

### **43. Friendly Aloofness (3:40)**

Nobody ever called me Les as Commanding Officer. Nobody. It wasn't that I was better than anybody. I was just CO. I was representing CO. That meant I was CO. Not Les.

My friendly aloofness is... I would be Commanding Officer of a base. I would be friendly with people but not on a first name basis. In other words, that's why I said nobody ever called me by first name. They would say 'Morning Sir' and smile and we talk and we joke and so forth.

But if my smile went away or something was not going right and I got real serious that means the aloofness is now taken over. He's now this Commanding Officer. We got to make sure we do what's right.

But you didn't make them guess what was wrong.

No no no no no - I told them. They knew. Lots of times when you have the people on your team who want to do their best, you very rarely ever have to tell them to do a specific thing. They usually know that's something what you want and then they give it to you. And usually those people are happy to Mentor or bring along the others that are ...

Absolutely. They say come on, we can learn from this guy. Just do some of the stuff he does and you're going to be in good shape. I probably gave less than a half a dozen direct orders in my two years at Yorktown. I was so well known about what I wanted - the standards I wanted and so forth.

When you're a leader, it doesn't mean you have to give a lot of direct orders - things are going well. Well that's right. They've got you figured out. They've got your system figured out. They're willing to try and please and the closer they came to what you wanted the better the thing got as far as you were concerned.

And then of course and that's the base where the guys decided I ought to get this leadership award you know. So that was a pretty nice thing too. When they want you - the people that work with you - want you to get the leadership award for the Coast Guard that's pretty amazing stuff.

We don't do as much of that in the Coast Guard as we probably should because we have a lot of wonderful performers. That's one of the things as commanding officer, you want to be sure that the troops know when they do something that's a little bit unusual. Especially make sure they know you're aware and you're appreciative because that just grows - just like you just asked. Does that grow?

Yes it does. It just grows and pretty soon somebody else wants to get the old man's approval so then they jump in to do stuff. So pretty soon you got a lot of people that know the base belongs to them , not just the CO. And that's a good place to have it.

## **Related Primary Leadership Principles**

Accountability

Active Listening

Attitude

Authority of Position

Capacity to Care

Character

Credibility

Drive to Achieve

Example

Expectations

Feedback

Field Presence

Followership

Military Core Values

Political Savvy

Recognition

Responsibility