Marine Corps Leadership Traits

The 14 leadership traits are qualities of thought and action which, if demonstrated in daily activities, help Marines earn the respect, confidence, and loyal cooperation of other Marines. It is extremely important that you understand the meaning of each leadership trait and how to develop it, so you know what goals to set as you work to become a good leader and a good follower.

JUSTICE

Definition: Justice is defined as the practice of being fair and consistent. A just person gives consideration to each side of a situation and bases rewards or punishments on merit.

Suggestions for Improvement: Be honest with yourself about why you make a particular decision. Avoid favoritism. Try to be fair at all times and treat all things and people in an equal manner.

JUDGMENT

Definition: Judgment is your ability to think about things clearly, calmly, and in an orderly fashion so that you can make good decisions.

Suggestions for Improvement: You can improve your judgment if you avoid making rash decisions. Approach problems with a common sense attitude.

DEPENDABILITY

Definition: Dependability means that you can be relied upon to perform your duties properly. It means that you can be trusted to complete a job. It is the willing and voluntary support of the policies and orders of the chain of command. Dependability also means consistently putting forth your best effort in an attempt to achieve the highest standards of performance.

Suggestions for Improvement: You can increase your dependability by forming the habit of being where you're supposed to be on time, by not making excuses and by carrying out every task to the best of your ability regardless of whether you like it or agree with it.

INITIATIVE

Definition: Initiative is taking action even though you haven't been given orders. It means meeting new and unexpected situations with prompt action. It includes using resourcefulness to get something done without the normal material or methods being available to you.

Suggestions for Improvement: To improve your initiative, work on staying mentally and physically alert. Be aware of things that need to be done and then to do them without having to be told.

DECISIVENESS

Definition: Decisiveness means that you are able to make good decisions without delay. Get all the facts and weight them against each other. By acting calmly and quickly, you should arrive at a sound decision. You announce your decisions in a clear, firm, professional manner.

Suggestions for Improvement: Practice being positive in your actions instead of acting half-heartedly or changing your mind on an issue.

TACT

Definition: Tact means that you can deal with people in a manner that will maintain good relations and avoid problems. It means that you are polite, calm, and firm.

Suggestions for Improvement: Begin to develop your tact by trying to be courteous and cheerful at all times. Treat others as you would like to be treated.

INTEGRITY

Definition: Integrity means that you are honest and truthful in what you say or do. You put honesty, sense of duty, and sound moral principles above all else.

Suggestions for Improvement: Be absolutely honest and truthful at all times. Stand up for what you believe to be right.

ENTHUSIASM

Definition: Enthusiasm is defined as a sincere interest and exuberance in the performance of your duties. If you are enthusiastic, you are optimistic, cheerful, and willing to accept the challenges.

Suggestions for Improvement: Understanding and belief in your mission will add to your enthusiasm for your job. Try to understand why even uninteresting jobs must be done.

BEARING

Definition: Bearing is the way you conduct and carry yourself. Your manner should reflect alertness, competence, confidence, and control.

Suggestions for Improvement: To develop bearing, you should hold yourself to the highest standards of personal conduct. Never be content with meeting only the minimum requirements.

UNSELFISHNESS

Definition: Unselfishness means that you avoid making yourself comfortable at the expense of others. Be considerate of others. Give credit to those who deserve it.

Suggestions for Improvement: Avoid using your position or rank for personal gain, safety, or pleasure at the expensive of others. Be considerate of others.

COURAGE

Definition: Courage is what allows you to remain calm while recognizing fear. Moral courage means having the inner strength to stand up for what is right and to accept blame when something is your fault. Physical courage means that you can continue to function effectively when there is physical danger present.

Suggestions for Improvement: You can begin to control fear by practicing self-discipline and calmness. If you fear doing certain things required in your daily life, force yourself to do them until you can control your reaction.

KNOWLEDGE

Definition: Knowledge is the understanding of a science or art. Knowledge means that you have acquired information and that you understand people. Your knowledge should be broad, and in addition to knowing your job, you should know your unit's policies and keep up with current events.

Suggestions for Improvement: Suggestions for Improvement: Increase your knowledge by remaining alert. Listen, observe, and find out about things you don't understand. Study field manuals and other military literature.

LOYALTY

Definition: Loyalty means that you are devoted to your country, the Corps, and to your seniors, peers, and subordinates. The motto of our Corps is Semper Fidelis!, (Always Faithful). You owe unwavering loyalty up and down the chain of command, to seniors, subordinates, and peers.

Suggestions for Improvement: To improve your loyalty you should show your loyalty by never discussing the problems of the Marine Corps or your unit with outsiders. Never talk about seniors unfavorably in front of your subordinates. Once a decision is made and the order is given to execute it, carry out that order willingly as if it were your own.

ENDURANCE

Definition: Endurance is the mental and physical stamina that is measured by your ability to withstand pain, fatigue, stress, and hardship. For example, enduring pain during a conditioning march in order to improve stamina is crucial in the development of leadership.

Suggestions for Improvement: Develop your endurance by engaging in physical training that will strengthen your body. Finish every task to the best of your ability by forcing yourself to continue when you are physically tired and your mind is sluggish.

Because it is important to always be able to remember the basic leadership traits, the acronym "J.J. DID TIE BUCKLE" is used. Each letter in the acronym corresponds to the first letter of one of the traits. By remembering the acronym, you will be better able to recall the traits.