could best defend it.

MacArthur firmly believed that *visible* leadership best motivated organizations. MacArthur's active presence in situations was crucial to the successful execution of his plans, as it allowed him to adjust them when necessary, without delay.

From a young age, he was taught to do what was right, and was taught that he would succeed if he had the determination. Though he was groomed to be a leader, he worked hard for all that he achieved. As a young soldier, he learned to prioritize and to remain calm during chaos. He demonstrated soft-spoken authoritative, resiliency, and determination.

MacArthur proved his superior leadership skills as Superintendent of West Point. He revitalized the stagnant Academy and promoted change by being decisive and carefully setting his priorities. When stationed in the Pacific, MacArthur was determined to uplift others, even if he did not benefit directly. When given command over Japan following World War II, he successfully reformed the entire country.

Part 2. Principles of Strategy

For victory to be achieved, it must first be defined. While victory can take on many different definitions, *"no matter how victory is defined, every successful organization must attain it."*

Once victory is meticulously and clearly defined, do not compromise – pursue that goal wholeheartedly. The leader's job in securing victory is to fine-tune the organization to move towards that definition. Your objective is to attain victory, so do not stall on your way.

- 1. Understand the situation:** When planning, stay constantly informed. Information can come from well-proven principles or from personal observations. MacArthur believed in using every available resource to gather info. In addition to prioritizing intelligence, leaders should also deeply know their organization and its internal workings.
- 2. Use Every Available Means:** The past and present can be helpful when designing a strategy, but their limitations can sometimes doom future-looking strategies. Strategies should *"use 'every available means' to achieve victory."* While fighting in the Pacific, MacArthur had to consider the best way to

