

Lessons in Leadership from the U.S. Military: Paint a Bold, Inspiring Vision for the Future

Following the 9/11 attacks, the U.S. military accelerated the ongoing and gradual process of searching for the best people available to lead – regardless of sex. As a result, female career military officers began to advance into very visible leadership roles: the first female combat pilot in the U.S. Navy, the first female in U.S. history to command in combat at the strategic level, and the first woman in U.S. military history to assume the rank of a four-star general.

They didn't want to be “female leaders”—they just wanted to lead.

These women were wives, daughters, mothers and sisters. But they were also military leaders, warriors, academics and mentors in their own right.

As the military has evolved to develop an appreciation for the potential of women to serve in the most challenging of positions, it is also time for the American public to see these women for what they bring to the fight: brains, strength and courage.

They are leaders.

No one does leader development better than the military. Behind winning our nation's wars, its primary purpose is to develop leaders. This happens through organized leader development programs, like institutional schooling and courses, but mostly through personal interaction and example. It's the unit-level leaders out there who are making the critical impact in our armed forces.

Falling between Armed Forces Day (the third Saturday in May) and Memorial Day (the last Monday in May), this SUMS Remix honors three female leaders who demonstrated principles of leadership development that all leaders will find helpful in leading their own organizations.

THE QUICK SUMMARY - [Fearless Leadership](#) by Carey D. Lohrenz

An F-14 fighter pilot's top lessons for leading fearlessly--and bringing a team to peak performance

As an aviation pioneer, Carey D. Lohrenz learned what fearless leadership means in some of the most demanding and extreme environments imaginable: the cockpit of an F-14 and the flight deck of an aircraft carrier. Here, her teams had to perform at their peak--or lives were on the line. Faltering leadership was simply unacceptable. Through these experiences, Lohrenz identified a fundamental truth: high-performing teams require fearless leaders.

Since leaving the Navy, she's translated that lesson into a new field, helping top business leaders, from Fortune 500 executives to middle managers, supercharge performance in today's competitive business environments.

In *Fearless Leadership*, Lohrenz walks you through the three fundamentals of real fearlessness--courage, tenacity, and integrity--and then reveals fearless leadership in action, offering advice on how to set a bold vision, bring the team together, execute effectively, and stay resilient through hard times.

Whether you're stepping into your first leadership role or looking to get out of a longstanding rut, *Fearless Leadership* will act like your afterburner--rocketing you to ever-higher levels of performance.

A SIMPLE SOLUTION

The primary work of nourishing people with vision is discovering and communicating that unique identity as a church. Many leaders photocopy a vision from a conference or book and then wonder why more people don't flock to the to that vision. Do your people really want a vision based on another church's values?

Never forget that God is always doing something cosmically significant and locally specific in your church.

A nourishing vision requires five courses. As you deliver the five-part meal, you're really addressing the irreducible question of clarity people need. If you have not thought through all five aspects of your church's vision, people won't be able to really access it.

The five questions play out as follows: At our church...

- What are we ultimately supposed to be doing?
- Why do we do it?
- How do we do it?
- When are we successful?
- Where is God taking us?

If you asked these clarity questions to the top 40 leaders in your church, what would they say? If they don't have a clear, concise and compelling answer that's the same answer, it's time to go to work.

A fearless leader begins the work of leadership with a bold vision.

The vision you create and hand down to your people is going to be the cornerstone of your team's success. It all starts with a clear concept, a view of where you want to go. If your vision is limited, your potential and possibilities are, too.

The very essence of leadership is the ability to create a picture of success and bring people toward it. Your vision gives the team a universal understanding of who you are, as both an individual and a leader within the organization; who they are as members of the team; and where the group is headed. It's a chart to our destination, providing a steady compass to orient your team. And when the sea gets rough, the vision allows you

to navigate the challenges and come out ahead.

If you don't have the courage to set the vision, the tenacity to keep after it, and the integrity to pursue it authentically, your team is going to be dead in the water.

Clear vision is not just wishful thinking. It's more than simply imagining what you hope the future will be. It's an incredible tool that catalyzes your team, gives it purpose and focus, sustains it in challenging times, and helps it perform at the highest level. You and your team have to see yourself accomplishing that dream without losing your way or getting distracted. The right vision can make that possible.

Carey D. Lohrenz, [*Fearless Leadership*](#)

A NEXT STEP

Set aside time to reflect and answer the following questions. Circle "Yes" or "No" – don't dwell on the question, but answer it without too much thought.

Dreaming and Achieving Pop Quiz

1. When people talk about the future of our church, is there an immediate sense of enthusiasm? Yes / No
2. Have we named a shared dream within a five-year timeframe? Yes / No
3. Do our volunteer leaders regularly pray for some specific yet epic impact that our church will make in our city or community? Yes / No
4. Do most of our leaders naturally talk about "the big picture" of the church before they talk about their ministry area? Yes / No
5. Do we have several days already calendared in the next year to review and reset a visionary plan? Yes / No
6. Has our team boiled down the single-most important priority for our ministry in the next 12 months? Yes / No
7. Are we totally confident that our team is taking action and reviewing ministry progress each week? Yes / No
8. In the last five years, did we have a church-wide, disciple-making goal that was not related to money? Yes / No
9. Has our team written down what our ministry will preferably look like three years from now? Yes / No
10. Has our senior pastor spent as much time on preparing a visionary plan as he/she has spent on preparing the last four sermons? Yes / No

After you have completed the above questions, ask yourself the following questions:

1. How many "no's" did we circle collectively?
2. What was the easiest "no" to circle?
3. What was the easiest "yes" to circle?

4. What was the most frustrating “no” to circle?
5. Are you excited about taking some time as a team to work on our church's big dream?
Why or why not?
6. Is there any reason why we shouldn't be able to answer “yes” to these questions after a few months of work?

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