Session SEVEN: LtGen Lori Reynolds, USMC, “Fitting in while standing Out"

General Reynolds has commanded at EVERY rank during her career, and has served in a broad variety of billets including battalion command in OIF and group command in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, both supporting ground combat operations. She was the first woman to command the Marine Corps' iconic Parris Island Recruit Training Depot. For many years she was the ONLY active duty woman general in the Marine Corps, of about 75 general officers!

Start Time : Jan 22, 2021



Zoom Meeting Recording:
https://zoom.us/rec/share/OJJpuhCetWaFICUOWlZrIFpAvIQUr-cm1AkFWdyhWdbh0yfH6e7ra7_mxg0A_mLB.yVVPFP8pw8c8yKOt
Access Passcode: N*Q6reSP

References:

We all want to fit in. To be part of the team. But sometimes we stand out, or are singled out, by looking or being different. Sometimes being outstanding is great. Other times it is not. How do we fit in while standing out?

Check out this article, an interview with Sandra Perron, Canada’s first female infantry officer, about her book, “Outstanding in the Field

Canada's first female infantry officer breaks silence on abuse (macleans.ca)

Summary notes:

My five favorite Take-Away-Tips:

(1) Don't forget the weak: If you are a superstar in your area, stop. Look at those who are not excelling, and see if you can bring them along. Perron starts with three other women in her class, but her singular focus on her own success blinds her to their experiences.

My personal experience with this? This Lean On group! This began seven years ago as a monthly Lean In circle potluck brunch. Professional, superstar STRONG women stopped for me, who was weak in so many ways, before I had been selected for command of even the rank of Commander. I was LOST. So I am personally a beneficiary of other leaders who invested in MY strengths, which is why I am personally so committed to this effort—to give back, and connect, as so many did for me!

(2) Stand up slowly: If you are six feet tall, as General Reynolds is, or if you have some other potentially distracting physical trait, UNWIND! Ease in to it. Non-verbal cues communicate! COL Susan Seaman's entire introduction of the General centered around the impact of the General's slowly raised eyebrow. . . and all that communicated to her when Susan was a Midshipman at USNA and again when Susan was a Colonel in the USMC!

(3) Kneecap to kneecap: "It matters:" These two words are on a post-it note on the General's desk, reminding her to follow her gut when she senses the right thing to do is to spend time in personal connection.

(4) Trust your gut and be YOU. Your organization hired YOU, so bring YOU to work and do and say what YOU think is right. You can only be someone else for about a day and half before you are exhausted and your health starts to suffer from inauthenticity. For the General it was a peer group in a safe place, for Perron it was her journals—find a way to give voice to your gut. The General shared a story of not following her gut when she should have fired a subordinate, and for a year a team had to suffer under that leadership, while she tried to help someone who could not be helped.

(5) Find humor. Don't go looking for bias, it's not graceful. Don't make your life and other's lives harder than they have to be. She told a funny story that may have been mildly inappropriate, but because she responded with humor, she experienced grace, and growth.

General Reynold's talk centered around three themes:

(1) Balance Fitting in and Standing out.

(2) Have an attitude of grace.

(3) Never expect the organization to change for us.