



IN PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

LEADERSHIP LESSONS FOR
LAW ENFORCEMENT

DANIEL D. TERRY

IN PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

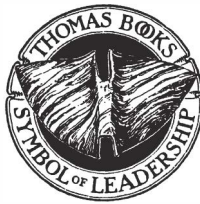
Daniel D. Terry has 32 years of law enforcement experience. He began his career with the Illinois Department of Corrections where he worked at the historical Stateville Correctional Center. He joined a suburban police department outside of Chicago, Illinois, where he served for 23 years in a variety of positions. Starting out as a Patrol Officer, he worked the streets for 5 years and in 1999, became an undercover member of the Community Oriented Policing Program before earning a promotion to Detective in 2000. In 2004 he returned to Patrol as a Sergeant before being promoted to Patrol Commander in 2010. In addition to managing patrol shifts, he commanded the K-9 and Crisis Negotiations Unit and in 2012, was named Northern Illinois Critical Incident Stress Management's Team Member of the Year. He finished his career in Illinois as the Detective Commander overseeing the Criminal Investigations Division until his retirement in 2017. Two days later, he moved to North Carolina and joined a Sheriff's Office where he served as the Captain of their Criminal Investigations Division and Lieutenant of the Division of Professional Responsibility. He remained at the Sheriff's Office until accepting a position as the Chief of Police of a local agency. He holds a Master's Degree in Law Enforcement and Justice Administration from Western Illinois University. He is a graduate of the 233rd Class of the Northwestern University Center for Public Safety, School of Police Staff and Command. He also served as an adjunct professor for Kaplan University teaching criminal justice courses from 2006 to 2015. He was a board member for the Illinois Crisis Negotiators Association and the Illinois Critical Incident Stress Management Team and has published articles in multiple law enforcement publications. He is married and has five children.

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Leadership Lessons for Law Enforcement

By

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CHARLES C THOMAS • PUBLISHER • LTD.
Springfield • Illinois • U.S.A.

Published and Distributed Throughout the World by

CHARLES C THOMAS • PUBLISHER, LTD.
2600 South First Street
Springfield, Illinois 62704

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ISBN 978-0-398-09416-4 (paper)
ISBN 978-0-398-09417-1 (ebook)

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 2023027703 (print)
2023027704 (ebook)

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*Printed in the United States of America
MX-C-1*

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Terry, Daniel D., author.

Title: In pursuit of excellence : leadership lessons for law enforcement /
by Daniel D. Terry, M.A.

Description: Springfield, Illinois, USA : Charles c.. Thomas, Publisher,
Ltd., [2023] I Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2023027703 (print) | LCCN 2023027704 (ebook) | ISBN
9780398094164 (paperback) | ISBN 9780398094171 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Law enforcement. | Leadership.

Classification: LCC HV7921 .T466 2023 (print) | LCC HV7921 (ebook) | DDC
363.2--dc23/eng/20230801

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2023027703>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2023027704>

*This book is dedicated to the memory of Officer Kyle Dieling and Deputy
Ryan Hendrix. Two heroes that left us all too soon.*

INTRODUCTION

Why another book on leadership? A quick search on the shelves of a local bookstore or the web will find you volumes of texts on the topic of leadership or sound management techniques. What can one more book on these topics provide the reader that the others don't? Has leadership changed to the point that a new text on leadership and management is required?

The truth is many, if not most, of these books contain sound leadership principles that any reader can learn and use to improve their leadership capabilities and the capabilities of the work groups they lead. I have referred to many of them and still do in my drive to be the best leader possible. Some of these writings and the leadership principles they recommend will be referred to in the present text as they are sound. A list of references and suggested readings will also be included at the end of the book so you can explore more fully the discussion topics within this text.

The ability to lead and motivate people, create strong teams and work groups, and create a shared vision has not changed. It still comes down to understanding and successfully interacting with people for the benefit of the organization or group. It is still all about people. True leadership implies that someone, and hopefully a group of people, consents to follow you willingly. A forced following or a cadre of subordinates who follow out of fear or intimidation has nothing to do with true leadership.

So, why another book on leadership and management? With so many texts already written on the topic, what do we hope to accomplish with this book?

First, we hope to provide a book specific to the leadership and management needs of the law enforcement professional. Frequently, we find the shelves filled with leadership books from the perspective of running a business or a division of a company. We can also find numerous leadership books from the perspective of the military or one perceived to be a great leader in military history. Again, the principles found in these documents can be sound advice. However, there are few specific texts on leadership principles related to law enforcement organizations. Most examples in this book are real-life examples and will relate directly to law enforcement, and therefore should be practical to the law enforcement professional.

The law enforcement professional, be it a police officer, a sheriff deputy, or civilian personnel working within the law enforcement environment, is unique. It typically takes a particular type of person to perform such a job. Not everyone can or is willing to do this type of work. For example, shortly before I began to write this book, Sergeant Ron Helus of the Ventura California Sheriff's Office died a hero on November 7th, 2018, because he chose to enter a bar alone to stop an active shooter from harming others.

A little closer to home for me, Deputy Ryan Hendrix made the ultimate sacrifice on September 10th, 2020, when he responded to a call that started as someone breaking into a vehicle but quickly escalated into a shootout between the vehicle owner and the offender. Despite the extreme danger present in this call, Ryan and his shift mates responded, as they had done so many times before. Unfortunately, on this occasion, Deputy Ryan Hendrix was hit by a bullet that would take his life. His co-workers, friends, brothers, and sisters of the badge would mourn and grieve for the loss of Ryan. They would gather around a week after his death to see him buried. And then what did they do? They went back to work protecting the community and responding to those same types of calls that took Ryan's life and so many other law enforcement professionals: burglaries, domestic violence calls, shootings, people drugged out, or having a mental health crisis.

The tragedy of seeing their good friend killed didn't stop them. I ask, is this normal? Who does this? Do normal people do this? Maybe normal is a relative term. Who gets to decide what is normal? How about the average person? Would they do this? Would most of America's population respond this way? I have seen people quit jobs over a lot less discomfort or frustration.

I think one of the best examples to emphasize the point is 9/11. What did we see immediately after the attacks on the Twin Towers in New York City on September 11th, 2001? Our first responders, our real heroes, including both law enforcement and firefighters, were observed running towards the towers, towards the danger, towards the unknown. In contrast, everyone else ran away in panic, a natural response for most people. It is an example that demonstrates that there is something different about those who choose law enforcement as their career and calling in life.

Our law enforcement professionals ran into harm's way to save the lives of strangers, people they neither knew nor previously met. And many of these heroes died doing their duty. Why would they do this? They certainly didn't do it for the money. You do not get rich being in law enforcement. They did it because that is who they were! They continue to do this every day in communities around the nation. They put their well-being aside and confront danger over and over as they serve their communities. We can find examples of this starting before 9/11 and up to the present day. The responsibilities of law enforcement require a unique personality and character.

The personalities you frequently find in those that choose the law enforcement profession, including the civilians, and non-sworn personnel who join law enforcement agencies to provide vital support to law enforcement activities, are often your “Type A” personalities. The police are typically individuals who come to the job with personal characteristics consistent with those required to carry out the police function in society. They are strong-willed, passionate, and action and control oriented. We seek out these people for the job, putting them through a testing process and psychological examination to ensure they have this passion and aversion for action and control; this is a good thing. When a man has just killed his family and is loose in the community, we do not want a group of police officers standing on the street breaking down emotionally, paralyzed by the gruesome scene observed moments before. We want our law enforcement heroes to take control of the situation, take the necessary action, and find and get the homicide suspect off the street, so the rest of the community can be safe.

We hire these personalities to be “action junkies and control freaks” to go towards the fight and not away. We reinforce this with the training we put them through so they can control and handle whatever bizarre, dysfunctional, or violent behavior they are confronted with, all to keep our communities safe. This reinforcement is necessary, and our communities are better because of it.

Let’s restate that more accurately. It is good and necessary when law enforcement officers are responding to potentially dangerous and urgent matters in the community that require immediate attention. We need ready and prepared officers to take needed action and control to get the job done. However, it does not work well when our officers take this same need for action and control and bring it back from the field into the office or station house. Now you have a group of control-oriented people jockeying for position or power within the office, which can lead to counterproductive behavior and performance contrary to the organization’s mission. Rather than improving relationships and teamwork that will enhance police performance, this strong ego can quickly weaken much-needed relationships if not recognized and kept in check.

Worse yet, they bring their ego and need for control home with them and present it to their families. That can have devastating effects on marriage and family. Many times in my career, my wife, Wendy, had to lay down the law with a proclamation to remind me that I am not “The Commander” or “Sergeant” in the house. I am grateful for those reminders, as they are certainly needed. Nonetheless, even with those reminders, the law enforcement career I chose has influenced my marriage and family, and many of those effects have been negative.

I believe there are unique challenges to leading and managing the unique personalities of most people who choose law enforcement as their career. I don’t know that these same challenges are as prevalent in most other chosen

professions. What works efficiently in a business environment might not fit the police culture. Where the bottom line in business is profit, the bottom line in law enforcement is much harder to identify and measure. It involves adding value to the community. But what does that look like, and how do we measure it to ensure we are successful? The resources available to law enforcement are also limited, as the taxpayers provide the needed resources. Not many taxpayers get excited about paying more taxes, hence the often-heard phrase the police need to “do more with less.” In this book, I hope to provide sound advice to leading and managing law enforcement professionals while keeping the police personality and these unique challenges in mind.

With all the resources available on leadership, shouldn't our so-called “leaders” have already mastered these skills? Look around your organization. How are those in management and supervisory positions doing? Would you call them true leaders? Have they mastered the principles of leadership found throughout the literature and in the many training courses and seminars?

The truth is there is no mastering the ability to lead. Leadership is an ongoing process that you can never wholly master. Leadership is a constant balancing act. Think of a three-legged stool with the organization being one leg, the people you supervise being the second leg, and you the third. You are trying to balance the organization's interests, the people you lead within the organization, and your interests. The scales are constantly moving. In one instance, a course of action may benefit all three groups. Then the next moment, what is in the organization's best interest might not serve the best interest of the organization's employees. Consider a business' need to downsize and lay off hundreds of employees. It may be best for the organization, but not for those poor employees who may end up unemployed. Or there may be a recommendation from your subordinates that would improve their work environment and morale but come at a tremendous financial cost to the organization. Perhaps better morale and motivation will eventually increase the organization's success, but maybe not. The leader must balance these varying interests and decide what the best course of action is at that very moment.

A leadership position requires this balancing act daily. And what of your interests? Well, those must frequently be sacrificed for the benefit of the organization and the people you lead. But sacrifice your interests all the time, never consider your needs or those of your family, and grave consequences await you that ultimately harm your ability to lead. Divorce, alcoholism and suicide rates are high for those in the field of law enforcement because some often make decisions that are not in their best interests. Finding the right balance is a constant for law enforcement leaders if they are to be successful and last an entire career.

In his book *Eisenhower on Leadership*, author Alan Axelrod puts it this way: “As a leader, you must balance your own perceptions with the demands of those

above you, the realities of overall strategy and the big picture, and the concerns of those immediately surrounding you. The success of the entire enterprise depends on the skill and consistency with which you achieve and maintain this balance.”¹

Again, you do not get to graduate from leadership. It is a constant process where learning should never stop for the person who truly desires to be a “true leader” and improve his ability to make a difference in their organization. So yes, we constantly need to think, talk, and consider what a good leader looks like.

Look around your organization. Is it full of leaders or just people filling supervisory positions? When asking law enforcement personnel what percentage of their supervisors practice true leadership behaviors, Jack E. Enter, Ph.D. author of *Challenging the Law Enforcement Organization: Proactive Leadership Strategies*, reports that most estimate between 5-10%.² Sometimes it might be downright challenging to spot a great leader.

Much easier, however, is to spot a poor leader. It doesn’t take long, and everyone knows what they look like. They are leaders who seem to have the opposite effect of good leaders. Instead of motivating employees, they de-motivate them. They are not well-liked or respected, tend to frustrate employees, and when not standing over and directing them in their efforts, performance or production may suffer. Working for this person might be outright miserable. Employees do not feel valued or appreciated. Ironically, bad leaders, who may put their subordinates through this negative experience, also recognize poor leadership when they are the victims. They are quick to recognize and complain about it without realizing they do the same to their people and organizations.

This difference between these two types of leaders and the practical consequences, one being positive and one negative, caught my attention early in my life and instilled my interest in the topic of leadership. I observed the same dynamics over and over from those who supervised me, whether: as a teenager working in the kitchen of a nursing home; on the docks of United Parcel Service as a young adult; or within in confines of the Illinois Department of Corrections as a correctional officer, or as a police officer on the streets of suburban Chicago. There were those supervisors who made me feel good and motivated me; I bent over backward to please them. And then there were those supervisors I tried desperately to avoid, who seemed to bring down the entire work group, and maybe the group’s performance along with it. I would watch

¹ Used with permission of John Wiley & Sons Books, from *Eisenhower on Leadership: Ike’s Enduring Lessons in Total Victory Management* by Alan Axelrod, copyright © 2006, p. 182. Permission conveyed through Copyright Clearance Center, Inc.

² Enter, Jack E. (2006). *Challenging the Law Enforcement Organization: Proactive Leadership Strategies*. Narrow Road Press, Dacula, GA, p. 27.

as my co-workers would complain about these supervisors and do just enough to get by, not wanting to do anything that might make this supervisor look good. I observed this repeatedly. I saw it but never really understood it. I saw the effects it had on the work group. I saw the fluctuation in morale between the two groups or the change in the work group after a preceding change in leadership. Even as I write this, supervisors - great, good, and poor - come to mind. If you are reading this, I know you have seen them too. You have worked for these same people. They have different names and different faces, but the dynamics and what they do to the organization and people within is the same. Unfortunately, I had no real experience in a leadership position to understand what I saw until I had my chance.

It was in the first part of the year 2000. I had just been promoted to detective. I had worked as a correctional officer, a patrolman, a member of an undercover tactical team, and now a detective. Up to this point, I never held a supervisory position. Being a detective allowed me weekends off in most cases, which allowed me to return to school to pursue a Master's degree in Law Enforcement and Justice Administration.

Western Illinois University had a satellite weekend program where you could attend courses on Saturday and Sunday to obtain your degree. I was required to complete a thirty-page term paper in one of my first courses. The instructor had a list of topics you could choose from on the board, but only one student could write on each topic. As the list of topics was posted, and I saw the subject of leadership among them, I quickly spoke out to secure the topic before anyone else could. Here was my chance to study leadership, to understand and comprehend the observations I had been making for years. The desire to learn and understand leadership was instilled in me through a series of events, including being fortunate to have had the opportunity to write that leadership term paper, as well as the process of growth in obtaining my master's degree and being promoted to sergeant a few years later. I had come to possess the desire to be the best I could, to be one of the good leaders and not one of the poor ones.

Did I make it? Was I successful in being one of the good leaders? I can confidently state that I was nowhere near perfection and learned as much from the mistakes that I have made then from my successes. I will share some of those mistakes with you. Whether I was a good leader rests with those who worked with me. Being a good or great leader is not determined by what you think of yourself but by the perspective of the led. It is their opinion and assessment that matters. I can tell you I have worked with some great police officers who, again and again, made me look polished. They are true heroes and true leaders themselves. They are the ones who decided to get up in the morning and make a difference. They sacrificed and gave, and I benefited from them. I will be ever grateful to them. You will hear about some of them in the pages of this book.

There are good, even great leaders, and then there are poor leaders. A person's true leadership potential and ability will be made known by their fruits. The Bible tells us in Matthew 7:16-18, "You will know them by their fruits...every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit." Indeed, no one is perfect, and every leader will make mistakes. Still, eventually, a good leader will be known by their character, how they treat people, their priorities, what they can accomplish, and how they achieve it. Do their accomplishments come with honesty and integrity?

Good leaders seem to instill a sense of pride in the work group, a sense that what is being done is of value and appreciated. They can motivate people to give more of their best. Working for a good leader is more enjoyable, less of a hardship, and more satisfying, and the desire to strive for optimal performance under this leader may be the norm.

But, be warned, even the poor or average police leader can probably recite much of what the research on leadership has to say. And many, if not most, police leaders have probably attended leadership training where these topics were emphasized. Police leaders may be able to talk about the characteristics of a good versus poor leader. Still, the question is, do they demonstrate the right characteristics in their personal leadership behaviors? Do they 'walk the talk'? and are their actions as a leader consistent with their words, or do they say one thing and do another? Knowledge and know-how are not enough if the characteristics and behaviors of a great leader aren't followed. So, where do you stand? Great leader? Poor leader?

Many of us will fall somewhere in between these two points. That is good news, as it leaves room for improvement. Hence the title of this book, *In Pursuit of Excellence*. This pursuit and drive for improvement are ongoing for the successful leader. I stole the title for this book from the motto of the sheriff's office I was fortunate enough to get to work for, but I think it fits the direction and purpose of this book perfectly.

Though perfection and excellence for ourselves and our organizations may be the goal, achieving it is impossible. However, the process of pursuing excellence should be what drives us to keep improving and moving forward. We can never stand still. There is no such thing as the status quo. You are either moving forward or falling behind. If you find yourself in a tremendous and outstanding agency, you can't say, "Stop, we have reached our pinnacle; things are running great, so let's just sit here and stay as we are." No, it does not work that way because change is inevitable. There may be a change in leadership within your organization. That can easily send an organization in a different direction. Eventually, there will be a change in personnel and hence personalities. There will be changes in technology, changes in law, changes in the attitudes and expectations of the community, and changes in best practices

for law enforcement. If you are not actively monitoring the environment, looking for these changes, and adjusting accordingly, you are falling behind. I hope this book will help you to do better and pursue excellence.

This book will discuss many principles of leadership. It will provide stories, examples, and experiences that offer lessons and takeaways linked directly to leadership principles. It will also dive into management and law enforcement-specific topics as to how you might drive performance, maintain accountability, or just do a more effective job as a supervisor. But the ideas and suggestions made in this book will do you no good if not founded on sound leadership behaviors. Everything rises and falls on your ability to lead. All the supervisors in your organization may be carrying out the same tasks as expected of your organization's management. However, whether they are successful or whether their work group is effective will depend on the type of leaders they are.

Remember the great, good, and poor leader (or leaders) you were picturing just moments ago? You were thinking of some of those poor leaders you have had the unfortunate experience of working for or observed others suffering through. There are many out there, certainly in law enforcement, with our "Type A" control-minded personalities. Why with all the resources on leadership we have today, is poor leadership still so prevalent? I believe we have a significant void in leadership. It is, to this leadership void, that we will now turn.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, thanks to the Lord Jesus. For taking a misguided youth on a fast track to a life of pain and disappointment and allowing him to accomplish more than he ever imagined or deserved. Thank you for the humbling lessons learned along the way and for keeping me safe all these years.

A special thanks to my parents, David and Jetta Terry. For their love and support, and especially their patience and the many prayers I know went up on my behalf. I'm so very grateful I wasn't stuck with the curse of having children as problematic as I was. I don't think I would have been as good as you two.

To my sunshine, Wendy. I would not have accomplished what I have without your love and support. I know it wasn't easy. You often sacrificed, so I didn't have to. While I went missing or didn't come home because of the job, you were the rock that ensured the family had what they needed, so I could do what I needed.

To my children, Brandon, Matthew (Laura), Alex (Travis), Jack, a.k.a. "Buddy," and Super Sam. This book is part of your story too. You were part of this journey, which wasn't always a smooth ride. I love you all, and I am proud of you for who you are and will continue to be.

To my friend and mentor, Pac-Man, a.k.a. Don Pasquarella. I don't know why we clicked the way we did. What did you see in this "wet behind the ears" rookie? I am grateful for your friendship, constant support, and the wisdom you imparted as I grew into the profession. I miss the pizza dinners and cups of coffee as we shared our many laughs together.

To my red penned friend, Mike Althoff. Thanks for your willingness to read and edit this book. I know it had to be frustrating and test your patience. However, your mark on this book has no doubt made it better. You're a good man, a good friend, and a good partner in CID.

A special thanks to Chief John Millner, Chief Steve Neubauer, Chief Dominic Panico, and Chief James Doherty. You gave me the opportunities and paved the path that allowed me to be the best I could be. To my friend, Sheriff Charles McDonald. If not for you, I would not have found my way to

the great State of North Carolina. And, what a treasure I would have missed. To Sheriff Lowell Griffin, thank you for your trust, confidence, and continued support as we continue to serve our communities.

Finally, to all the men and women of the badge, who worked with me, stood beside me, and made me look good. You are the real heroes who sacrificed daily to make a difference in the world. You will always have my utmost respect and admiration.

P.S. Go White Sox and Roll Tide!

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
<i>Introduction</i>	vii

SECTION ONE: THE LEADERSHIP VOID

Chapter 1. The Number One Rule of Leadership: It's Not About You. . . .	5
To Lead is to Work	10
To Lead is to Serve	14
Chapter 2. It's Lonely at the Top	17
Leaders Set the Example	21
Leaders Take Responsibility	24
Chapter 3. The Leadership Pipeline	33
Chapter 4. Control without Competence is Chaos	43
Get Down and Dirty	46
How Important is Competence in Law Enforcement Leadership . .	53
Competence Part Two	55
Chapter 5. Small Things Matter	58
Make Those "Small Thing" Deposits	62
Get Out and About	65
Is There Someone Who Needs Recognized Today?	73
Chapter 6. An Outdated Leadership Model	80
Good Ideas; Where Do They Come From?	82
Problem Solving	88

SECTION TWO: DRIVING PERFORMANCE

Chapter 7. An Environment for Success	99
Diverse Talents, Strengths, and Weaknesses	102
Having All Bases Covered	102
Smile and Have Some Fun	104
Team Focused	110

Value Everybody	111
Check Your Ego at the Door	117
Communication: Keep People Talking	126
It Starts with the Leader	138
Chapter 8. Find Your Johnny P!	140
Chapter 9. Relationships, It's All About Relationships	158
Chapter 10. What Gets Measured (Or Monitored) Gets Done	172
Unexpected Results and a Lesson Learned	178
What Should We Measure	180
Identify Your Priorities	181
The Strategic Plan	184
No Strategic Plan, No Problem!	189
Final Thoughts On Measures, Monitoring, and Rewards	194
Chapter 11. Execution	199
No Accountability, No Execution	202
Follow Up	208
The Follow Up Process	211
The Learning Organization - Never Stop	216
Don't Ignore Poor Performance	222
The Dreaded Evaluation	225

SECTION THREE: YOU WILL NEVER BE GREAT UNTIL YOU REALIZE YOU AREN'T GREAT

Chapter 12. You Are Only Human, So Give Yourself a Break	237
Reality Check - You Can't Save the World	238
All That, and for What?	241
The Bad Guys Aren't Always the Problem	246
It's Not About You!	247
Remind Them Why?	248
Find a Safe Place-Be a Safe Place	252
Give Control	254
Conclusion	256
<i>Appendices</i>	<i>259</i>
<i>Appendix A. Sample Request for Feedback Survey</i>	<i>261</i>
<i>Appendix B. Sample Leadership Survey</i>	<i>264</i>
<i>Appendix C. Sample Strategic Plan</i>	<i>266</i>
<i>Appendix D. Sample Patrol Division Monthly Report</i>	<i>284</i>
<i>Appendix E. Property Room Audit</i>	<i>288</i>
<i>References</i>	<i>289</i>
<i>Index</i>	<i></i>

IN PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

Section One

THE LEADERSHIP VOID

The following section, titled; The Leadership Void, highlights several leadership areas I believe are lacking among many law enforcement agencies today. These voids, as I have chosen to call them, keep our agencies and leaders from performing at the highest level possible. The failure of leaders to recognize and make appropriate adjustments as required will prevent a leader from developing into the best leader they can be. Indeed, if forfeited or ignored, other leadership characteristics may also inhibit the “would-be” leader from obtaining the “true leader” status, which ultimately has adverse effects on the leader’s work group and, subsequently, the organization as a whole. The topics (voids) chosen for discussion in this section are based upon the author’s experience, observed behaviors of both good and bad leaders, as well as his very own decisions made, including the good, the bad, and the ugly, and the subsequent consequences that went along with those decisions and behaviors.

Many of the dynamics present among these leadership voids come naturally. The behaviors are a means of survival; avoiding discomfort and caring for one’s interests are basic instincts learned and developed over a lifetime. Therefore, failing to recognize these voids doesn’t mean a person is bad. Instead, they are not performing as leaders to their full potential. With some self-reflection, honesty, and genuine effort, a person can take action to eliminate or minimize these voids to enhance their ability to lead and develop high-performing, successful work groups. The leadership voids discussed in this section include:

- The failure to recognize that leadership is about serving others and not yourself.
- Compromising your values and integrity and doing what is right to avoid discomfort and the feeling of loneliness that sometimes comes with leadership.

- Adhering to the skills and the role of a previous position instead of accepting, learning, and mastering the skills of your present leadership level.
- Promoting people into leadership positions for any reason other than competence and ability to perform successfully.
- The failure to recognize the importance of small things that might not be so small after all to your people.
- Utilizing a leadership style inconsistent with the demands and expectations of today's community policing.

Chapter 1

THE NUMBER ONE RULE OF LEADERSHIP: IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU

It's not about you! This is what I call the number one rule of leadership. A failure to appreciate and grasp this concept will undoubtedly leave a leadership void within your organization. If you are a leader, your priority, at least as it pertains to the organization you work for, should be the success of the organization and the group of people you lead. As soon as your decision-making comes down to what is in the best interest of you personally and not the group or organization, you have lost your leadership. It takes a unique person to do this. Indeed, many rise to this challenge and call for true leadership who sacrifice for the organization's benefit and do so successfully. This type of behavior is not natural, however. It requires effort, and constant self-reflection, to continually put the interests of others above yourself.

Human nature, left to itself, is selfish. It looks out for its own interests. The Bible tells us in Mark 14:38 that "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." We may genuinely desire and tell ourselves we want to be good leaders. We want to be successful and care for and support those we lead, to help the police department meet its goals, to help make the community safer, and improve the quality of life for the members of the community. In other words, "the spirit is willing." We agree these are positive things and want them to happen, but this is where the "rubber meets the road." It takes daily effort, self-reflection, and self-sacrifice to do the things necessary to make them happen. Without the constant effort required, we will fall back on human nature and what is in our best interest because "the flesh is weak."

Where do we, as law enforcement officers, get in the most trouble in police work? Indeed, everyone makes mistakes. We will have lousy judgment calls as we try to make the best decisions under complex and stressful situations. I have made many. But typically, it isn't these "good faith" decisions that go wrong that get us in our most significant trouble. When are we, the police, getting suspended, demoted, fired, and even indicted and prosecuted? When

we let our self-interests and selfish desires dictate the decisions we make instead of the code of ethics and the oath of office, which we swore to uphold.

Greed, booze, and inappropriate sexual relationships certainly rank high in ruining many law enforcement careers. But, in my opinion, the number one thing that gets the police in trouble is lies! When we lie, lie, lie. We lie to cover up our mistakes, and sometimes the poor decisions we make that aren't mistakes but decisions intentionally made, though clearly wrong.

There was a police officer who worked on my patrol shift. I'll call him "Officer Smith." I liked Officer Smith and thought highly of him. In many ways, he was an asset to the shift and organization. During urgent calls for service, such as crimes in progress, I was thankful to hear him answer the radio and call out "en route." Smith did not hesitate to get involved in high-risk situations. He would not be intimidated by potential danger or conflict. He took control of those situations, and I would breathe a sigh of relief when I heard on the radio that he had arrived on the scene of particularly nasty calls with the potential for violence. However, Smith had a problem. It was his ego. He wanted to be a cowboy. He thought he could do what he wanted, and considering policy and procedure wasn't his priority. He was going to do what he thought was right or at least right for him, and any other opinion as to the matter was "stupid," which he often publicly verbalized.

Smith's attitude began to have the expected adverse effects on other members of his shift, as well as with others elsewhere in the organization. I saw his strengths and the benefit he brought to the police department, but his "I know it all" ego overshadowed that, so others could not, or refused to, see his strengths. I met with Smith on more than one occasion, commending him for the strengths he brought to the team, but I made it just as clear that he would not last long enough to retire from the police department if he didn't change his attitude. Unfortunately, my words came true, as it wasn't long after those conversations when Smith lost his job.

Smith responded with others to an incident where a man had exposed himself to a woman and her young child. Smith was the primary assigned unit, nearing the end of the shift. I heard the call on the radio and heard Smith responding to it. As I was preparing to leave the office, Smith entered the station house with his duty bag in hand as my shift concluded. He appeared to be going toward the locker room to prepare for going home. Knowing enough time had not elapsed for him to complete a thorough investigation and report, I asked him for details of the incident and who was completing the report. He briefly summarized the incident, which was clearly a sexually motivated crime requiring a report and investigation. He assured me he was completing the report. We concluded the conversation, and I went home for the night.

The next day came, and I sought out the report looking for more details of the crime. After not finding the report, I asked Smith about it. He said he had completed the report and turned it in to the front desk, which was the appropriate procedure (this was before computerized Records Management Systems when we were still handwriting reports). I checked with the front desk personnel responsible for taking reports and entering data from the reports into the computer. They had neither seen nor were familiar with the report in question. I had a second conversation with Smith, and it ended with him adamantly saying he completed and turned in the report, suggesting the front desk personnel lost it. I instructed Smith to complete the report again while I continued to investigate what happened to the first report.

During this investigation, I came to suspect Smith had been less than truthful in his story about completing and turning in the report. Because of this suspicion, the second report was reviewed with some scrutiny. I later learned that Smith had not completed a first report and had no intention of doing so. In addition, he hadn't obtained the information from the victim necessary to complete a report.

Smith's first lie was telling me he would complete the report knowing he had no intention of doing so. The second lie was telling me he had finished it and turned it into the front desk to avoid getting in trouble for the first lie. Then, being held accountable for completing a report for which he had no information, Smith committed his third lie by falsifying his report rather than being forthcoming. He searched for information in the computer system on the victim and a witness, but unfortunately for him, the information was outdated. So, his report contained false information that he wanted his supervisors to believe he obtained directly, in person, from the victim upon responding to the incident on the night in question. This incident was the final "nail in the coffin," leading to Smith's departure from the police department.

Can lying by a police officer be anything other than them promoting their personal interests above all else? Smith lost a great career with a professional police agency. Why did Smith lose his job? Because Smith lied! Why did Smith lie? To cover up the decisions he made when he put his interests above that which was right and required by his commitment to the law enforcement profession. Maybe Smith wanted to go home on time. Perhaps he didn't want to be stuck at the office on overtime. Or, maybe Smith was just being lazy at the moment. Whatever his thought process was at that moment, Smith's self-centered decision came at a price. Fortunately, he was not in a leadership position, as it is much more destructive to an agency when a person in a leadership position puts their interests above that of the organization and its good people.

How about these additional examples of things that cause the police significant troubles?