

Episode #42: Leadership Tips from Two Ex-Navy Seals

Welcome to THE CAREER ACCELERATOR, the podcast where corporate managers will find tips and tools to deliver results through others.

Hello. Today I will provide three leadership tips from the book *Extreme Ownership*, by two ex-Navy Seals, Jocko Willink and Leif Babin.

I'm your host, coach Percy Cannon.

In our last episode I shared three cases on reverse mentoring where I, being the more senior person, benefitted greatly from the knowledge of younger employees who were much better prepared than me in specific domains.

If you are a senior manager, I invited you to not be dependent on having an existing formal reverse-mentoring program in your organization. Find junior experts in digital technology, social media, or any other area where you have a knowledge gap. These experts are easy to spot. Ask for their help and show your gratitude by returning the favor in a way that adds value to them.

And if you are a junior employee who holds an expertise in a particular area, I suggested you look for an opportunity to reverse-mentor a senior manager in your company. You will be helping this manager improve his or her capability to deliver better business results. You may also place yourself in a much more visible position with this and other managers, which can increase the odds of accelerating your career growth.

Let's now switch to today's subject: Leadership. I recently read the book *Extreme Ownership: How U.S. Navy Seals Lead and Win*. There were several takeaways from this book, but I want to share three that resonated with what I think is most applicable to you as current or future managers:

1. **The leader is accountable for everything that happens in his or her team.** When I read this in the book, I immediately recalled the advice that an executive gave to me, back in my corporate years, when I was first promoted to general manager: "Your top priority should be your leadership team."

If you have a team reporting to you in your current job, do you see yourself accountable for their impact on the business and on the organization? Do you hold them accountable for the way they behave and for delivering on their commitments?

You may have had bosses who regularly blamed their team as a whole or individuals within their team when something went wrong. Could it be that you also have a growth opportunity in this area?

In any event, I invite you to use this piece of advice as a reminder to avoid blaming others and become fully accountable for your team.

2. **Connected to the previous tip, leaders must train and mentor underperformers.** Have you ever inherited a team with one or more underperformers? And have you ever hired the wrong person for the job? If so, how did you address these situations? In my case, I faced both situations several times during the more than 25 years I had people manager

responsibilities inside three different corporations.

On the one hand, I was fortunate to receive, as part of my new manager training, a set of clear guidelines on how to manage employees who were underperforming. It involved being clear with the employee about their underperformance, setting a 90-day period with well-defined success criteria to either turn around their performance or move on, and establishing a continuous process of interim checkpoints with the manager.

This process gave employees a clear message on where they stood with the company. It also gave them a chance to turnaround their performance, fully aware that if no visible improvements were observed, they would have to leave the team and probably the company as well.

On the other hand, I have to admit that this was never a pleasant thing for me to do as a manager, and I probably procrastinated more than once.

I invite you not to procrastinate addressing underperformance situations with your team. It's not good for them as individuals, and it's not good for the company to let this underperformance linger once detected.

3. Which takes us to the third tip: **It's not what you preach, but what you tolerate**. Have you ever been exposed to company mission statements that highlight certain cultural behaviors and values, then realize that not all leaders behave that way? A typical example of this, which I have observed more than once in my close to four decades in the corporate world, is teamwork. As long as team members deliver on revenue goals, one too many leaders tolerate the existence of silos in their organizations, despite preaching the importance of teamwork. Look into your own teams and assess if the music goes with the lyrics... Are you tolerating behaviors opposite to what you preach?

Summarizing, there are three leadership tips that I shared today, extracted from the excellent book *Extreme Ownership: How U.S. Navy Seals Lead and Win*:

1. The leader is accountable for everything that happens in his or her team.
2. Leaders must train and mentor underperformers.
3. It's not what you preach, but what you tolerate.

I hope you enjoyed today's episode. In the next one, I will share insights I gathered from the book *The Obstacle Is the Way*, by Ryan Holiday.

If you like what you heard today, and depending on the platform you're using, let me ask you to please rate, subscribe or follow this podcast and share it with your coworkers and friends.

Also, you can request a free coaching call with me by visiting my website at www.cannon.consulting, or if available in this platform, using the links provided in the notes section.

This is coach Percy Cannon, working to help you ***make the rest of your life...the best of your life®***.

Percy's BIO

Percy has been helping hundreds of corporate executives and their teams boost their leadership and teamwork capabilities over the past ten years.

Before this, Percy spent close to three decades working for three multinational corporations, Procter & Gamble, IBM & Microsoft, in the United States and across several countries in Latin America.

Percy is a Certified Professional Coach from Wainwright Global, Authorized Partner for "The Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team" and "Everything DiSC", a Certified Go-Giver Speaker & Coach, and a practitioner of several methodologies from best-seller author Patrick Lencioni (e.g., "The Ideal Team Player", "The 6 Types of Working Genius", "Organizational Health" and others).

He published his first book in 2012-13 in English (*The Business Apostolate: Insights to Define and Achieve Your Mission in Life*) and in Spanish (*El Negocio Más Grande de su Vida*).

Percy is a Consulting Partner with Grupo Azimuth and the Chapter Director for the COO Forum in Southeast Florida.

He has lived in 9 different cities and 5 countries, and speaks English, Spanish and Portuguese fluently.

Percy is married, has 3 children and 6 grandchildren, and is a passionate runner & reader.

He can be reached at percy@cannon.consulting.