

# Gunner's Seat: Developing Leaders of Character

Leader development is an ongoing endeavor, delivered in many forms and by different means. From Army attributes and competences across the institutional, operational and self-development domains, to feedback mechanisms such as coaching, counseling and mentorship, leader development is foundational to a disciplined, fit and confident outfit that is "Army Ready" for the crucibles of ground conflict.

While level of competency can be determined through tests, measures of performance and assessments, the quality of one's attributes (character, presence, intellect) are more challenging to ascertain, therefore more difficult to devise a deliberate plan for development. The Army attributes represent the values and identity of the leader, how the leader is perceived by followers and others, and the mental and social faculties the leader applies in the act of leading (Army Doctrine Publication 6-22).

Character is not something that is teachable. Character is often exposed through personal or professional encounters (good and bad), moments of uncertainty or fear, or when facing tough decisions that require moral or ethical decisions. As leaders, are we recognizing these moments when they occur, intently observing behavior to assess the developmental need and, more importantly, devising a plan for improvement?

Intellect is not just about the knowledge possessed. It includes mental agility, sound judgment and interpersonal tact, to name a few. Tough, realistic training opportunities that are both physically and mentally challenging are often engines that showcase mental agility and sound judgment. As leaders, are we recognizing these moments as they occur and devising a plan for improvement?

The Army attributes of character and intellect could not be more important in our Army than present-day, yet there are often few formalized plans to develop these essential tenets in our Soldiers and leaders. As daily-life endeavors (personally and professionally) provide the window to assess both character and intellect, we must catalogue and devise a developmental plan that ensure our No. 1 priority – America's sons and daughters are grounded in the disciplines and values of our profession, have a warrior spirit and possess the mental agility / resilience to face and conquer any obstacles. This focus of leader development is undoubtedly the most challenging, yet I firmly believe it is the most essential!

Armor Ready! Forge the Thunderbolt!

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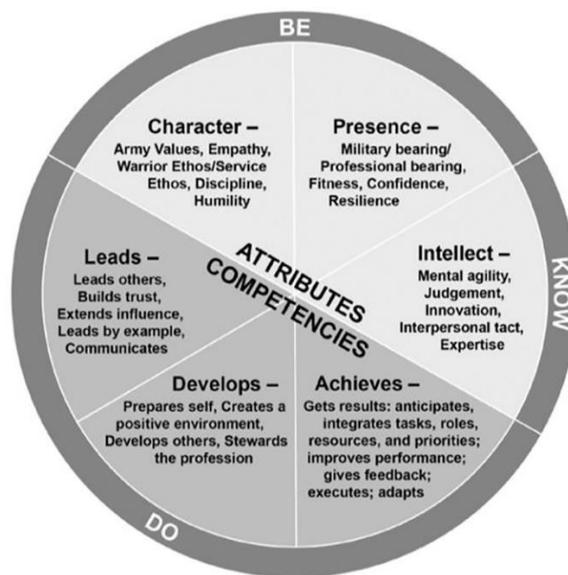


Figure 1. Introductory logic map from Army Doctrine Publication 6-22.