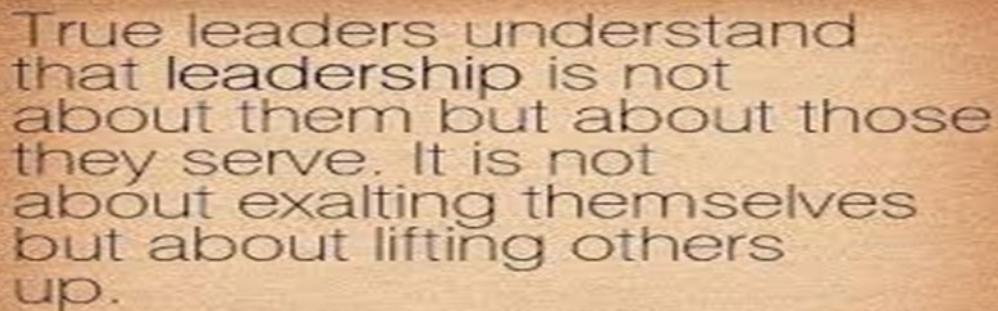


This Thursday's leadership Insight focuses on a salute to service as demonstrated by our veterans. What service is and is not, and seven service elements are shared using the acronym S.E.R.V.I.C.E.

#serviceinleadership#Servantleadership#tablegroup

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Thursday's Leadership Insight Salute to Service: A Leadership Lesson in S.E.R.V.I.C.E. From Our Veterans



True leaders understand that leadership is not about them but about those they serve. It is not about exalting themselves but about lifting others up.



Many countries worldwide take time to commemorate the service and sacrifice of their veterans. This week, we in the United States pause to recognize our veterans for their past and present service and sacrifices. November 11 Veterans Day activities commemorate the service past and present of veterans. The last Monday in May is Memorial Day, set aside to commemorate those veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice. In many European countries, the service and sacrifice of veterans are remembered on the Sunday before November 11, Remembrance Day. Many of these countries have a national moment of silence and reflection at 11:00 am. This is because 11/ 11/1918 at 11:00am was the moment the Armistice ended World War I became effective. The British Broadcasting Corporation (B.B.C.) reported in an article by Jacqueline Howard [Nation falls silent as King leads Remembrance Ceremony](#) that "King Charles has led the nation in two minutes of silence in remembrance of men and women who lost their lives serving in the two world wars or other conflicts. Thousands of veterans and

civilians joined the King in paying their respects to the fallen at the annual National Service of Remembrance ceremony at the Cenotaph in central London. The King was joined by other members of the Royal Family, including the Prince and Princess of Wales, and political leaders. Events to mark Remembrance Sunday - observed on the closest Sunday to Armistice Day - are taking place around the country."

I believe that veterans and those in service now should be recognized daily with gratitude. I believe it is simply the right thing to do. Here in the U.S., many organizations provide services to veteran groups. The National Football League (N.F.L.) hosts an ongoing project to support veterans and those currently serving called "Salute to Service." In a November 7, 2024, N.F.L. Publications article ***Over \$73 Million Raised for the N.F.L.'s Salute to Service Charitable Partners Since 2011*** noted that The N.F.L. announced today the continued support of [Salute to Service](#), the league's commitment to honor, empower and connect with the country's military community. Throughout the month of November, the collective N.F.L. family, including all 32 clubs and players, will reinforce their support and gratitude to those who have and continue to serve. Salute to Service will come to life on-field during Weeks 10-12 of the regular season and will be

complemented by special events and activations in communities nationwide.

"Every day, the brave men, women, and families serving in our armed forces make countless sacrifices to uphold our great nation's freedom and security. Because of their sacrifice, the entire N.F.L. family can participate in and enjoy the game of football," said N.F.L. Commissioner Roger Goodell. "Salute to Service represents our year-round commitment to the military community, and we are proud to recognize and honor our country's service members, veterans and their families."

Salute to Service is anchored through league partnerships with five charitable organizations that support the military community: the Bob Woodruff Foundation, Pat Tillman Foundation, Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS), the United Service Organizations (U.S.O.) and Wounded Warrior Project. Since 2011, the N.F.L. has raised more than \$73 million for our Salute to Service charitable partners to help advance their ongoing missions to uplift our nation's military community through targeted programs, resources, and support."

Our veterans provide a great source of protection, safety, and security, as well as learning on many topics, especially leadership. Service is the common thread.

Every member of our armed services is in service to each other. They develop self-leadership. Their self-leadership is seen in their service to each other to be part of something bigger than themselves. Service is an essential leadership content skill for anyone in any organization to grow their leadership practice. Robert Greenleaf, the author of [Servant Leadership](#), wrote, "The servant-leader is servant first; it begins with a natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first, as opposed to wanting power, influence, fame, or wealth." Our Veterans are models of service.

This Thursday's leadership Insight focuses on a salute to service as demonstrated by our veterans. What service is and is not, and seven service elements are shared using the acronym S.E.R.V.I.C.E.

Service is a foundational pillar of all branches of the U.S. Military. What does service mean for leaders? Service is a general term; any dictionary definition can yield numerous definitions in several fields, from economics to social service to car repair. Service, as it relates to the U.S. Military, refers to time spent in service to help others. This may lead some to consider service as a weakness. It is

quite the opposite. Service in leadership is a strength and a commitment to something bigger than oneself. The problem with all these general definitions is that they miss the essence of service in leadership shown in action by the U.S. Military. To better demonstrate the leadership concept of service shown by our U.S. Military, I collaborated with my dear friend and colleague Peter Palanca. Peter and I both teach and coach leaders, and we agreed that developing an acronym with descriptors for service as S.E.R.V.I.C.E would provide clarity and usefulness. As we celebrate our veterans this Veterans Day, reflecting on the leadership principles embodied by those who serve our nation is fitting. The acronym S.E.R.V.I.C.E. encapsulates seven key elements of effective leadership that are vital for any organization, particularly exemplified by military leadership. Each component contributes to impactful leadership and how the U.S. military demonstrates these principles daily.



## **S. Selfless service to set the stage for the organization's success**

The United States is a free country today due to the sacrifices of those citizens who served the country and its vision, not their personal gain. On June 10, 1775, John Adams, a Massachusetts delegate to the Continental Congress, proposed that state militias be formed into a Continental Army to fight for independence. Five days later, on June 15, 1775, Adams proposed the army be led not by a New Englander like himself but by a Virginian, George Washington. Creating a citizen army built on service to the country was unique, as many countries at that time had mercenaries from other countries to fight their wars. This focus on service is a hallmark of the United States military today. It provides a guiding light for leadership in establishing a vision or mission for a bigger purpose than the self. Selflessness is the cornerstone of servant leadership, a philosophy deeply ingrained in military culture. Military leaders often put the needs of their troops and mission above their own, embodying the principle that "the mission comes first, and the team comes before the individual." This selfless attitude fosters trust, loyalty, and a sense of shared purpose within any organization. Selfless leaders prioritize their team's growth and success over personal gain. They make decisions

based on what's best for the organization and its people, not just their own interests.

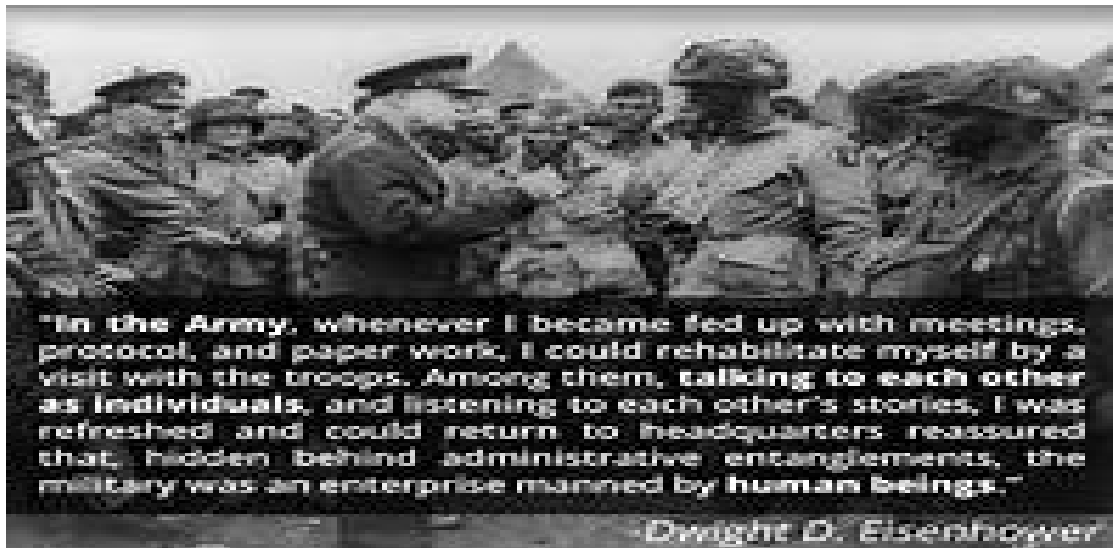


**E. Empowering and equipping everyone is crucial to completing the mission**



Effective leaders empower their team members by giving them the tools, knowledge, and authority to succeed. The U.S. military excels in this area through rigorous training programs and a culture of continuous learning.

Soldiers are equipped with physical tools, decision-making skills, and leadership capabilities at every level. In any organization, leaders should focus on developing their team's skills and confidence. This involves delegating responsibilities, offering mentorship, coaching, and creating growth opportunities. When team members feel empowered, they're more likely to take initiative and contribute innovative ideas.



## **R . Responsibility is required to lead in service.**

Taking responsibility is a hallmark of great leadership. Military leaders are taught to own their successes and failures, understanding that ultimate responsibility rests with them. This accountability extends to caring for their

troops and ensuring mission success. In the corporate world, responsible leaders acknowledge their mistakes, learn from them, and take decisive action to correct course when necessary. They also take responsibility for their team's performance and well-being, creating a culture of accountability throughout the organization.

Leaders accept responsibility for their decisions and credit others for success. Six days after Memorial Day, the commemoration of the sacrifices of those who served, we commemorate the 81<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the Allied invasion of Nazi-held Europe in World War II. Dwight Eisenhower was the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe during World War II. He commanded the most massive invasion in history on June 6, 1944. Eisenhower clearly understood the implications of success or failure in the D-Day invasion to end the war in Europe. He had to contend with the Nazi defenses but also the unpredictable English Channel weather. He had to postpone the invasion one day from June 5 to June 6. Eisenhower is often remembered for his D-Day speech to troops, reminding them of their duty and service to free Europe as a crusade. Few remember the speech never given by Eisenhower.

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*"Our landings in the Cherbourg-Havre area have failed to gain a satisfactory foothold, and I*

*have withdrawn the troops. My decision to attack at this time and place was based on the best information available. The troops, the air, and the navy did all that bravery and devotion to duty could do. If any blame or fault attaches to the attempt, it is mine alone."*

*Dwight Eisenhower, the Supreme Commander of Allied Forces in Europe during World War II*

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After visiting airborne troops ( pictured above) about to embark on the invasion, Eisenhower scrolled a second note for distribution if the landings failed. "Our landings in the Cherbourg-Havre area have failed to gain a satisfactory foothold, and I have withdrawn the troops. My decision to attack at this time and place was based on the best information available. The troops, the air, and the navy did all that bravery and devotion to duty could do. If any blame or fault attaches to the attempt, it is mine alone." The second note is now a history trivia question. It is an example of service and responsibility by leaders; he would have accepted total blame. Interestingly, he never took credit for the invasion's success, as he credited those who served.



## **V . Values-based leadership is a vital part of service.**

A leader's top priority is building people up and getting things done. Leaders must consistently add value to their organization and the people they serve. The U.S. military adds value to the nation through its defense capabilities, humanitarian efforts, and technological innovations that often benefit civilian life. Military leaders are trained to maximize resources and personnel to achieve objectives efficiently. In any context, leaders should constantly ask themselves how they can contribute more to their team and organization.

Unlike many other countries today, the person who serves in the U.S. Military today is a volunteer. They serve to make a difference and have sworn to values like the U.S. Army Values cited above. Leaders are expected to hold

themselves and those they lead to these standards of value. A leader knows that their personal examples illuminate the best leadership lessons and the best life lessons. John Wooden, the legendary basketball coach at U.C.L.A. who served in the Navy during World War II, often said, "My personal example is my most powerful leadership tool."

### **I.Improvement as leaders for the leader and those they lead is critical.**

The U.S. Military's emphasis on continuous self-improvement and leadership development at all levels is a model for other organizations. From basic training to advanced leadership courses, there's a constant focus on personal and professional growth. The U.S. Military is not a career for those who want to be a 30-year private. Leadership development in the military is "up or out." Soldiers, sailors, marines, or airmen must continue demonstrating leadership growth to continue their careers. Leaders understand that leadership skills can and must be intentionally modeled, taught, and demonstrated at all levels. The United States Military is based on leadership at all levels. The ultimate strength of any military team is its ability to function if a commanding officer is injured or killed in action. The "next soldier up "means someone can and will step into leadership in any situation.

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*"I don't see how the credit can go to anyone other than the company-grade officers and senior N.C.O.s who led the way."*

*D-Day Veteran Sgt. Ellery on the success of the Normandy Invasion*

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The late historian of the D-Day Invasion, Stephan F. Ambrose, cited in his D-Day Classic book [D-Day The Climactic Battle of World War II](#), an interview with an invasion veteran, Sgt. Ellery exemplifies the point of stepping into leadership at all levels. "When you talk about combat leadership under fire on the beach at Normandy," Ellery concluded, "I don't see how the credit can go to anyone other than the company-grade officers and senior N.C.O.s (non-commissioned officers) who led the way. The Military today emphasizes leadership training and continued growth as leaders. This practice fosters the

belief that all members are leaders. These are practices that would benefit any organization.



### **C. Character is integral to all that a leader does in the U.S.Military.**

Character is at the core of military leadership. The armed forces instill values such as integrity, courage, and honor, expecting leaders to embody these traits and set an example for others. This model of character is a model of behavior. It is seen in the practice of clearly understood communication, the "Commanders Intent" in all missions. The Commander intends to clearly explain the plan and process to all on the mission, and is often reported back to the commander. This practice holds the character of the leaders to a standard of integrity, candor, and clarity with

all levels of the team. This practice reduces communication errors at critical times and also models the leader's integrity in action. General Norman Schwarzkopf, the Commanding General on the field of Coalition Forces in Desert Storm, often said to fellow leaders that "Leadership is a potent combination of strategy and character. But if you must be without one, be without the strategy."

This character-driven leadership builds trust and respect within the ranks. In any organization, leaders of strong character create ethical, transparent organizations. They lead by example, demonstrating the values and behaviors they expect from their team.

## **E. Empathy is crucial to service in leadership**

Empathy is crucial for connecting with and understanding team members. Military leaders often face high-stress situations where empathy is essential for maintaining morale and cohesion to achieve mission success. They must be attuned to their troops' physical and emotional needs while still focusing on the mission. In any leadership role, empathy allows leaders to build stronger relationships, resolve conflicts more effectively, and create a supportive work environment. Empathetic leaders are better equipped to motivate and inspire their teams.



In discussions with doctoral-level leaders, Dr. Arvid Johnson, President of the University of St. Francis, noted in his pre-university career as a technical consultant to the military that a successful leader in the U.S. military must demonstrate a set of traits labeled as S.M.E.E. This acronym stood for subject matter expertise and empathy, a combination of "hard" skills and "soft" skills, both critical traits to effective leadership. Subject Matter Expertise skills in strategies, tactics, and weaponry are critical. The empathic leader has a grasp on their feelings and those in their command and a sense of the surrounding circumstances. This ability to "know yourself and those you lead combined with a sense of the surrounding environment or setting is critical to mission success. The empathic leader reads situations more quickly and knows how to support those needed followers to help complete a mission. The empathic leader is especially crucial to their unit /combat team's success and being of service and support to all involved.

The intentional practice of S.E.R.V.I.C.E. in leadership can transform organizations. It creates a culture of trust, mutual respect, and shared purpose. Team members feel valued, supported, and motivated to give their best. This leadership approach fosters innovation, resilience, and adaptability, which are crucial in today's rapidly changing organizational environment. Patrick Lencioni, in a video

blog released on November 13, 2024, [Organizational Health in 3 Minutes Patrick Lencioni](#), described how successful organizations are Smart (Subject Matter Expertise) and Healthy (Empathy). He notes, "**The smartest companies don't always win.** To maximize its results, an organization must be both smart and healthy. A **healthy organization** minimizes politics and confusion, raises morale and productivity, and **reduces turnover** among its best employees." He also reports that health is critical. Healthy organizations can become smarter, whereas unhealthy organizations never become smarter and often lose smarts. The S.E.R.V.I.C.E. is the model for all organizations to be healthy and smart

The U.S. military's application of these principles has created one of the world's most effective and respected organizations. By emulating this approach, leaders in any field can build stronger, more cohesive teams and achieve remarkable results. The best honor and gratitude we can show is to recognize and emulate the leadership lessons they offer. The S.E.R.V.I.C.E. model provides a framework for leadership that serves not just the organization but also its people and the broader community. A leader's intentional practice of S.E.R.V.I.C.E can make a difference. The S.E.R.V.I.C.E. model provides a framework for leadership that serves not just the

organization but also its people and the broader community. By embracing these principles, leaders can create a lasting positive impact, just as our military does for our nation daily.

Thank you to those who serve, and my eternal gratitude to those whose ultimate sacrifice provided our Republic's safety, security, and freedom.

**The Leadership questions for you are :**

- 1. How does your leadership demonstrate S.E.R.V.I.C.E. to those you lead?**
- 2. What of the seven elements can you improve on?**
- 3. Have you thanked a Veteran today for their service and sacrifices?**