

Walk With Me

Target Audience: Leaders at all levels

Purpose To foster better, appropriate, professional relationships which will increase the probability of a stronger sense of commitment, loyalty, and trust within your organization.

Description Building good relationships enable you to have greater influence which in turn will shape the perceptions of your personnel and ultimately drive desired behavior. Better relationships can be engineered by leaders – whether you’re walking from the aircraft to the crew bus following a sortie, or from the squadron to the wing building for a weekly staff meeting, these and other similar moments should be seen as opportunities to get to know your people.

Everyone has a story; most people desire to tell theirs. When you truly listen to a person’s story, you develop empathy with them because you experience the events for yourself. A recent neuroscience study (“Why Sharing Stories Brings People Together”, published 6 June 2011 by Joshua Gowin, Ph.D.) showed that brains actually synchronize when sharing stories and you experience the exact same brain pattern as the person telling the story.

Employ Take every opportunity to have someone walk with you and get to know them. Bring a different Airmen with you each time you regularly walk to staff meetings, attend local civic events, etc. This requires no additional time or money.

- Talk about life issues, not the mission
 - Prompt a conversation by saying, “Tell me about your parents.”
 - Ask questions like...
 - Why did you join the Air Force?
 - Where did you grow up?
 - Where do you hope to be in five years?
- The key is to be genuinely interested in what the other person has to say. Anything short of authentic interest will have the exact opposite intended outcome. People can sense insincerity; sincerity comes from wisdom and breeds character.
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