

THE FORMATION



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LOYALTY

- 1: Unswerving in allegiance
- 2: Faithful to a private person to whom fidelity is due
- 3: Faithful to a cause, ideal, custom, or institution

“Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved.” —Martin Luther

DISCUSS

- ⇒ To what are you unquestionably loyal?
- ⇒ What would you endure to demonstrate it?
- ⇒ What would you violate to demonstrate it?
- ⇒ What is the role of loyalty in personal integrity?

COMMANDER'S COLUMN

Why is loyalty important to the Profession of Arms? I think the goal would be to foster effective units and to get the mission done. If people are working together, and they know others are going to stand by them, up and down the chain of command, you will have an effective unit which can get the job done. That's why we care about loyalty. We have a mission to do and if we have people who are committed and loyal, we can do great things.

How do Airmen reconcile competing loyalties? We are loyal to the U.S. Constitution, the Air Force, our unit and to our fellow Airmen, basically in that order of preference. I've seen people become more loyal to their friends than to the unit, but by doing so, they compromise their loyalty to the Air Force as a whole. Loyalty shouldn't be an excuse to tolerate some sort of unacceptable behavior. It is not an excuse to fail to do what's right. If you see something going on that's improper, your loyalty to those higher levels dictates that you say something about it. It's never disloyal to use the chain of command.

How can we develop the right type of loyalty? I think it has to do with connecting people to a commitment to something bigger than themselves. You have to define what that is for your small unit or group. It's hard to say 'we're going to be part of the Air Force' because that is such an all-encompassing thing to be committed to. But you can be committed to being the best at your particular mission. People need to believe what they do is important, and that it's worthy of their loyalty. Then you reward things that make that happen, and you discourage things that detract from the loyalty to the unit. But if you're not loyal to it and you tolerate people who aren't, loyalty dissipates.

— Col. Thomas Zimmerman, AFDW/JAG

UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES

16-20 May: [Joint NCR Professional Development Course](#), more info to follow about registration

6 May, 0845-1630: [Leadercast](#), at the SMART Bldg on JBA for Officer, Enlisted & Civilian

For more info on these and other opportunities, contact CMSgt Pineiro: manuel.pineiro3.mil@mail.mil

AFDW FIRST SERGEANT COLUMN

I recently came across a virtual loyalty app. Imagine trying to build loyalty through social media. This could never happen because you really need to connect, and I'm not talking about on-line, I'm talking about connecting with people. Authentic loyalty is not blind devotion, but an allegiance to truth and duty. That's why loyalty is essential to leadership. Leadership hinges on trust, and trust is cultivated by loyalty. Leaders have to trust their people, and people must be accountable for the leaders' trust. Sincerely investing in those you are leading and building trust takes effort. One of my first supervisors believed questioning what he was doing demonstrated a lack of loyalty. Some also believe that if they instill fear or use threats, they will breed team players or a loyal workforce. In each of these instances, we know one thing for certain, asking anyone to demonstrate loyalty through actions that are wrong or clearly inappropriate, will not build loyalty. Instead, it is likely to erode the relationship between the member, the supervisor, and the institution. Using these types of strategies results in a leadership foundation built on quicksand. As the outside pressures increase, these types of individuals will find their leadership foundation crumbling. But if these strategies are ineffective, what will work to develop Airmen who become increasingly loyal to their leaders? We must begin by defining loyalty at every level. Ultimately, true loyalty from our Airmen comes when the supervisor is able to build a relationship with the Airman based upon deep trust. This means a supervisor may perceive that he or she has loyalty, but if the Airman does not feel a bond of trust, the two of them will never have true loyalty. I've used these 5 simple steps in cultivating loyalty throughout my career, and hopefully, they will assist you as well.

1. **Clarify your values.** As a leader, what do you value? Do you value honesty? Clarifying your values benefits the individual, which will in turn contribute to the organization.
2. **Trust your people.** Not passing along significant responsibilities and withholding important information are two signals that convey a lack of confidence in and commitment to your Airmen.
3. **Encourage people to question or challenge you.** When Airmen care enough to ask supervisors tough questions, it provides supervisors with an opportunity to provide honest feedback. Ask them about their understanding of the topic being discussed. Supervisors who dislike being challenged are leaders who lack confidence in their ability to do the job.
4. **Care about the person first as an individual, then as an Airman.** Great leaders know that when they care about Airmen as people first, many positive things happen. One of them is a loyal workforce.
5. **Be honest.** Being honest builds the trust level needed to get the job done correctly. Leaders who are consistently honest with their teammates will build a lasting bond.

Being a leader today is tougher than ever before. Today's Airmen are faced with challenges unheard of fifty years ago. Doubting the loyalty of those you supervise doesn't need to be added to your list of pressures. As you lead, your team will be there with you, willingly offering their support, their contributions, and their loyalty. Remember a loyal relationship is nearly unbreakable. We are loyal to those who are indispensable in our lives and who always have our best interests at heart, those who make our lives better and easier, those who we trust unconditionally and view as partners and trusted advisors. Those that we call Airmen!

- CMSgt Manny Pineiro, AFDW First Sergeant

CHECK OUT THIS PACE VIDEO: "Heritage Today: Loyalty"

<http://www.airman.af.mil/Products/ReferencePages/AllToolsandProducts/Loyalty.aspx>

CHECK OUT THIS SHORT INTRODUCTION TO A PROVOCATIVE TOPIC:

"Loyalty: The Vexing Virtue" by Eric Felton

<http://www.simonandschuster.com/videos/LOYALTY-THE-VEXING-VIRTUE/915112019001>

"Loyalty is a vexing virtue. It's crucial to every relationship...but our loyalties are always getting hopelessly tangled. When loyalties collide, it can be crushing. Too much loyalty or loyalty to the wrong person, and now we're talking about a vice not a virtue."