

MLTW2015: “Servant Leadership: a Higher Calling” — Maj. Gen. Joseph S. Ward, Jr. USAF (ret.)

Posted on 18 December 2015.

Notes taken by David McBee during the speech by Maj. Gen. Joseph S. Ward, Jr.

You don't have to be smart to be a general. You need to have smart people around you.

Leadership: try to have a positive impact on the people you are trying to lead. Try to leave the unit better than you found it.

People are your #1 resource.

Servant leadership – helping others. Our mission is to help others. We do that by earning their trust.

People skills – build a rapport with people. Take the time to get to know them.

MG Ward talked about taking over command at the Joint Forces Staff College and having breakfast every Friday with two different people – one from the staff and one from the faculty. By doing this ties were established and bonds formed that led to mutual understanding and support.

At another command he asked to set up a schedule so he could visit everyone on staff at their workplace within his first three months. And every Friday they held an informal town hall in the main corridor. This allowed him to get to know the people on his staff, both military and civilian and be able to relate to them.

How can you motivate someone you don't know? Get to know your people. Your approach has to be individualized.

What are the two most important words that a person wants to hear? Their first name and their last name. Know your people.

The next two most important words that a person wants to hear is *Thank you*

MG Ward talked a bit about one leader who inspired him and that was MG Alfred K. Flowers, USAF (ret). When MG Flowers retired he was the longest serving active duty member in Air Force history, from August 1965 to November 2011.

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfred_K._Flowers)

Several years ago while working in the Pentagon when they both held lower ranks, but Flowers was the superior officer, Ward was tasked with a project along with another officer. They worked

overnight on the task but Flowers stayed with them bringing them a meal and getting them coffee without regard to his rank. Sometimes a leader needs to serve.

MG Ward told another story about a successful Air Force officer who served successfully for many years and retired one day because he realized that he was no longer able to help his people.

Career Development:

Connectivity couple people with the right skills to accomplish the mission.

Three S's of Leadership:

Survival – when you start a new job – the first level is survival. What do I need to know and do to keep this job?

Success – How do I succeed? I need to connect with my boss, my peers, and my subordinates. I cannot do it by myself.

Significance – Be a leader of significance. We owe others our best performance.

Summary:

If you want to be a significant leader – be a servant leader. Support the people who work for you and get to know them. Work on your people skills and strive for continuous improvement.

Leaders eat last.