Followership
National Conference on Ethics in America
Conference Primer

West Point, New York
November 14th-15th, 2022
In the world of firearms and artillery, the primer (pri-mer) serves to initiate the combustion sequence that launches the projectile. In academia, the primer (pri-mer) is a reading (usually a short one) that introduces a particular subject to an audience. While the pronunciation may differ, both serve the same purpose; as a catalyst that enables change.

This primer offers a brief overview of key concepts and ideas our speakers will share to allow you to maximize your time here at the conference. The literature and professional discussion about leadership is abundant yet, we often overlook that without followers there are no leaders. This year’s National Conference on Ethics in America (NCEA) discusses followership.

On Day One, we navigate this topic by first defining followership, then discuss the different follower roles that exist. After this, participants are immersed in a real-life scenario faced by a junior US Army Officer to highlight the challenges of being a good follower. Putting followership into action, four Command Sergeant Majors will discuss their experiences as followers through decades of service in the ranks of the US Army. To cap off day one, GEN(R) Perkins will highlight the importance of empowering subordinates to be good followers during his team’s experience in the March to Baghdad in 2003.

On Day Two, you will all become armed with tools followers can use. The discussion focuses on providing candid communication within your organization and how followers become more confident. We then end the day and the conference with the keynote address to highlight the link between followership and leadership. Armed with this knowledge, we hope each of your will continue these discussions at your respective institutions.

We greatly appreciate the time each of you took out of your busy schedules to travel to West Point to participate in this discussion. I hope that you find this primer useful in your preparation for this conference and we thank you in advance for your attendance!

JAMES R. YASTRZEMSKY
Colonel, US Army
Director, SCPME
NCEA Agenda

Monday, November 14th, 2022

0730…………………………………………Transportation from Various Lodging
0800-0845…………………………………Breakfast and Registration at Eisenhower Hall
0900…………………………………………Conference Opening: BG Mark C. Quander
0930……………………………………….Followership Defined: Dr. Sarah Brazaitis
1040-1200…………………Followership Types: Dr. Gordon Curphy and MG (R) Daniel Walrath with Dr. Scott Parsons
1200-1315……………………………………………Lunch at Eisenhower Hall
1330-1500………………………………Followership Challenges: Dr. Peter Kilner
1500-1630…………………………………… Networking
1645-1815………………Followership and Soldiership: CSM Robert Craven, CSM Latavia Williams-Green, CSM Michael Burke, and SGM Stephanie Cleveland
1830-1900…………..……………Empowerment Upwards: GEN (R) David Perkins
1900-2000……………..……….……………………………………….NCEA Banquet
2000-2130………………….……………………………………………...NCEA Social
2130…………………………………………Transportation to Various Lodging

Tuesday, November 15th, 2022

0730…………………………………………Transportation from Various Lodging
0800-0845…………………………………Breakfast at Eisenhower Hall
0900………………………………..…..Honor Captain Reflection: CDT Cammack Shepler
0910-1010…………..…..…..…..Followership and Communication: Kim Scott
1015-1115………….Followership and Ego Management: Dr. Galit Ben-Joseph and Dr. Nate Zinsser
1115-1200…………..…………….Walking Tours of Trophy Point
1200-1235………………….…………Lunch at Washington Hall (Cadet Mess)
1250-1400……………..……….Followership as Leadership: SMA (R) Daniel Dailey
1400-1430……………….Conference Closure: Colonel Ross Yastrzemsky
1500…………………………………………Transportation to Newark Airport
Followership Defined: A process in which subordinates recognize their responsibility to comply with the orders of leaders and take appropriate action consistent with the situation to carry out those orders to the best of their ability. In the absence of orders, they estimate the proper action to contribute to mission performance and take that action. (Uhl-Bien, M., Riggio, R.E., Lowe, K.B., Carsten, M.K., 2014)

Followership Requirements: Vision, social capacity, strength of character, moral and psychological balance, and above all a desire to participate in a team effort for a common purpose.

Followership Actions: Followers must be able to execute critical thinking (Kelley, Curphy), possess a level of engagement (Curphy, Kellerman, Chaleff), demonstrate proper communication (Chaleff, Edmondson) and recognize and take necessary action (Kelley).

Followership Conditions: Psychological Safety, which is a belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes, and that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking. (Edmondson, A.)

Dr. Sarah J. Brazaitis is an Associate Professor of Practice in the Department of Organization and Leadership at Teachers College, Columbia University where she also directs the MA program in Organizational Psychology. Her teaching and research centers on group dynamics and equity, diversity and inclusion in teams and organizations. Dr. Brazaitis maintains a private practice of organizational consulting with a specialty in working with diverse teams and she has 20+ years of experience in providing coaching, consulting and training to executives, leaders and high potentials including to those in the C-suite.
Followership Roles: Dr. Gordon Curphy and MG (R) Dan Walrath

Main Points:
- Everyone is a follower.
- Followers get things done.
- Followership Framework (Critical Thinking and Engagement).

(X) Engagement: Level of follower effort at work.
(Y) Critical Thinking: Follower ability to challenge status quo, prioritize, and generate solutions.

Criticizers: “Finding Fault in Everything” (high critical thinking skills, low engagement).
Slackers: “Working to Live vs. Living to Work” (low critical thinking skills, low engagement).
Brown-Nosers: “Seeking Permission Over Forgiveness” (low critical thinking, high engagement).
Self-Starters: “Seeking Forgiveness Over Permission” (high critical thinking, high engagement).

Dr. Gordon Curphy is a 1978 graduate of the United States Air Force Academy who has spent the past 30+ years practicing and consulting on leadership consulting to a wide variety of corporate and governmental organizations. He is the architect of the Rocket Model®, and has authored 23 books.

MG (R) Dan Walrath is a 1988 graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point. He served honorably for over 33 years across Airborne, Air Assault, Mechanized, and Special Operations units, culminating in his command of US Army South. Dan is also a Wounded Warrior with a passion for fitness.
Followership Challenge: Dr. Peter Kilner

**What is it?** A real-life scenario faced by a junior US Army Officer as described by the person who experienced it. These scenarios focus on situations where the junior officer is forced to make a decision on an ethical dilemma or conduct moral decision-making.

**The Four Components:**

The Scenario:
A true story of an ethical dilemma told by the officer who lived it. *Not* embellished or manipulated to impart lessons.

The Mindset:
We imagine ourselves as the officer. Engage in the followership challenge with a “learner” mindset, not a “judger” mindset.

The Arrangement:
Time, space, movements, and sequence are structured to maximize the experience.

The Conversation:
This is where the learning occurs! The mindset, scenario, and arrangement all support the conversation.

**How it Works:**

A video is shown to all participants to provide context to the situation and describe the decision point to be made. This is followed by a timed small group discussion on the scenario and possible courses of action to take. Participants then switch tables, share insights from their previous group, and then watch the next video that highlights what decision the junior officer made. They then discuss in another timed small group discussion their response to the decision and the values that are at stake.
Followership and Soldiership: Sergeant Major Panel

**Army Doctrine Publication 6-22: Army Leadership and the Profession**

- Mentions “Leader” or “Leadership” over 1,500 times in 132 pages.
- Mentions “Follower” less than 50 times and “Followership” only twice.
- Discusses Compliance (behavioral agreement) vs Commitment (mental agreement).

Every Army leader is a subordinate to someone, so all leaders are also followers…. Effective Army organizations depend on the willingness of their leaders and their subordinates to serve faithfully and competently in both leadership and followership roles. (Paragraph 1-102)

Effective followership requires an ability to take the initiative to get things done when necessary. Effective leaders learn to be trusted followers. Teaching weapons maintenance provides an example. New Soldiers clean their rifles how and when instructed to do so. Experienced Soldiers routinely clean their weapon without being told so that it will function when needed. This simple discipline of doing the right thing when no one is looking is fundamental to following. (Paragraph 1-103)

There is a tendency to think of people as either a leader or subordinate but leading and following are simultaneous responsibilities... Being an effective follower requires the same attributes and competencies required to be an effective leader, although application is different....The principles of mission command capture this: leaders empower followers, by fostering mutual trust and creating shared understanding, to take initiative based on the commander’s intent. The subordinate leader transitions from follower to leader as they take action and direct their followers. (Paragraph 1-104)

All Army leaders are followers; each reports to someone higher in the chain of command…. Whether serving in the role of leader or subordinate, all are honor bound to perform their duties to the best of their abilities. (Paragraph 5-3)

---

CSM Robert Craven serves as the 26th Command Sergeant Major of the Corps of Cadets. He previously served as the CSM of the 5th Security Forces Assistance Brigade (SFAB).

CSM Latevia Williams-Green serves as the Command Sergeant Major of the 101st Combat Aviation Brigade. She earned a MA from UT El Paso (UTEP) and has deployed three times.

CSM Michael Burke serves as the Command Sergeant Major of the 1st SFAB. He previously served as a ROTC instructor at University of Washington and a 1SG in the 2nd Ranger Battalion.

SGM Stephanie Cleveland serves as the 11th Sergeant Major of Army Public Affairs. She previously served as a Garrison CSM in Natick, MA and Army Central Command Public Affairs SGM.
Empowerment Upwards: GEN (R) David Perkins

Army Doctrine Publication 6-0: Mission Command, Command and Control of Army Forces

Mission Command: The Army’s approach to command and control that empowers subordinate decision making and decentralized execution appropriate to the situation.


Role of Subordinates:

- [Mission Command] requires active participation by personnel of all ranks/duty positions. (Paragraph 1-70)
- Demands more of subordinates... [leaders] must train and educate subordinates so they demonstrate good judgement while exercising initiative. (Paragraph 1-71)
- Orders emphasize to subordinates the results to be attained, not how they are to be achieved. (Paragraph 1-53)

GEN(R) David Perkins served as the 15th Commander of the United States Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), which developed and published the Army’s concepts of Multi-Domain Operations and Mission Command under his leadership. As a Brigade Commander, he led the historic “Thunder Run” into Baghdad that led to the fall of the regime.
Followership and Communication: Kim Scott

Main point: Do your best work and build the best relationships of your career by using the framework of Care Personally vs. Challenge Directly. (Radical Candor video)

(X-axis) Challenge Directly: The willingness to, “piss people off.”
(Y-axis) Care Personally: The “give-a-damn” dimension.

Ruinous Empathy: Showing deep personal care but lacking direct challenge.
Manipulative Insincerity: Not challenging directly nor caring personally.
Obnoxious Aggression: Challenging directly without caring personally.
Radical Candor: Caring personally while challenging directly.

Tips:
1. Solicit radical candor (now you’re primed to give radical candor).
2. Gauge your candor (it’s subjective; measure at the listener’s ear, not the speaker).
3. Encourage candor (don’t condone gossip; push others to communicate openly).

Kim Scott is the author of Just Work and Radical Candor. She co-founded a company that helps organizations put the ideas in Radical Candor into practice. Kim was a CEO coach at Dropbox, Qualtrics, Twitter, and other tech companies. Kim previously held leadership roles at Apple and Google. Earlier in her career Kim managed a pediatric clinic in Kosovo and started a diamond-cutting factory in Moscow.
Followership and Ego Management: Dr. Galit Ben-Joseph and Dr. Nate Zinsser

Victorious warriors win first and then go to war, while defeated warriors go to war first and then seek to win. –Sun Tzu, The Art of War (Confident Mind video)

Confidence: Confidence makes one’s peak performance possible. Total confidence is necessary for consistent elite performance and is achievable with conscious thought. Building and maintaining confidence requires a step-by-step process.

1. Filter the Past
   a. Identify valuable memories in your chosen field (encouraging/energizing performances) and focus on Effort, Success, and Progress.
      i. Were you proud at giving a good effort?
      ii. Did you experience a feeling of accomplishment?
      iii. Do you feel that you have made progress?
   b. Reflect on these experiences as a baseline and modify with new efforts.

2. Construct the Present
   a. Build confidence with first-person, present-tense affirmative statements:
      i. “I am a solid defensive player, and I have fast/accurate shots.”
      ii. “I handle disagreements thoughtfully and communicate well.”
   b. Use these statements to confirm your best qualities and skills as well as to affirm the skills you seek to build and the outcomes to hope to achieve.

3. Envision the Future
   a. Your imagination WILL stimulate actual physical reactions in your body. (cardiovascular, muscular, and even neurological responses).
   b. “Seeing” yourself perform successfully will prime your mind/body to actually perform that way. The benefit of these “repetitions” is a greater “balance” of successful performances from which to draw valuable confidence.

Dr. Galit Ben-Joseph is an Executive Director and Wealth Advisor with J.P. Morgan Wealth Management. She provides investment management services to foundations, small businesses, and high net worth individuals and has been honored by Forbes as a Best-in-State Wealth Advisor each of the last three years and as a Top Women Wealth Advisor from 2017-2020.

Dr. Nate “Doc Z” Zinsser has been at the forefront of applied sport psychology for over 30 years and directed the USMA Sport Psychology Program during that time. A PhD in sport psychology, “Doc Z” was a regular consultant to the Philadelphia Flyers and New York Giants for twelve seasons and has personally coached Super Bowl Champions, Olympic medalists, government agencies, and numerous tactical professionals.
Quotes on Followership:

“When we are debating an issue, loyalty means giving me your honest opinion, whether you think I’ll like it or not. Disagreement, at this stage, stimulates me. But once a decision has been made, the debate ends. From that point on, loyalty means executing the decision as if it were your own.”

–Secretary of State Colin Powell

"If I had to reduce the responsibilities of a good follower to a single rule, it would be to speak truth to power."

— Warren Bennis

"Followers are more important to leaders than leaders are to followers."

— Barbara Kellerman

“Followership is a discipline of supporting leaders and helping them to lead well. It is not submission, but the wise and good care of leaders, done out of a sense of gratitude for their willingness to take on the responsibilities of leadership, and a sense of hope and faith in their abilities and potential.”

— Reverend Paul Beedle

"You're gonna have to serve somebody."

— Bob Dylan

“There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it.”

— Edith Wharton, Vesalius In Zante (1564)

“The world is moved not only by the mighty shoves of heroes, but also by the aggregate of the tiny pushes of each honest worker.”

— Helen Keller

"True leadership must have follower-ship. Management styles can vary, but even an autocrat needs people who believe and simply don't follow from fear."

— James Robinson III

"Do what you can, with what you have, where you are."

— Theodore Roosevelt

"We all carry a responsibility to do what we can when it will make a difference."

— Michael Useem, Leading Up

"Followers and leaders both orbit around the purpose; followers do not orbit around the leader."

— Ira Chaleff