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LIFE | LEARNING | LEADERSHIP

The problem is that when we live in a state of surge operations for too long, we may jeopardize our overall health and welfare.

Many of us find ourselves overly busy taking care of so many things and so many others that we end up swamped and possibly even overwhelmed from time to time. Have you ever found yourself with more things on your “to-do” list at the end of each day than when it started? How about being so busy doing work that isn’t yours that you can’t complete your own? Maybe you’ve even dropped social or fitness activities important to your own well-being to take care of a “hot” deadline? Most of us have probably found ourselves in these situations from time to time and that’s okay. **The problem is that when we live in a state of surge operations for too long, we may jeopardize our overall health and welfare.** Below I’ll share some things I do to ensure I keep my sanity in hopes that if you find yourself in the above-mentioned situations often, they might help.



Take time to schedule your priorities

The late and great Dr. Stephen Covey once said, **“the key is not to prioritize what’s on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities.”** Many of us are in a constant reactionary mode when we start our day and it continues throughout. Some may feel there is no option due to their circumstances, but we must remember that we are not victims of our circumstances unless we choose to be. **Just because we have a lot of urgent things to do, does not mean they are all important things to do.** Identifying the most important things to us by aligning our meaning and purpose to our organization’s mission is critical to our performance and to our health.

Waking up a little earlier to plan your day while remaining flexible to a proverbial monkey wrench or two can pay off exponentially. A goal should be to sit for about 15-30 minutes to ensure all your priorities or “big rocks” are scheduled and allow the “other things” to fill in the gaps. Also, ensure you are scheduling all *your* priorities, not just everyone else’s. I personally use a quad chart where each quadrant is labeled **Personal, Mission, People,** and **Extracurricular Leadership.** All of what I do fall into one of these four quadrants because those things are the most important to me. The **Personal** quadrant lists things like medical appointments, fitness, spending time with family, meeting an old friend. My **Mission** quadrant has activities critical to my primary duties, like administrivia, dealing with manning issues, program execution, long term goals, etc. My **People** quadrant lists activities like 1-on-1 mentorship meetings, reviewing records for protégés, visiting work centers to see how they are doing, and so on. Finally, my **Extracurricular Leadership** quadrant has activities like professional organization business, facilitation of professional development courses around the base or maybe a guest speaker activity, to name a few.

Regardless of the method you choose to organize your life, make sure you organize all of it to include scheduling your personal activities and I recommend scheduling only the important things and not just the urgent ones.

Make self-care a priority

Our comprehensive fitness and resilience are vital to our overall performance and well-being. There are times when we must make personal sacrifices, but if you are doing it all the time, you are hindering your abilities to positively affect others. **None of us can effectively pour into others if we are running on empty.** Sometimes we need a resiliency day or even week to recharge. Meeting with a friend over dinner or a drink to catch up can remind us that we are human. Also, physical fitness is instrumental to our overall health. There are [comprehensivestudies](#) that show **physical activities can enhance brain function and those you influence deserve the best you.** Meditation and reflection, cardio fitness, socializing with peers, strength and conditioning and relaxing should be priorities and we should all remember to make them priorities that we schedule.

Grow

The great philosopher Seneca once eloquently stated, **“As long as you live, keep learning how to live.”** Learning is a lifelong journey that feeds our curiosity and our souls. I've always felt that if you are not continuously learning, you aren't *truly* living. Some things I do to affect my growth is I minimize screen time to maximize reading time and I listen to an audio book or a podcast on the 25-minute commute to work *and* while jogging. You'd be surprised how much learning can occur during these spurts of information consumption. Some podcasts I listen to are The Joe Rogan Experience, The Tim Ferris Show, Hardcore History, and Naval. I personally enjoy Joe Rogan's the most often because of the variety of people he chats with to include Dr. Rhonda Patrick, various Mixed Martial Arts competitors, David Goggins, and even Neil deGrasse Tyson. **Whichever mechanism you choose to utilize, whether it's magazines, journal articles, podcasts, books, etc., make sure you do it with an open mind and learn about what you want to learn about.**

Empower your team

I've often found that most people who find themselves busy doing everyone else's work are victims of their own self-esteem issues (they want to feel important), or they haven't taken the time to develop their teams. On rare occasion, someone might find themselves with completely incompetent personnel or a circumstance where they lack time to educate their teams, but I've found that this is more often an excuse and not completely accurate. Training and empowering your team are critically important! Sometimes this means letting them fail and allowing them to learn from it. Other times it requires a leader to curb their ego. And for goodness sake, **don't let them pass their monkeys to you!** If they are capable and committed to doing the task, *they* should do it! Don't fall into the trap of doing their work for them mistaking that for "taking care of them." If you are interested in learning more and haven't already read it, [this book may change your life](#). **Taking the time up front to train and develop your team will open time on your schedule to work on creative ways to improve your team and organization.** So, focus on that in which you have control and influence and make developing your team a main dish versus a dessert you pass on when you are full.

Learn to say no

Finally, learn to respectfully say no to commitments you do not have time for or that aren't truly important to you. People that say yes to everything often get very little done and let down the people they care about the most. Simply saying "I really wish I could but I am overextended and wouldn't do you any justice if I took that on," might not be the answer the requester may want to hear, **but in the end will earn you respect as nothing is more detrimental to one's credibility than committing and not following through.** I realize not every one of these tips can be utilized by all, but hopefully there is something here that can help you if you find yourself endlessly treading water in life. Remember, focus on what you can control, take care of yourself, and schedule your priorities.

JOSEPH "JOE" BOGDAN

Joe Bogdan is the co-founder of Llama Leadership, is an adjunct professor of leadership studies and is a senior enlisted leader in the United States Air Force. He has led various organizations with diverse missions across multiple countries and currently oversees almost 500 people composed of U.S. Military and civilian personnel in Travis Air Force Base, California.



Salt of the Earth published 9.Sep.20

As a leader, can you confidently say you lead with a Salt of the Earth level of personal responsibility?



As a man of faith, I am constantly inspired by the teachings of Christ. **If you examine his words, you will see he often used parables to illustrate his teachings to increase understanding of the concepts he spoke of.** One of the most well-known of these parables is how he described the expectations of his disciples. In the book of Matthew, he describes them as the 'Salt of the Earth'. Interesting use of words you might think, but here is why the label was so important at that time.

During this time, salt was an incredibly valuable mineral. You could not easily find it in a market or grocery store like we do today. Depending on one's location, salt was often hard to come by. In some cases, salt was used as payment: as a form of salary or a trading commodity. Salt was also considered highly essential in adding flavor to foods and preserving items to

increase longevity. The flavor of salt was (and often still considered today) highly distinctive. While it is different than any other mineral in flavor, it is used in countless cultures throughout the world.

Christ's expectation of his disciples, and all believers for that matter, is that they be like salt; valuable, essential, and distinctive. As a believer I carry the burden to bring value to the lives of others. To play an essential role in bringing joy and hope to others, especially in a world filled with confusion and chaos. And lastly, to be confidently distinctive in the community...to stand out as a person that promotes and holds strongly on to values, standards, and beliefs that often contradict much of what is celebrated in society today.

Ultimately, it is my prayer that you are encouraged and curious to explore more of Christ's teachings, however I imagine many of you are simply wondering (if you're still reading at this point) what does any of this have to with leadership? **I will respond with this, the same type of burden placed on believers to be the Salt of the Earth, should challenge those in modern leadership positions to take seriously their responsibilities.**

Being like the Salt of the Earth means you are a difference maker, promoter of hope, joy, and optimism, and most importantly an example; an example of how one should navigate life and handle trials and tribulations. **Being like Salt is also being someone with clear values & standards and is willing to uphold them in the face of ridicule, naysaying, and opposition.**

As a leader, can you confidently say you lead with a Salt of the Earth level of personal responsibility?

We are currently experiencing challenges such as racial tensions, political conflict, economic uncertainties, and a global pandemic. **It is common in times like these for us to want to throw our hands in the air and simply give up, admit defeat, and retreat. As leaders this is simply not an option.** Although we are experiencing the same concerns as those we lead, we are still charged with creating an environment that promotes safety, optimism, and the way forward. At times it seems unfair and troublesome because we need to express our own thoughts and worries. I will offer this time-tested advice. Find a confidant. Surround yourself with positive, supportive peers. **Vent! Let it out! Get it off your chest!** But only laterally and upward. The moment you begin to debate, argue, and quite frankly complain downward, you run the risk of fracturing an environment designed to uplift, and promote hope. You run the risk of no longer creating value to others and losing your distinctiveness.

In his teachings Christ warns of the possibilities of one losing their flavor, their saltiness. Salt can lose its savor when the grains are separated from another. He commands followers to gather, to encourage and support each other. Modern leaders should do the same. **Leaders should surround themselves with others who build each other up, provide counsel, and promote the organization's values and standards.** Salt can also lose its effectiveness when combined with too many other substances or chemicals. Much like leaders can lose their effectiveness when their priorities are confused, and their focus is on negative and self-defeating behaviors.

Being a follower of Christ has rewards beyond measure, but keep in mind Jesus informed his believers that life will not necessarily be one that is straightforward and easy. In fact, the scriptures tell us that maintaining certain values and standards will bring disdain and ridicule from many. I will say this, there is joy in knowing that you are serving in a mission far greater than oneself. I imagine that today's leaders can identify with this concept. **While leaders will always face opposition, questions, and challenges, knowing they are serving something-- an organization, a mission, or a philosophy, brings awesome responsibilities and its own sets of rewards.** In order to be more effective, to be more productive, and to be more respected, I encourage you to stand by your convictions, your values, and make a difference in the lives of others by adopting a Salt of the Earth mindset.

W. SCOTT GREENE

W. Scott Greene is the co-founder of Llama Leadership, an Air Force veteran, adjunct college professor, and leads learning and organizational development programs in South Texas.



The Antidote: Toxic Leadership and Can it be Prevented? published 3.Mar.20

"Had concerns been voiced at the time, I would certainly have addressed the issue to resolve it. Unfortunately, those who are now complaining waited until I left command and was retiring."



On the surface, the concepts of avoiding toxic leadership traits seem simple and can be tied to the golden rule, "treat others how you'd like to be treated". Simple enough...right? Well, maybe. **Chances are, if you're in a leadership position you've made a few mistakes and you've made unpopular decisions,** but hopefully your actions or leadership style aren't described as *toxic*. Most recently, I've seen more headlines, more social media posts and have had more discussions on *Toxic Leadership*. I then began to question a few things. *Do toxic leaders know they're toxic,* and more importantly *is there anything followers can do to mitigate toxic organizations?*

While trying to tackle the issue of suicide, the U.S. Army found that many of their soldiers (who died by suicide) were dealing with personal hardships and belonged to what was described as toxic organizational climates. In 2014 the U.S Army publicly announced that they have too many "toxic leaders". They assigned an anthropologist to investigate and the first course of action was to define toxic leadership. Paraphrased, U.S Army doctrine defines toxic leadership as:

"a combination of self-centered attitudes and behaviors that lacks concern for others and the climate of the organization. A Toxic leader has a self-inflated self-worth and uses position power to intimidate & punish to get what they want for themselves."

I can't imagine being described as someone who uses **power to punish teammates** when they don't get what they want. I assume other leaders at the highest levels of their organizations don't either, until they receive a notice, that they're subordinates aren't happy and are describing their organizational climates as toxic. Reading the interviews and news segments from Senior Leaders who were accused of toxic leadership, always piqued my interest because it provided tangible examples of behaviors on whatnot to do. **The accusations were & are usually egregious behaviors such as bullying, coercing and or harassment.** Although, it's not too surprising to hear what

the CEO said, or how the General was acting. What's more intriguing is that those Senior Leaders were mostly oblivious to the climate of their organizations and how their behaviors impacted the members on their team.

Reflecting back on one of my questions that triggered this article, do toxic leaders know they're toxic, I'm not so sure they do. Certainly, there is no excuse for toxic behaviors. I'll never dispute that, **but what if the leader is completely unaware of how their actions impact their members.?** In fact, that was a legitimate response to one of the senior leaders accused of creating a toxic work environment:

"Had concerns been voiced at the time, I would certainly have addressed the issue to resolve it. Unfortunately, those who are now complaining waited until I left command and was retiring."

Entertaining that logic, does the member, teammate, or subordinate have the obligation to give that leader feedback? Absolutely not, especially in an environment where the member feels like they're "walking on eggshells". **Ideally, every leader has a wingman** that can provide candid feedback and sage counsel to get them back on track. **In the real world, it seems that no one is telling these leaders the truth about their toxicity nor their inability to lead effectively.**

So, let's recap. If a leader doesn't recognize that they're toxic, no one tells them that their actions are toxic, and the institution keeps promoting them, well...Houston, we have a problem! What responsibility does then the institution have to course correct and select the right leaders? I'd contend the institution holds the majority of that responsibility. I don't doubt, most organizations have proactive measures and thorough processes that can be used to mitigate ineffective leaders, but the fact of the matter is, **without accurate, timely & "tough feedback", none of the other stuff matters.** Without feedback, up and down the chain, we will continue to see toxic leadership in our organizations and continue to scratch our heads wondering how these leaders ever got to the "c-suite" in the first place.

This leads to my second inquisition; can followers prevent toxic leadership? My vote is yes! If feedback is truly the antidote to Toxic Leadership, followers must be courageous enough to give it. They must practice *courageous followership*. **Courageous followership requires critical thinking, active participation, and a bit of moxie:**

- Critical thinking- to construct sound recommendations
- Active participation- to demonstrate loyalty to the organization
- Moxie- to stand up to actions that are unethical or immoral

Surely, this is easier said than done, and you may even encounter peer advice such as "do what your stripes can handle". By itself, delivering constructive feedback is hard enough, but knowing your career may take a hit for it, definitely ups the ante. That's why it's called *courageous followership*. **It takes courage to stand up to bullies, it takes courage to speak up when no one else in the room will—it takes courage to be honest.** At the end of the day, if this means we're preventing toxic leadership...it's worth it. Not to mention, it's kind of cool to have peers come up to you after a meeting to say thanks for saying what everyone else was thinking.

Leadership is truly an art. It can be messy at times and you *will* undoubtedly piss a few folks off. Just as long as your folks are comfortable enough to tell you how they feel, I think you're still on the right track. As you strive to hone your leadership craft and build championship teams, keep the feedback channels open and encourage your team members to be bold in their followership and leadership.

FRANK "Z" ZAMORANO

Frank A. Zamorano Jr is a member of the Llama-Leadership Team. He is a Senior Noncommissioned Officer in the United States Air Force where he serves as the Aerial Port Superintendent for the 731st Air Mobility Squadron at Osan Air Base, Republic of Korea. He oversees training & readiness for 140 Airmen and directs Air Transportation activities across the Korean peninsula.

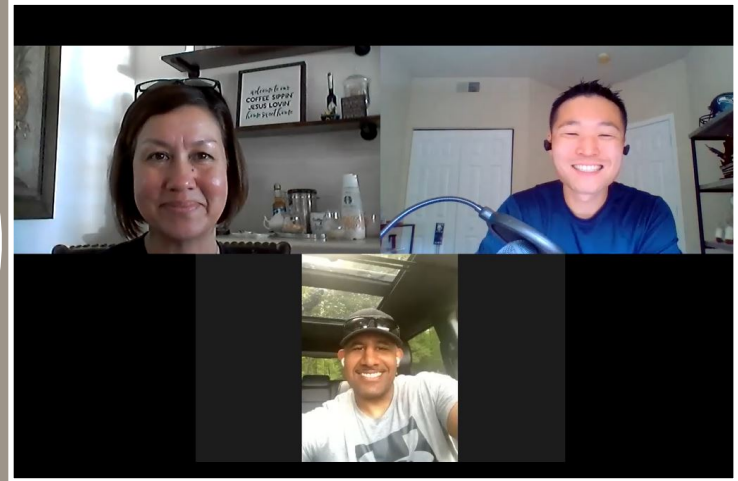


The Llama Lounge

A Dialogue on all things Life, Learning, and Leadership!

Episode 11
**THE SPEED
OF RELEVANCY**

LLAMA LOUNGE
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[Listen to the Episode Here](#)

In this episode, Jose and Joe had the great privilege of chatting with a dear friend of the Llama Leadership family, Jo Bass, the Command Chief Master Sergeant of the 2nd Air Force at Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi. During their discussion, they chatted about generational differences, the importance of self-care, and much, much more. Enjoy!

Jo's Book Recommendations:

Stillness is the Key - Ryan Holiday | [purchase here](#)

Follow Jo here:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/2nd-Air-Force-Command-Chief-Master-Sergeant-824686110931449/>

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The Llama Lounge

A Dialogue on all things Life, Learning, and Leadership!



[Listen to the Episode Here](#)

In this episode, Joe had the amazing privilege of chatting with Scott Mason. Scott is an attorney who worked as a public servant and transitioned to becoming a supporter of non-profit organizations, equality movements and is an entrepreneur and leadership coach. During their discussion, they talked about a myriad of topics to include the negative effects of ego, the importance of deEp. inner work, and much, much more.

Scott's Book Recommendations:

Just Listen – Mark Goulston: [purchase here](#)

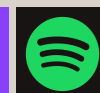
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