Extreme Ownership—How the US Navy Seals Lead and Win.

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Part one: winning the war within.

Chapter 1: extreme ownership.

- "You know whose fault this is? You know who gets all the blame for this?" The entire group sat there in silence, including the CO, CMC, and the investigating officer. No doubt they were wondering whom I would hold responsible. Finally, I took a deep breath and said, "there is only one person to blame for this: me. I am the commander. I'm responsible for the entire operation. As the senior man, I am responsible for every action that takes place on the battlefield. There is no one to blame but me."
- Looking back, it is clear that, despite what happened, the full ownership I took of the situation actually increased the trust my commanding officer and master chief had in me. If I tried to pass the blame onto others, I suspect I would have been fired—deservedly so.
- The more important, the commanders and training could learn what I had learned about leadership. While some commanders took full responsibility for blue on blue, others blamed the subordinates for simulated fratricide incidents in training. These weaker commanders would get a solid explanation about the burden of command and the deep meaning of responsibility: the leader is truly an ultimately responsible for everything. That is extreme ownership, the fundamental core of what constitutes an effective leader in the seal teams or any leadership endeavor.
- On any team, and any organization, all responsibility for success and failure rests with the leader. The leader must own everything in his or her world. There's no one else to blame. The leader must acknowledge mistakes and admit failures, take ownership of them, and develop a plan to win.
- When subordinates aren't doing what they should, leaders that exercise Extreme Ownership cannot blame the subordinates. They must first look in the mirror at themselves. The leader bears full responsibility for explaining the strategic mission, developing the tactics, and securing the training and resources to enable the team to properly and successfully execute.
- "If one of your manufacturing managers came to you and said, my team is failing, what would your response be? Would you blame their team?"

Chapter 2: no bad teams, only bad leaders.

- When it comes to standards, as a leader, it's not what you preach, it's what you tolerate.
- When setting expectations, the matter what has been said or written, if substandard performance is accepted and no one is held accountable— if there are no consequences— that poor performance becomes the new standard.
- Leadership is the most important thing on any battlefield; it is the single greatest factor in whether a team succeeds or fails.

Chapter 3: believe.

- "But to do that, we have to get each mission—each operation—approved. And if we wire missions approved, we must have Iraq you soldiers with us on every operation. Does anyone not understand this?" The room was quiet. Everyone understood. I didn't have to jump for joy at the thought of fighting alongside Iraqi soldiers on a dangerous battlefield. But they feared have to understand why they were doing it so that they could believe in the mission.
- There were no questions. The most important question had been answered: why? Once I analyze the mission and understand for myself that critical piece of information, I could then believe in the mission. If I didn't believe in it, there was no way I could possibly convince the Seals in my task unit to believe in it. Express doubts are openly question the wisdom of this plan in front of the troops, their desertion toward the mission would increase exponentially. I would never believe in it. As a result, they would never commit to it, and it would fail.
- In order to convince and inspire others to follow and accomplish a mission, a leader must be a chew believer in the mission.
- "Do they ever confront you on anything or ask questions?" The CEO thought for a few seconds. "Not really, I think they get the business, and I think they know what we are trying to do. So there really isn't much that they would need to confront me on. I've been in this game a long time. I wouldn't be here today if I didn't know what I was doing. They know that and I think they respect that. Experience counts for a lot in this business. But I think if they had an issue, they would certainly bring it up to me." A common misperception among military leaders or corporate senior executives, this was an example of a boss who didn't fully comprehend the way of her position. In her mind, she was fairly laid-back, open to questions, comments and suggestions from people.

Chapter 4: check the ego.

- "I wouldn't have thought to take that hack," Gary admitted. "It's counterintuitive," I said. "It's natural for anyone in a leadership position to blame subordinate leaders and direct reports when something goes wrong. Our egos don't like to take blame. But it's on us as leaders to see where we failed to communicate effectively and help our troops clearly understand what their roles and responsibilities are and how their actions impact the bigger strategic picture. "Remember, it's not about you," I continued. "It's not about the drilling superintendent. About the mission and how best to accomplish it. With that attitude exemplified in you and your key leaders, your team will dominate."

Part two: the laws of combat.

Chapter 5: cover and move.

- No options were good options. We had to choose the least bad option.
- "No reason," I replied, understanding that his logic was absolutely correct. I realized my error. "I was so focused on our own squad's dilemma, I didn't think to coordinate with the other team, OP1, to work together. We absolutely should have." This was the first rule in Jacko's Laws of Combat: Cover and Move. I had broken it. We had use cover and move within my own immediate OP2 team, but I had forgotten about the greater team and support available.

- It was a rude awakening for me. I had become so immersed in the details, decision points, and immediate challenges of my own team that I had forgotten about the other team, what they could do for us and how we might help them.
- Each member of the team is critical to success, though the main effort in supporting efforts must clearly be identified. If the overall team fails, everyone fails.
- Make them a part of your team, not an excuse for your team.
- They now worked together as one team— Cover and Move.

Chapter 6: simple.

Chapter 7: prioritize and execute.

- Even the most competent of leaders can be overwhelmed if they try to tackle multiple problems or number of tasks simultaneously.

Chapter 8: decentralized command.

- They can ask, "What do I do?" Instead, they had to stay: "this is what I'm going to do."
- To be effectively empowered to make decisions, it is imperative that the frontline leaders execute with confidence. Tactical leaders must be confident that they clearly understand the strategic mission and commander's intent. They must have explicit trust that their senior leaders will back their decisions. Without this trust, junior leaders cannot confidently execute, which means they cannot exercise affective decentralized command. To ensure this is the case, senior leaders must constantly communicate and push information—what we call in the military "situational awareness"—to the subordinate leaders. Likewise, junior leaders must push situational awareness up the chain to their senior leaders to keep them informed, particularly of crucial information that affects strategic decision-making.
- "The Seal Teams and the US military, much like militaries throughout history, or based on building blocks of 4 to 6 man teams with a leader. We call them fire team. That is the ideal number for leader to lead.
- That is why simplicity is so important, copper decentralized command requires simple, clear, concise orders that can be understood easily by everyone in the chain of command.

Part three: sustaining victory.

Chapter 9: plan.

- Tao is what mission planning was all about: never taking anything for granted, preparing for likely contingencies, and maximizing the chance of a mission success while minimizing the risk to the troops executing the operation.
- What's the mission? Planning begins with mission analysis. Leaders must identify clear directives for the team. Once they themselves understand the mission, they can impart this knowledge to their key leaders and frontline troops tasked with executing a mission.
- The mission must explain the overall purpose and desired result, or end state, of the operation.
- Leaders must delegate the planning process down the chain as much as possible to key subordinate leaders.

- Following a successful brief, all members participating in an operation will understand the strategic mission, the commander's intent, the specific mission of the team, and the individual roles within that mission. They will understand contingencies—likely challenges that might arise and how to respond. The test for successful brief is simple: do the team and supporting elements understand it?
- "As a leader, if you're down in the weeds planning the details with your guys, you'll have the same perspective as them, which adds little value. But if you let them plan the details, and allows them to own their piece of the plan. And it allows you to stand back and see everything with a different perspective, which adds tremendous value. You can then see the plan from a greater distance, a higher altitude, and you will see more. As a result, you'll catch mistakes and discover aspects of the plan that need to be tightened up, which enables you to look like a tactical genius, just because you have a broader view."

Chapter 10: leading up and down the chains of command.

- Still, it is critical that each have an understanding of the others role. And it is Parma that the senior leaders explained to the junior leaders and troops executing the mission how their role contributes to the big picture success.
- This is not intuitive and never as obvious to the rank and file employees as leaders might assume. Leaders must routinely communicate with their team members to help them understand their role in the overall mission.
- "Well, they should come out here than," I responded. They should," Jacko answered. "But have we told them they should were scheduled a convoy to pick them up? I know I haven't.
- If your boss isn't making a decision in a timely manner or providing necessary support for you and your team, don't blame the boss. First, blame yourself. Examine what you can do to better convey the critical information for decisions to be made in support allocated.
- One of the most important jobs of any leader is to support your own boss—your immediate leadership. In any chain of command the leadership must always present a united front to the troops.
- That "us versus them" mentality was common to just about every level of every chain of command, whether military unit or civilian corporation. But breaking that mentality was the key to properly lead up the chain of command and radically improve the team's performance.

Chapter 11: decisiveness amid uncertainty.

Chapter 12: discipline equals freedom— the Dichotomy of leadership.

- Discipline starts every day when the first alarm clock goes off in the morning. I say "first alarm clock" because I have three, as I was taught by one of the most feared and respected in structures in Seal training: one electric, one battery-powered, one wind up. That way, there's no excuse for not getting out of bed, especially with all that rests on that decisive moment. The moment the alarm goes off is the first test; it sets the tone for the rest of the day. The test is not a complex one: when the lime goes off, you get up out of bed, or do you lie there in comfort fall back to sleep? If you have the discipline to get out of bed, you win— you pass the test. If you are mentally weak for that moment and you let that weakness keep you in bed, you fail. Though it seems small, that

weakness translates to more significant decisions. But if you exercise discipline, tattoo translates to more substantial elements of your life.

- A leader must be calm but not robotic. It is normal—and necessary—to show a motion. The team must understand that they leader cares about them and their well-being. But, a leader must control his or her emotions. If not, how can they expect to control anything else? Leaders who lose their temper also lose respect. But, at the same time, to never show any sense of anger, sadness, or frustration would make that leader appear void of any emotion at all—a robot. People do not follow robots.
- It was evident that and he knew he was leaning too far in one direction. As if many of the dichotomies of leadership, a person's biggest strength can be his biggest weakness when he doesn't know how to balance it.