

# Leadership Fundamentals for Commanders

**Lesson Objective:** Demonstrate an understanding of basic leadership principles that are integral to command.

**Desired Learning Outcomes (DLO):**

1. Describe several leadership styles and when each might be used most effectively.
2. Demonstrate understanding of the Core Values, Ethics Policy, and Nondiscrimination Policy and how they form a foundation for leadership.
3. Explain how a leader shows his or her leadership.
4. Describe how a leader makes decisions.
5. Demonstrate conflict resolution skills.
6. Explain the importance of and how a commander might value/show appreciation to members.
7. Describe the importance of, how to recognize, and how to cope with self-management concerns such as stress, burnout, and balance.

**Scheduled Lesson Time:** 50 minutes

## Introduction

To become a successful CAP unit commander, you will need to effectively employ basic leadership skills. Leadership is a broad, ever changing subject. One can study leadership for years and still be challenged and grow.

As a commander or supervisor, it is important to understand a little about leadership styles. Leadership style encompasses how a leader provides direction, motivates followers, and puts plans into action. One could read a great deal about leadership styles; however, this material will cover a few of the more popular styles.

## 1. Leadership styles

Three basic leadership styles include the autocratic style, the laissez faire style, and the democratic style.

- Autocratic leaders make decisions without consulting members of the team. Control is centered on the leader. Communication is not a priority. Followers do as they are instructed. The leader maintains authority through position, rewards, punishments, or force. This style can work in certain situations. It works well when decisions must be made quickly, when members of the team are not able to provide input, or when the team need not agree for a successful outcome. This style might work well in an emergency or if you have followers who have little experience. This style of leadership can also demoralize followers and lead to disengagement, fear, and distrust.
- Laissez faire leaders allow members of the team a lot of freedom in how the work is accomplished. For example, members of the team might set their own deadlines for a project. Laissez faire leaders provide support and advice, if asked. Laissez faire leadership works well when followers are competent and motivated. Allowing subordinates to have control can lead to high levels of satisfaction; however, if the subordinate is a poor time manager or lacks the skills to complete the task it can lead to problems. Subordinates must be motivated to be successful in this model.

- Democratic leaders engage the team members in making decisions. The final decision may rest with the leader, but the process involves the team members. Democratic leaders ask others for their input. This type of leadership encourages creative approaches and a high level of engagement among followers. Followers in this model can have a high level of satisfaction with their work and high productivity. Friendships and good relationships are often a product of democratic leadership. People feel valued in a democratic environment. One negative to democratic leadership is that it takes more time. It does not work well when time is short and a quick decision is needed.

Outside of the basic leadership framework above, many other types of leadership exist. One reads about transformational leaders. These leaders normally possess a great deal of integrity and motivate their followers by sharing a well-communicated vision of the future.

Transformational leaders are generally humble, empathetic, and authentic. Followers identify with a transformational leader and are inspired by their enthusiasm and energy.

Transformational leaders often expect the best of their followers and are self-aware. A transformational leader is able to set clear goals for his or her team. Transformational leaders are often productive and highly engaging. Finally, transformational leaders often employ strong conflict-resolution skills. We will talk more about conflict resolution later in the lesson.

Transformational leaders can fall into trouble when they can see the big picture but not the details or when they wear out their followers with too much energy. Passion and confidence are not always truth and reality.

Another leadership style we often hear a lot about is servant leadership. The term was developed in the 1970s. This style of leader is characterized as one who leads by example. The servant leader is one who meets the needs of the team or the community. This type of leader has a high level of integrity and is generous with his or her time. The servant leader often inspires followers to have high morale and a positive culture. The servant leader is held in high regard for his or her ethics, values, and ideals. Servant leaders share power with others. This allows followers to develop and perform at a high level.

The leadership style of a good commander changes based on the situation and the followers. Good leaders know their own tendencies and talents. Leaders have to look at their need for control, willingness to trust others, organizational skills, and people skills to help them identify the best leadership style. Strong leaders also look to their followers in choosing a leadership style. Generational differences, for example, can impact what leadership style is most effective. Older members may react better to a less autocratic style of leadership from a younger commander. By using democratic leadership, the younger commander can encourage older members to share experiences and knowledge. Conversely, cadets may react more positively to a more autocratic style. Leaders also have to consider the needs of the organization, learn from other leaders, and be prepared to change. Leading volunteers is a delicate balance. The ability to analyze the situation and choose the right leadership style will impact success on projects and retention in the unit.

## **2. The foundation of your leadership**

There are several policies that guide our actions as leaders. The policies form the foundation of our leadership in CAP. Among these we find:

- The Core Values.
- Ethics policy.

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- Non-Discrimination policy.
- Cadet Protection Policy.

The Core Values are Integrity, Volunteer Service, Excellence, and Respect. Integrity, Excellence, and Respect are derived from the Air Force Core Values. Core values are the guiding principles of an organization. They impact both behavior and actions. In this regard, they are the ethical framework for our service to our communities, states, and nation.

- **Integrity:** Integrity is the cornerstone of our relationships with others. Without integrity, our relationships with others will struggle. Integrity encompasses more than honesty. Integrity combines honesty with courage, responsibility, self-respect, and humility. Integrity, for a member of CAP, means practicing a high level of self-discipline. For a leader, it means modeling the above qualities in all you do because subordinates will emulate your actions. A leader who is not honest with his or her followers will lose them. Integrity builds trust in a leader to do the right thing—even when it is a hard thing.
- **Volunteer Service:** Volunteers in CAP give time, energy, and resources so that they might serve others. The essence of this core value is the commitment we make to each other to place the organization before ourselves. Our volunteers not only give of themselves and their resources but also agree to obey a variety of rules and regulations. Unlike the military, commanders in CAP direct volunteers. This is a delicate balance. A focus on volunteer service is one reason why the organization functions properly. Volunteer service is one area in which our members are often servant leaders. We all chose to serve others when we joined CAP.
- **Excellence:** The goal of CAP members is to exceed the standard in appearance, actions, and stewardship of resources. Commanders must hold themselves to a high standard and show excellence in all they do to earn the respect of their followers.
- **Respect:** Members of CAP are a diverse group from age to background. Each person likes to be treated with dignity and fairness. Members of CAP must respect each other or the mission can suffer. A leader must have the respect of his or her followers to be successful. While you may be appointed to a position, respect must be earned through your actions.

For the Core Values to effectively serve as our guide, leaders must show followers these four items in their actions. A leader cannot merely talk about their importance. A leader must model the values to show their importance. Finally, leaders must engage their followers in the Core Values.

The Civil Air Patrol Ethics policy is discussed in CAPR 1-1. Civil Air Patrol expects its members to maintain very high standards of ethical conduct. The Core Values are a part of these expectations, but our ethical standards also play a role. Our ethical standards can be seen in several areas:

- **Good Stewardship of Resources:** One way CAP members show strong ethical standards is in how we manage the assets and resources of the organization. Being a good steward includes the processes we have for reporting, internal controls, and how we ensure members are well-educated to perform their duties. We accomplish these things in a variety of ways. We have inspections, audits, and inventories to check processes and assets. We use the ORMS and Wing Banker systems. Another aspect of good stewardship is that we fill volunteer and corporate positions using fair, impartial methods. Commanders have a fiduciary responsibility toward CAP and members.

Fiduciary responsibility means commanders must act in the best interest of the organization.

- **Avoid Conflicts of Interest:** Commanders must ensure that members of CAP do not use corporate property, information, or positions for improper personal gain or benefit. Commanders can learn more about conflict of interest in CAPR 1-4.
- **Base Working Relationships on Respect, Fairness, and Openness:** A third aspect of the ethical standards CAP expects is that members will always act with integrity and ethically. Members of CAP do not garner an unfair advantage by manipulation, intimidation, concealment, abuse of privileged information, misrepresentation of facts, or other unfair practices. CAP members treat others with respect. Transparency is an important aspect of squadron leadership. When possible, commanders should always share the why with members so they can understand actions thoroughly and support them.
- **Fair Dealings in External Business Relationships:** CAP is positively or negatively impacted based on its public image. We must take good care of our reputation by engaging in fair and open dealings with competitors, suppliers, customers, and colleagues. When the unit accepts an obligation and how it treats vendors with whom it works reflects on the organization. Good leaders always remember that they represent the organization as well as themselves and share the principle with their subordinates. Working together and acting diligently will help CAP keep its reputation for fair dealings in place.
- **Confidentiality:** CAP leaders have a role in helping ensure that members protect sensitive and confidential information. CAP's ability to protect confidential information can impact our missions. A failure to protect confidential information might cause harm to our ability to complete our missions, individuals, and organizations. Following the rules regarding confidentiality is important. Commanders should review CAPR 1-3 regarding the Disclosure of Confidential Information by Volunteer Members.

The actions of the leader are mimicked by his or her followers. By embracing ethical behavior and adhering to CAP Ethics policy, commanders can help ensure the reputation and viability of the organization. CAP uses valuable time and resources to train members regarding ethical conduct and the core values in many trainings including the CAP Orientation Course, SLS, CLC, and National Staff College. Commanders have a responsibility to promote, maintain, and enforce high standards of ethical conduct in CAP. CAP members who believe a violation of ethical standards has occurred should report it through the chain of command. The unit commander has a role in this process as well. It is important to remind members of the process and to facilitate an atmosphere where reporting can occur, if needed.

The Nondiscrimination Policy is described in CAPR 36-1. Complaints related to Nondiscrimination Policy are covered in CAPR 36-2. Commanders should be familiar with both regulations. Commanders have several responsibilities related to Nondiscrimination.

- **Implementation:** Commanders at all levels are responsible for implementing CAP policies, procedures, and directives prohibiting discrimination throughout their commands.
- **Enforcement:** Commanders at all levels are responsible for enforcing CAP policies, procedures, and directives prohibiting discrimination throughout their commands.

- **Yearly Briefings:** Commanders ensure that the CAP Nondiscrimination Policy is briefed to all members in their commands each year.
- **Diversity in Recruiting:** Commanders will ensure that every effort is made to recruit diversity in membership.
- **Record Keeping:** Commanders must ensure that records are maintained to show compliance with directives and that these records are available for inspection.

Finally, leaders must implement the Cadet Protection Policy as a cornerstone of their leadership. Parents entrust their most valued possessions to Civil Air Patrol and leaders must ensure no harm comes to these youths. A focus on the Cadet Protection Policy, as outlined CAPR 60-2, helps ensure the safety of cadets.

The unit will follow the leadership of the commander. When a commander makes the Core Values obvious in his or her leadership, members will see the importance of doing the same. When commanders support policies and directives both in letter and in spirit, subordinates will understand that these guiding principles are important. In short, we must show our priorities and our values to grow these qualities in others.

### 3. Showing your leadership

There are many ways a leader can show his or her leadership. This section will explore how a leader can show his or her leadership in actions, decision making, conflict resolution, and in valuing members.

- **Have a professional leadership presence.** Successful commanders have good leadership presence. Leadership presence is a bit of an elusive term. One might say you know it when you see it. How do you identify a leader by what you see? A good leader shows he or she is the leader by action and deed. In essence, leadership presence encompasses your values, how we carry ourselves, how we think, what we say, and what we do. It is an extension of the foundation discussed above. Let's think about some ways a leader can develop a leadership presence. Words that we often associate with leadership presence include confidence, authenticity, and effectiveness. Leadership presence includes how one communicates both verbally and non-verbally. Leaders should have a firm handshake, smile, and make eye contact with others. Finally, the leader must be present and visible at meetings.
- **Be positive.** Related to leadership presence is attitude. A positive attitude is a powerful tool a leader can use to motivate others. A positive attitude is also helpful when overcoming challenges and working with others. According to John Maxwell, a leadership author, attitude is The Difference Maker. A leader employs his or her positive attitude when he or she praises others and encourages others.
- **Listen.** Being a good listener is not an easy task. It requires one to set aside distractions and focus on the individual or individuals with whom we are communicating. Being a good listener shows your subordinates that they matter and that you value their input. Good leaders don't type or sign papers while listening to others. Good leaders set aside the distractions and focus on the person. The things can wait until later. Listen to your colleagues so you can learn from them and show them you care about them. A good way to show others you are listening is to lean forward, look them in the eyes, have an interested look, and to take notes. Finally, one can repeat things back and ask questions to show that he or she is listening and engaged. All these things

show respect for the speaker. Being friendly, warm, and welcoming can help you build a good relationship with members of the unit and open lines of communication.

- **Be accessible.** The commander needs to be accessible to members. This means being available to listen to their ideas. It also means being friendly and approachable. If you scowl all the time, members will not want to approach you. You have to smile, learn member names, and be human. All of this will help your members feel comfortable approaching you with ideas, advice, and information. Good leaders are knowledgeable but admit there are things they do not know. Leaders ask others for advice and feedback. Good leaders admit they have room to grow and show members that they can still grow by taking on new skills, specialty tracks, etc. We should all strive for continuous improvement.
- **Be visible.** The commander must be visible in the unit and model good behavior. This means the commander needs to wear his or her uniform properly. As much as possible, the commander should be in the same uniform as the members or an equivalent uniform. Commanders should be well groomed and meet the standards in CAPM39-1. Another good habit is to be on time. A commander who is visibly late to meetings is letting members know it is okay to be late to meetings. Remember, your unit will see you as an example and your behavior as what is acceptable. Do not sit in your office all night. It is important for a commander to visit members and see what is going on during a meeting. The commander sets the tone for the meeting. Make a point of greeting members and engaging them. Remain calm and show self-control.
- **Build the team.** Good leaders bring together followers to help achieve the goal. By sharing a vision, the leader can inspire the followers to work hard to achieve. Sometimes leaders have to employ tools like icebreaker activities to help teams form. Leaders can use teambuilding exercises that are found on the internet or in local libraries to help teams become more effective, communicative, and motivated. Strong leaders allow the team to achieve and remember to praise the team for its accomplishments. Leaders often give credit to others for accomplishments. Leaders are not attached to the “I” but rather the “we”.

#### 4. Make good decisions

A key aspect of earning the respect of your followers involves how you make decisions. Leaders have to keep fairness and respect in mind when making decisions. There are many models or ways to make decisions including rational models, intuitive models, and more.

Rational decision making involves the use of analysis, facts, and process to achieve a decision. Decision making matrices can help a leader with decisions. A SWOT analysis is an example of a decision matrix analysis. In this model, we review the pros and cons. It is comparative. The decision-maker chooses the most logical solution that will lead to the desired effect. Rational models can be time consuming to implement with a number of steps required in the process. Rational models can also be difficult to employ when there is too much information to analyze.

Intuitive decision making involves the use of cues or hints to recognize patterns. Once the pattern is recognized, the decision-maker can choose a course of action. If the decision-maker is not sure the solution will work, he or she chooses a different option and works through it. This continues until the solution is found. This method can be time consuming.

Regardless of the model chosen, leaders should remember the following concepts when making decisions.

- **Use data to make decisions.** The Commander's Dashboard in eServices is full of information that can help a commander make decisions about everything from aerospace to training. Good decisions are not based on a guess. Commanders should review the available data and make the best possible decision.
- **Be fair and consistent.** Many people are sensitive to a lack of fairness or consistency. They will compare outcomes over time and develop an opinion about how decisions are made.
- **Be empathetic.** We must always remember that we command volunteers. Volunteers are not required to do what we ask. We cannot take their hard work and dedication for granted. We must be empathetic and understanding of their challenges. Think how your decision will impact members. Will it increase costs to members? Will it increase the burden of time or travel? These are important considerations. Will a member understand the reason for an action? How can it be explained so they understand it is important to support the initiative? Sometimes members need to hear why before they can get on board with an initiative.

Commanders are well-served when members see their choices as fair and based in data rather than on whim. Members will have faith in the decisions made by a fair, thoughtful commander. One area that requires a calm, thoughtful leader is conflict resolution.

## 5. Resolving conflict

Conflict will occur at some point because it is a normal part of working with people. It is inevitable that within a group, members will disagree about a concept or a course of action. When conflict occurs it sometimes seems trivial, but those involved relate to a deeper need. The disagreement may be about how to fold the uniforms in supply, but the root of it may be respect or feeling valued. Being able to resolve conflicts is an important tool for leaders. If a leader can help others recognize conflicting needs and analyze the situation, the result can be trust and improved relationships.

Conflict can be managed in a healthy way or an unhealthy way. Conflicts can be stressful for all involved. A good leader can help others remain calm, be open to verbal and nonverbal communication, and lower stress. It is important to keep emotions and behavior controlled. When people are out of control, they struggle to communicate their needs in a positive manner. Those who are out of control tend to threaten, frighten, or lash out at others. If a conflict is managed in an unhealthy manner, it can lead to resentment and members leaving a unit.

There are many methods of resolving conflict. This is another subject where one could read books on the topic. Several guidelines to help leaders manage conflict successfully include:

- Build good relationships with the members of the unit. An atmosphere of mutual respect will help with good relationships. Tough situations are easier to handle when good foundations for communication already exist.
- Lower the tension level by recognizing there is an issue. The longer we wait to deal with an issue, the worse it often becomes. Be open and honest that a difficult situation exists.
- Remain calm and in control of the situation. Don't let either side take control.

- Avoid assigning blame. Focus on the present and moving forward rather than the past.
- Ask members to express their feelings in words rather than actions. If someone struggles to remain in control, take a break to allow them to regain their composure. It can be helpful to meet with individuals before a meeting with a group. In this way, you can get an idea of what is happening before managing the resolution process.
- The parties must be specific about the problem. Vague complaints are hard to solve. What is the root of the issue? Don't let members introduce too many things. Find the heart of the matter.
- Don't allow accusations or personal attacks. These only create distrust, anger, defensiveness, and vulnerability. Conflict resolution is not about deciding who is right and who is wrong. Conflict resolution is about determining the underlying need and then finding a solution everyone can accept.
- Avoid terms like never or always. These terms are likely to heighten tension.
- Listen to the members with complaints. Encourage them to tell you what is wrong. Let them know you want to understand what upsets them and what resolution they seek.
- Ask members to clarify when the discussion becomes too vague. Ask the member to say more about something or ask if it normally happens in that manner.
- If you can find agreement between the parties, it will help you solve the conflict. Several aspects you can find agreement on include the problem, the procedure to follow, the emotions it causes, or small changes that may help solve the problem. Any common ground, no matter how small, is a step toward resolution.
- Restate what the member has said to you. This shows the person you were listening. It also allows the person to explain things you did not quite understand or hear.
- Be empathetic. Tell the members you appreciate them talking about the issue, that you are glad the group is working toward a solution, and that you can understand how something might have been upsetting.
- Be sure that the solution meets the needs of both parties. If one party is not talking, there is a good chance the solution is unacceptable. Everyone should agree that the resolution is workable.
- Follow up on the situation. You might schedule a follow up meeting or just check on the individuals. This also shows the individuals that you care about them.

## **6. The value of the volunteer**

Our volunteers are the most important resources the organization has. The ability of a like minded group of volunteers to work together toward a common objective that better the community is a valuable resource. People participate in volunteer organizations for a variety of reasons including gaining experience, gaining new skills, gaining new friends, and more. Some members join because they want to give something back to their community or help a friend. Volunteers give their time, energy, and money because they get a sense of worth and fulfillment from their membership.

While volunteers do not come to an organization expecting rewards, it is important to think about how we value and celebrate the great work volunteers do. One role of the commander is to ensure that members know they are valued by the organization. Members who do not feel

valued may leave an organization or have a bad attitude. A bad attitude, like a good one, is contagious. It can impact many other aspects of a squadron. Acknowledging the work done by members of the unit and their contributions shows an appreciation for their input and commitment. Let's look at some keys to valuing squadron members.

- Valuing our members does not need to be costly. Members joined the organization to give their time and energy, not to be paid in the strict sense of the word. Simple, inexpensive methods of paying our volunteers exist.
- A commander must ensure that all members are valued for their contributions not just a small group. Every unit has members who give more and members who give less. Each gives according to his or her ability to do so. All should be valued in one way or another for what they give.
- Valuing members needs to be a regular occurrence. It cannot happen only when we nominate people for the "of the year" awards. Valuing members must be done week in and week out as they give. This is how it best motivates them to continue their efforts.
- The best reward is one that is personal. Get to know your members and you will also come to know what they value. One member may prefer a written note. Another may prefer a word of encouragement or thanks said at a meeting. Another member may be embarrassed by public thanks and shrink away from it.

***What are some ways we can value our volunteers?***

- Respond to their communications promptly. When a member calls or emails, ensure he or she receives a response. Listening to others is one way we value what they have to give.
- Give members feedback about how their work makes a difference. What kind of information could you share that helps the volunteer see the impact he or she makes? There are rewards for numbers of hours spent volunteering, for example, that might help recognize members for what each contributes.
- Giving a member a task to complete with greater responsibility can show value. This shows the member you trust them and by extension value their efforts.
- Say thank you in a note, in public, in private, by phone, by email, etc. There are many ways to do this. Highlight a volunteer in a newsletter, on a bulletin board, etc. Be creative in how you recognize others! But also be fair and consistent. You can send a note, a card, or other.
- Share information with members. Volunteers often feel valued when they are informed and kept updated on what is happening with the organization.
- Give awards. Nominate your members for "of the year" award as well as other awards. There are a variety of awards in CAP from the Achievement Award to Exceptional Service. There are also awards outside of CAP such as the Presidential Volunteer Service Award program.
- Give volunteers the opportunity to learn and advance. When we keep a volunteer so busy that he or she does not have time to develop, we failed to value the volunteer. CAP has many professional development opportunities. Encourage members to take advantage of them and ensure they have time to do so.

- Give volunteers some time to socialize and enjoy their fellow volunteers. Members often join a group to spend time with others. If the volunteer is so busy folding uniforms in supply that he or she never gets to see the cadets wearing the uniforms, it can lower morale and make the person feel less valued. Show the Logistics officer the value of his or her work in a well dressed flight of cadets, it makes the work more valuable.

## 7. Self-Management

A good leader takes care of himself or herself. A common theme in emergency training is that one cannot save others if one falls victim to the disaster. A first responder checks the scene before the victim. We are asked to put our own masks on before others if the commercial aircraft experiences problems with cabin pressurization. If we hear this message often, why is it so hard to implement? Leaders give freely of their time, energy, and resources. It is easy to lose the work/CAP/life balance. When one loses this balance in his or her life, all aspects of life suffer. Things we used to enjoy become tedious and difficult. We are no longer motivated to contribute. Good self-management skills will help a leader maintain energy and the ability to contribute.

- **Good leaders effectively manage stress.** The job of squadron commander is tough but very rewarding. Unit commanders are able to see the effects of their hard work and contributions each week. However, stress accompanies leadership roles.

Stress is how your body responds to demands. Stress can be characterized by a pounding heart, tight muscles, higher blood pressure, quick breathing, and sharper senses. Stress is not always bad. Stress can help you stay focused and alert. It can also make one more resilient. It can save your life by giving you greater strength or more stamina to face an emergency.

Stress can also cause damage when we are beyond our comfort zone or we experience it too often. Stress can have a negative impact on your immune system, your digestive system, and aging. Stress can cause depression and anxiety, weight problems, skin conditions, pain, heart disease, sleep problems, and cognitive problems. How do you know if you are too stressed? Signs that you might be overly stressed include memory problems, poor judgment, concentration problems, a negative attitude, anxious thoughts, and constant worrying. Emotional symptoms of stress overload include depression or unhappiness, anxiety or agitation, moodiness or irritability, feelings of being overwhelmed, and feelings of isolation. Stress can manifest in physical problems also. Physical problems include aches, pains, nausea, dizziness, diarrhea, constipation, and frequent illnesses. Sometimes stress impacts our behavior. Behavior symptoms include eating more or less, sleeping too much or too little, withdrawing from others, procrastinating or neglecting duties, reliance on drugs or alcohol, or nervous habits like nail biting or pacing.

Sometimes CAP can cause stress and other times it is caused by life. Stress can be caused by major life changes like a divorce or death in the family, work or school difficulties, relationship difficulties, financial problems, or family problems.

The question one has to ask is how much stress is too much stress for me? How one handles stress depends on many factors. There are ways to improve how we deal with challenges in our lives. One key to dealing with stress is knowing when you are stressed. Another way we can reduce stress or manage it more effectively is with physical activity. Regular exercise tends to distract people from their worries, stress, and anxiety. Eating a healthy diet and drinking plenty of water is another way to deal

with stress. When we are stressed and short of time, we often turn to processed, convenience foods. These foods contain many carbohydrates and a lot of sugar. What one needs to fight stress is fruits, vegetables, and protein.

Interacting with others can also reduce stress. Being helpful and friendly toward others also can reduce stress. Listening to music can help some people reduce stress. Others benefit from working on a hobby they enjoy. Some people reduce stress by spending time with a pet. Eating certain foods can also reduce stress. Some people report that the smell of coffee or tea helps them relax. Setting aside time to relax is also important. Eating a healthy diet and getting plenty of rest can also help reduce stress.

For members of CAP, it is important to not let the job get in the way of enjoying membership. Ensure that you have some activities that you enjoy as well as your duties. Make time for your own advancement. Leaders need to grow and focus on themselves as well as others.

- **Good leaders maintain a positive attitude.** Entire books have been written on the topic of how attitude impacts success. A positive attitude is an essential tool for a leader. It can be hard to maintain a positive attitude because there is a lot of negativity in the world. There are many ways to help maintain a positive attitude. One way is to think in terms of getting to do things rather than having to do things. Don't think, "I have to go to the promotion board." Think, "I get to go to the promotion board." Tell yourself you can be positive. Think about the good in your life. Sometimes a person needs to refuel and re-energize to keep positive. It is okay to take some time for yourself. Another good method of keeping a positive attitude is having someone to talk to when you feel down. A mentor or friend can help you find your positive attitude again. Don't let other people drag you into their complaints. Make someone else smile. All of these actions will help you maintain a positive attitude. Remember, most people have to work at having a positive attitude. We can all become negative if we lose our focus.
- **Good leaders maintain a work, life, family, CAP balance.** When CAP begins to take too much of our time, we lose our balance. Balance is critical to success. It is hard to be successful without a support network. How can we maintain a good balance? Schedule time with family and friends to help you recharge and maintain good relationships. If your spouse resents the time you spend on CAP, it will impact your ability to participate and your success as a leader. Make sure you plan to be at important family events and celebrations.

Every weekend need not be devoted to CAP. Others can lead activities too. You want to be visible but you don't want to be so dedicated you have time only for CAP. Analyze your schedule for activities that take time and energy. What can you cut from the day that would give you more time for the things you enjoy? How can you more efficiently use your time? Are you retracing steps? Can you delegate some activities to others?

Don't give up your workout! Exercise is often dropped when we are short on time. Exercise boosts your energy level and ability to concentrate. Make time to feel your best!

Balance is also understanding that you are not perfect. You cannot give enough time to everything for perfection. Take time to unplug. We are tied to technology. Sometimes we enjoy life more when we take short breaks from it. eServices notifications will be there when you come back from a night out with your spouse or family.

- **Good leaders recognize the signs of burnout in themselves and others.** Burnout is a hazard that commanders can fall victim to. Commanders, and other high achievers,

often think they can do everything. Members who are passionate about their service in CAP can ignore the long hours they give to the organization and a heavy workload. We all know members who volunteer for every unit activity, hold three staff positions, and work long hours to get everything done. These members are the ones who are prone to burnout. They are our biggest asset because of their tireless service and “can-do” attitude, but they are also a liability because it is not sustainable.

What is burnout? It is the result of chronic stress. It can be physical or emotional exhaustion. It can lead to detachment or cynical attitudes. Burnout is a condition that builds over time in members. It is hard to recognize, but there are warning signs. Members who are experiencing physical or emotional exhaustion may show chronic fatigue, insomnia, forgetfulness, lack of attention, increased illness, loss of appetite, anxiety, depression, or irritability. Each symptom can range from a mild reaction to a more severe reaction. For example, depression may start as feeling sad or hopeless and may later lead to suicidal thoughts. Anger may be tension or irritability at first, but later progress to outbursts or thoughts of violence toward others. Members who are experiencing cynicism and detachment may show a loss of enjoyment in CAP or projects pessimism or isolation. Signs of ineffectiveness include feelings of apathy, irritability, lack of productivity, and poor performance.

- **Avoiding Burnout.** How can we avoid burnout? We need to eat, drink, and sleep well. We need to learn to say no to additional commitments. We must make time for exercise. We can spend time with positive people and avoid negative people. All of these efforts will help avoid burnout.
- **Overcoming Burnout.** What can we do when burnout makes the brightest lights in members dim? Make a list of things that causes us stress and then note how we can reduce the stress of each. Implement some positive changes. Avoid taking on new commitments. Delegate tasks when possible. Plan to take breaks between projects or assignments. Give the mind and the body time to work through the stress. Try to use devices like phones, tablets, and computers less. Give your mind a break. Try not to take CAP home with you. Try to explain to yourself or others the importance of not being perfect and feeling good about what you give rather than the result. Try to rediscover what it is that brought you to CAP and made you passionate about it and work that into your schedule.

## Lesson Summary and Closure

Leading a CAP squadron is a big job. It is a job with many responsibilities and many rewards. A commander has many tools he or she can employ to successfully complete the tasks at hand. Understanding leadership styles and when to employ different styles is a useful tool for commanders. There are several foundational policies in CAP that guide leaders including the Ethics Policy, the Nondiscrimination Policy, and the Cadet Protection Policy. In addition to policies, leaders must use the Core Values as a foundation of their actions. Leading with the Core Values and showing members the Core Values in action is important. Members will model what leaders value and show.

A leader can show his or her leadership in actions, decision making, conflict resolution, and in valuing members. Leaders should be visible and present in their units. They should make decisions based on data and fairness. When conflicts inevitably arise, leaders help members resolve them by recognizing the problem, listening to the members, helping others find common

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ground, and helping identify fair solutions all parties can support. These situations force commanders to use their people skills and communication skills.

A good leader keeps his or her members in mind. One important job of commanders is to show members they are valued. This can be done in many ways and how one values the member depends on the individual and the situation. Regardless, members must feel valued or they will leave the organization. Another way a leader keeps his or her members in mind is in monitoring levels of stress and working to prevent burnout. Stress is not always bad. It can cause members to have increased focus, productivity, and success. However, over time it can become negative and cause health problems. Stressed members can cause more harm than good. Good leaders monitor their personnel and intervene when it appears members are showing signs of high stress or burnout. Through intervention, we can save our valuable volunteers.

Finally, a commander has to monitor himself or herself for stress and burnout. A healthy balance must be maintained between life, work, and CAP. When a commander loses his or her balance, CAP and the member both suffer.