

Leadership Lessons from The SEALs

1. Realize that nobody is forcing you to be here
2. If you're new, you have to shut up and learn
3. **You're the One Who Can Make It Work, and That's Often Thanks Enough**
4. **Your Value during the Battle Has Nothing to Do with How Close You Are to the Front**
5. **Help Your Boss and You Help Yourself**
6. **It's Okay; You're Supposed to Fight with Your Boss: -**

A functioning team is more than just a group of people with a common goal. It's a group of people who can work toward that common goal despite having different opinions about how to reach it. No, not everyone has the same say. No, not everyone's opinion will play a part in the end. The boss makes the final decision and will live or hang by that decision.

Will you agree with every decision? No. If you're a leader yourself, it's inevitable that you will have an opposing view or contrary insight. Will you know everything about why a decision is made? Rarely. Do you want to play a part in the mission or project? Of course. And you want the decision that's about to be made to be the right one, the one that will bring you through with flying colors. So what do you do? When you disagree with your boss, let him or her know about your ideas. If you don't, you're screwing the team over. Many doomed projects got off the ground because everyone was too frightened to say "boo." On the other hand, many lives and dollars have been saved because someone was willing to speak out. Who knows? Perhaps you do know something that your boss doesn't. Perhaps that's why he or she hired you. But if, after you tell your boss your alternative plan, she or he still plunges ahead with their original idea, get on board. He or she has listened. He or she has considered what you had to say. And now he or she *still* wants to climb the sheer cliffs while under fire in order to knock out the enemy guns.

In this situation, if the decision is within your boss's authority to make, is supportive of the team's mission, and is consistent with your organization's philosophy, then you have to go along. And do the work to the best of your ability. Oh yes, something to keep in mind. Believe it or not, you may not know the big picture. Maybe those enemy guns on top of those sheer cliffs threaten the entire allied fleet. Maybe your platoon is the only team that can do it. Maybe you'll come out alive and be a hero. Maybe you won't. But that's a moot point. You joined the organization and its decision-making process. So fight with your boss. You're supposed to. Then do your job.

7. **Cowboys and Cogs Don't Have Job Security—Team Members Do: -** You want to be a senior vice president? You want to be a president? You want to be CEO? Know how to do it? Stand out as a team player. Do you think a solo star is what makes success? Wrong. And most of the time, companies recognize this. There will always be the slimeball whom you'll watch in amazement as he or she continues to fail upward. Sorry—it happens. But other than in that unfortunate

exception, the only position where only one person is important is called self-employment. Most companies—all quality organizations—recognize that everyone is dependent upon a team. The president, the CEO, the other senior executives, they're all supported closely by a team of people who help them make the right decisions every day. They are very aware of the value of team players. They are reminded every day that it's neither the cowboys nor the cogs, but the team players who drive success

8. **You Can't Fool People about Being a Team Player**

9. **There Are Probably Good Reasons Why Your Marching Orders Seem Screwed Up:** - Do you think you're right? Do you think you

have the right answer? Have you ever thought that you don't know everything? If you're good, your answers are probably right. But half the time, you're probably making a decision in a partial vacuum. Have you ever thought that maybe you don't have

all the information, and maybe, just maybe, your boss is making a decision because of info you don't have?

It's simple; the boss has the big picture. You don't. If you don't like the way he or she is leading, get

out. If you don't like the project you're on, quit. But if you want to survive, you might just think of doing what the boss says.

10. **Build Your Team, Build Your Résumé**

11. **It's a Small World, and It's Getting Smaller:** - Whom do you think you'll be working with in a few years? Do you think your peers will stay in the jobs they're currently in? Do you think you're going to be the only one advancing? If you do, think again. Your team members are going to be with you for the rest of your life—in elevators or flight terminals, through email, and at cocktail parties, talking about you. Maybe some of them will drop out and do different things, but for the most part, the people you'll run into are the same people you started with, in one way or another. Think they'll have forgotten how you left the company with your project in tatters? Think again. Think local businesses will have forgotten how you stiffed them? No dice.

There are so many good candidates out there. Often, one bad nudge is enough to place your résumé in the permanent round file. "No, don't worry. We're keeping it on file should everyone else

on earth die."

On the other hand, when you work hard, do your job, and help others on your team, you'll make a

lasting impression. People remember who was competent, who worked hard, who was fair, and who was their friend. People will remember when you came through.

Remember, often your future will irreparably be affected by a comment made far away, by someone you briefly knew a long time before. Make sure it's the right comment.

12. **There Aren't Many Ways to Radically Change a Proven System:** - "If you don't rebel against the system when you're 24, you'll never

amount to anything, and if you're not a part of it by the time you're 30, you'll never do anything." Often, doing what's right means taking the less dramatic road of supporting the company's long-term goals, and then doing your part to bring the efforts of the people under you into harmony with those goals. Sometimes the system itself gets in the

way of those goals. But unless you're the top dog and have a real chance of changing the system, and the costs of changing the system are worth the benefits, your job is to continue to work within its current framework toward those long-term goals. As time goes by, the more credibility you gain, the better your chances of effecting meaningful change. But no matter what you do, or what your level is, it's not going to happen overnight. So if you can't stand the system you're in, you're better off hunting for a new one than frustrating your-self, your team, and your boss by trying to lead a revolution. Hey, Ché Guevera caps are sexy, but sometimes revolutions are only good in songs. Know the difference.

13. **Own Everything You Do**

14. **Sweat the Small Rituals:** - By maintaining its rituals, an organization is communicating the idea that a system or culture is in place. By adhering to its rituals, you are confirming that you belong to the organization. If you buck the system, you are not simply rebelling against formal suits and orthodox memos; you are questioning the organization, strategies, and processes they represent. You are questioning the company you work for.

15. **Bring Me the Problem Along with a Solution**