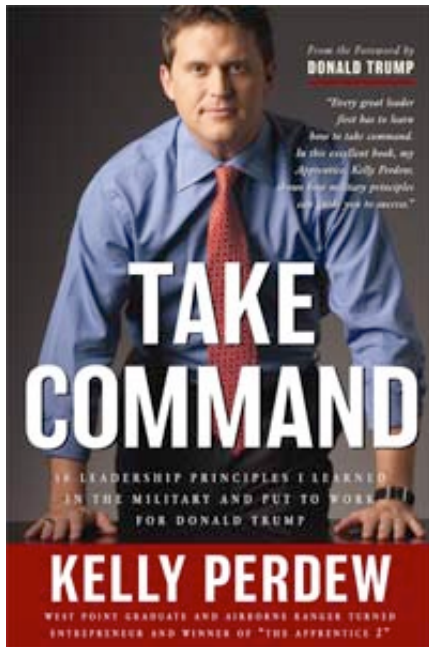


# Take Command

Ward Carroll | February 28, 2006



*Take Command: 10 Leadership Principles I Learned in the Military and Put to Work for Donald Trump*, by Kelly Perdeu. Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, Inc., \$24.95, 199 pps.

*Reviewed by Ward Carroll*

Anyone who has ever transitioned from the military to a civilian job probably heard advice about the need to demilitarize oneself before starting the process. Kelly Perdeu, West Point graduate, former [Army](#) Ranger, and winner of the *Apprentice 2*, has in essence stood that logic on its head in his book, [Take Command: 10 Leadership Principles I Learned in the Military and Put to Work for Donald Trump](#). More than a simple how-to

effort, *Take Command* is written in a breezy style that feels like a casual conversation with a somewhat intense, savvy, and successful friend.

As the title indicates, the book is basically divided into 10 principles: Duty, Impeccability, Passion, Perseverance, Planning, Teamwork, Loyalty, Flexibility, Selfless Service, and Integrity. (Each principle is also the title of a segment of Kelly's exclusive career series on [Military.com](#).) Perdeu intersperses his own vignettes with those of well-known veterans who've made it in business (Ross Perot, Roger Staubach, Pete Dawkins, and a pre-fall-from-grace Marsha Evans, late of the Red Cross). And, of course, there's plenty o' Trump hagiography, but what else could be expected from an *Apprentice*?

While the famous vets stories have a somewhat obligatory feel to them, Perdeu's own anecdotes are great reading. He's confident but not cocky. He's candid without being reckless or sensational about it. He's smart. He's sincere. The following excerpt should resonate with anyone who's ever wrestled with the metaphysical challenge of a career change:

"In the course of my twenty-hour workweek at Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher {the law firm where he was interning during his third year of law school - yes, he has an MBA *and* a law degree}, I labored for months on the corporate acquisition of a company worth tens of millions of dollars. My law firm represented the corporation acquiring the smaller company. When it was finally time to close the deal, a bunch of us had been up all night at the printer finalizing the documents for the purchase with lawyers and accountants and principals from both sides. At 10:00 a.m. we were all bleary with bloodshot eyes when the owner of smaller company strolled in with his CFO. They were both big guys, from Texas, wearing cowboy hats and boots and smoking cigars.

"The two men took seats at the long wooden table, where a partner from Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher was arguing with the acquiring company's lead attorney. The issue was where a comma should be placed in one of the contract's clauses . . . I looked at both of the attorneys at the end of the table. Both were highly regarded partners in their respective top-drawer law firms -- extremely capable and bright. Both had contributed immeasurably to getting this deal done. But at the moment, they were arguing about a comma. I looked over at the guy in boots smoking a cigar about to make millions on one deal, and the light bulb went on: I wanted to be the client . . . I wanted to be the guy running the companies and hiring the lawyers."

*Take Command* is full of those sorts of insights, the little moments, the forks in the road that define a career if not a life. But more than anything else, Perdeu gives the transitioning veteran confidence that the tools he or she acquired in the military are more than just applicable to the corporate world -- they're an advantage. And although the book is a quick read (only 200 biggish print pages), over the course of the book he points out a career's worth of opportunities to use that advantage.

Perdeu's message might be distilled down to this: Don't hide your former military self. Embrace it. In the too often confusing world of military transition advice, this Army veteran and pseudo-celeb's track record in business suggests he's worth listening to.

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