

PERDEW UNIVERSITY

In his new book, Donald Trump Apprentice Kelly Perdue teaches how his military training helped him succeed in business—and how yours can too

By DINA SANTORELLI

Prior to winning and becoming "The Apprentice" on the second season of the Donald Trump reality show of the same name, Kelly Perdue served as a military intelligence officer in the U.S. Army and successfully completed both Airborne and Ranger training. He holds a bachelor's of science degree from the United States Military Academy, West Point, and earned his MBA from The Anderson School at UCLA and his JD from the UCLA School of Law. He also has held numerous chairman and CEO positions.

Since hearing those immortal words, "You're hired," he has been assigned to several high-profile projects for the Trump Organization and has started a new business with Trump called Trump Media Direct, which provides direct marketing for premium brands. Perdue is also now the host for a new series that premieres this month on the Military Channel called *GI Factory*, which examines military technologies and where they are made.

Whew. All that and a new book to boot.

Anyone familiar with Perdue and his time spent on *The Apprentice* knows that he always has credited his success to his military background. In *Take Command: 10 Leadership Principles I Learned in the Military and Put to Work for Donald Trump* (Regnery Publishing), he demonstrates how his personal formula for success—developed, in large part, from the Army—can help you thrive in virtually any venture, be it serving your country or running a small or large company. And the book also shares insights from former military leaders

turned business professionals, such as Jim Kimsey, USMA and founding CEO of AOL, and Marsha Evans, Rear Admiral, Navy, and CEO of the Red Cross.

While the book aims to provide Fortune 500 CEOs with new insights into the military and the strong leadership principles former military personnel can bring to their companies, it also offers tips for those transitioning from military life into the business world.

"The first objective for the book was to get corporate America to understand the incredible value that hiring veterans brings to an organization," Perdue tells *Salute*. "It sprung from being asked time and time again, 'Do you think that your military background helped you to win *The Apprentice* and in your business career?' After a while it kind of frustrated me that not everybody seemed to understand the great benefits of having served in the military. And the second objective was [to help ease] the trepidation or anxiety as you're leaving the military wondering, How do I fit in? What am I going to do?"

In order to successfully transition from the military to the business world, Perdue says it's important to know that your skills are valuable; the trick is in knowing how to sell yourself. "It's a new lexicon, really," he says. "You need to learn how to translate the amazing things that you've done in the military into language that the civilian world will be able to decipher. Also, learn as much as you can about the target organization that you're going to be interviewing with, and be confident about the skills you possess."

Perdue breaks down these skills into what

he calls the 10 essential principles for effective leadership: Duty, Impeccability, Passion, Perseverance, Planning, Teamwork, Loyalty, Flexibility, Selfless Service and Integrity.

#1 Duty

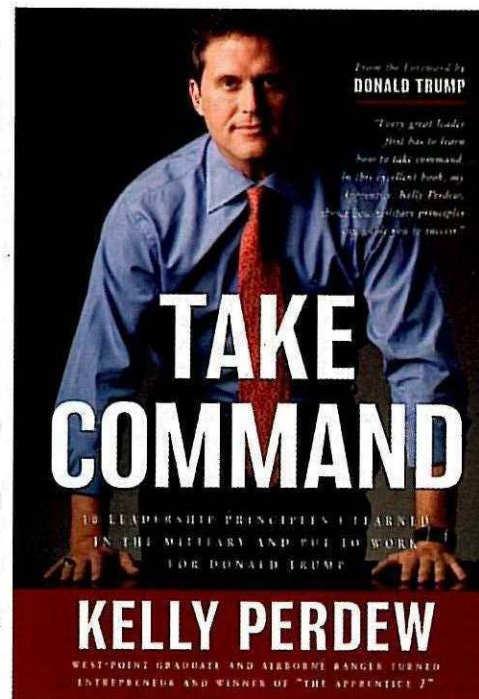
"There's definitely an argument to be made that one of the highest manifestations of duty is to join the military," Perdue says. "Certainly joining the military is one of them. Joining the Peace Corps is one of them. Volunteering your weekends or evenings to help with legal aid to people who can't afford lawyers is another, any pro bono work.

There's definitely some calling there that people have inside of them to try and help their community."

How does that sense of duty lend itself to the business world? "If you're coming back from lunch, whether you have a 20-, 200- or 2,000-person company, and you're walking toward the front doors of the headquarters, and there's garbage on the lawn—somebody's McDonald's wrappers or whatever. Who picks that up?" Perdue asks. "Maybe you have a janitorial or yard service, but would your employees pick that up? Would you pick that up? For me, the duty concept is something where you do what you're supposed to do without being told or watched over to do it."

#2 Impeccability

"You only get one chance to make a first impression," Perdue stresses. "You never know when your work product and what you're doing is going to be viewed, who's going to be viewing it or when it will be put to the test. Everything you're spending your time working on, even if



From the Foreword by
DONALD TRUMP

"Every great leader
first has to learn
how to take command.
In this excellent book, my
Apprentice, Kelly Perdue,
shows how military principles
can be used to succeed."

you're not the happiest or most excited in that specific position, you do your best at it, because you can always learn something in different portions of your career. That translates directly from the military—counting exactly how much ammo you have, not 'about' how much ammo you have—is extremely important when you're going into combat. The same can be said when you're doing inventory counts in your organization. The more impeccable you are, the more you strive for that. The people above you, below you, the clients see it and understand it, that you're giving

100 percent on each activity. Nobody can ask for more. It's a horrible feeling to have looked back on a year of work or a big project and say, 'You know what? I could have done much better at that.'"

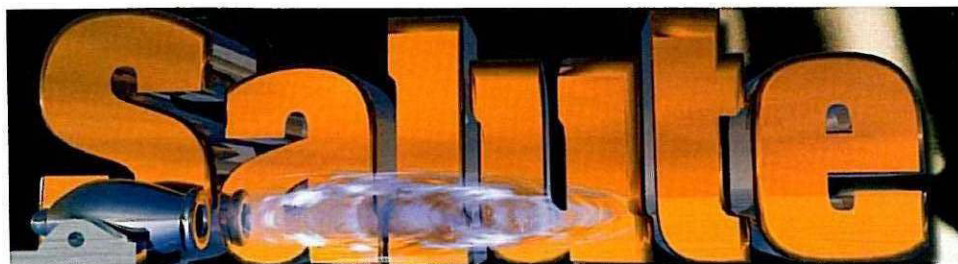
#3 Passion

"You can't spend a whole lot of time doing something that you're not passionate about and have it end up being a real good situation," says Perdue. "I say, 'You do what you're passionate about, or be passionate about what you're doing.' That is the most contagious feeling that comes across in a leadership position."

#4 Perseverance

"You can't give up—ever," Perdue says. "And from an entrepreneurial standpoint, you are going to be told no."

Perdue suggests using your existing network—where you went to school, where your brother or sister went to school or other organizations that you joined when you got out of the military or while you were in the military. "There



are specific military experiences that are phenomenal," he says, "but you have to make sure they are understandable to somebody who's never even been in the military."

He explains: "An XO, an executive officer for a company or a battalion, doesn't mean anything to the civilian world, but in actuality, you're like the chief operating officer for that organization. So you need to be able to translate those terms and use a whole bunch of analogies and give real specific, hard number examples of those things that you were doing. If you had responsibility for 1,200 people in a battalion and \$25 million of equipment—that's impressive. It's just staggering to think about the advanced leadership training and experience that military

"There are specific military experiences that are phenomenal, but you have to make sure they are understandable to somebody who's never even been in the military."

people have compared to their civilian counterparts of the same age."

#5 Planning

"The better you are at planning and prioritizing, the more efficient you'll be," Perdew says. "And the more you'll accomplish."

#6 Teamwork

"Understanding how to operate in teams, how to motivate individuals in that team, who have different backgrounds and personalities, is critical for success," Perdew says. "And you as the leader may not be the best at any of the skill sets needed, but coming out of the military, you're going to be a person on the team who has the team-leading experience and will be able to control and manage a group of very intelligent and aggressive individuals."

"I'm all about collaborative interaction when you're in collaboration mode—'Let's strategize about how we're going to tackle this problem'—but once a decision is made, be it by the group, the commander or the CEO, military people are very good about saying, 'Okay, the decision is made. Let's charge ahead. Let's execute.' They're much better than some civilian counterparts, who may still lament and argue and bellyache and whine," Perdew says.

"The challenge is not having the same exact response for everyone," he continues. "One of the biggest misunderstandings and bad beefs about military people is that they're not creative or flexible. And I honestly believe that the opposite is true. If you're commanding a company or a platoon or a battalion, you're not told how to do something, you're told to get it done. And with your team, you need to come up with a creative way to do it."

A challenge, he says, is communicating effectively with non-military people. "In the military, for the sake of efficiency, there's a chain of command, an infrastructure and a communication and delivery of orders that's acceptable for the giver and receiver," Perdew says. "There doesn't

have to be a please and a thank-you. It can be said in a tone that's under duress or pressure in a stressful situation, and it's not taken personally."

"That is not the case in the civilian world," Perdew laughs. "Barking orders at a software engineer typically backfires. The one piece of feedback I get from people operating with military or recently ex-military is that they're a bit harsh in their delivery of messages. To their credit, I think that over time they adopt and adapt as they realize what's going to be effective."

#7 Loyalty

"The Trump organization has a massive amount of loyalty inside of it," Perdew says. "There are people who have been with Donald for 20 to 30 years."

#8 Flexibility

"You can't just have one way to deal with problems, because they come in all shapes and sizes," Perdew says, "and, again, I think military training does a great job for that. There's always a contingency plan. 'If we get ambushed on the way to our objective...' You actually build your operation around the understanding that things will be disrupted. It creates phenomenal problem-solving capabilities in times of confusion."

"It's just staggering to think about the advanced leadership training and experience that military people have compared to their civilian counterparts of the same age."

#9 Selfless Service

"To give back, you don't have to wait until you're a mega millionaire," Perdew says. "Every day, think about who helped you and the different breaks you got from people to get to the position you're in."

#10 Integrity

"One of the great things about the military is the emphasis upon integrity," Perdew says. "Just because you're moving slower than you should be, you can't give improper coordinates for where you are or else you can get blown up. The idea is, if I'm talking to you on the radio, and you tell me something, I have to be able to believe what you're saying, because I'm making life and

death decisions based on it.

"To me, it's the most important aspect of being in business," he adds. "Doing what you say you're going to do, being honest, having character—that makes you who you are. Period."

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES

Kelly Perdew is soliciting examples of each of his 10 principles and wants to hear about your experiences on transitioning from the military into the civilian business world. Visit www.kelly-perdewforums.com to share your story.