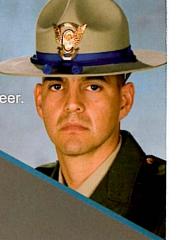
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Principles That Will Help You Land Your Next Job!

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10

Principles That Will Help You Land Your Next Job!

Former Army Ranger and winner of Donald Trump's "The Apprentice II" Kelly Perdew attributes his success to ten principles learned in the military.

by Steven N. Czetli and Rich McCormack

n addition to their specific skill sets, veterans have a more subtle quality that is hard to define, but crystal clear to enlightened recruiters. Many have tried to put their finger on it, but most come up short. Perhaps the latest is "The Apprentice II" winner Kelly Perdew who earlier this year released his book, "Take Command" which he says attempts to do exactly that: make tangible the personal qualities so important to employers that as little as three years in the service seems to shape in veterans. Among supporters of his principles is Navy vet Roger Staubach, AOL founder James Kinsey, Bob Nardelli, Chairman, President and CEO, The Home Depot and of course Donald Trump. Some of his naysayers are anonymous "big names" who refused to endorse the book for Kelly.

But Perdew is adamant that the real inspiration for the book came from Perdew's impatience with the general public – particularly corporate America – in not recognizing how valuable military training is to corporate success.

It began during the first two weeks after he won the competition. "I went through a flurry of media interviews and coverage as well as being contacted by about everybody I've ever sat next to since the second grade, and the same question I got from everybody was:" 'Do you think your military background helped you win the show?' "The first few times I answered the question politely and with patience, 'Well, yes, the discipline, the attention to detail, being able to operate under significant time constraints and pressure probably helped.'

"And as I kept getting the question over and over, I got kind of frustrated and very surprised that this wasn't obvious to the general public, especially corporate America. It seemed so obvious to me that the leadership principles instilled in people who train and serve are exactly what you want in your corporate organization.

"So in writing the book, that was the primary objective – educating America that all things being equal between two candidates, they should be actively recruiting the one with a military background."

And then he gives an example.

"Imagine being in a tactical operating center at three in the morning. We've been up for three days and a two-star general walks in and wants to know the exact situation on the ground. I have to brief him coherently and answer all his questions. Does that make it easier to sit across from Donald Trump and answer him when he asks what happened on a two-day task? I think so."

"My half-brother was deployed in Iraq. He got out and one year ago started at Lehman Brothers on the trading floor. He explained to me that when you are first on the trading floor, the managers go after you

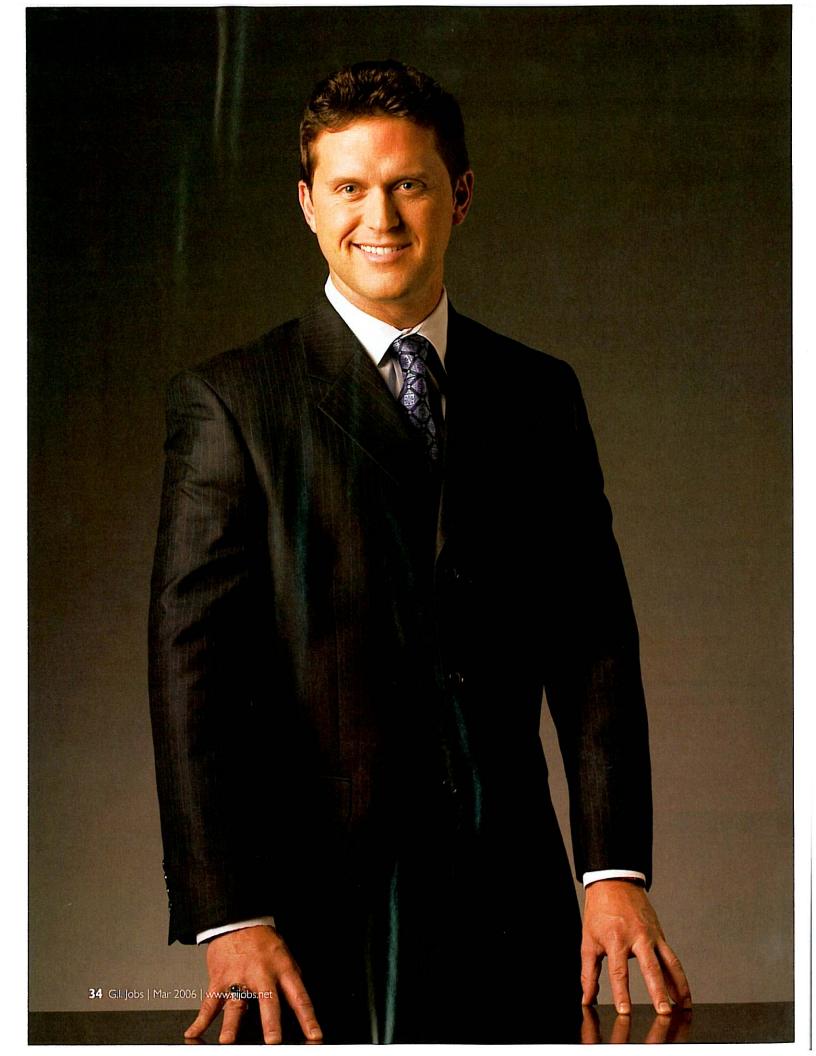
hard to see what kind of stress level you can take. But Brent Osborne, my half brother, was completely unphased – almost as if he was ignoring them yelling at him and trying to get him to do stuff. So they took him aside and had a talk with him. They said, 'We don't think you are very responsive to what's going on."

And he said, "I learned a long time ago in the military that I have one head and two hands and I can operate at 100 percent and that's all. I also know that tonight after work I'm going home to my wife and nobody is going to be shooting at me. So I don't think getting upset or showing you that I'm nervous in some manner helps me perform better. So all the yelling doesn't make me nervous. It doesn't make me upset. I'm already operating as effectively as possible."

Says Perdew, "That comes from having stress put on you. You don't operate that way out of the box."

In fact, at West Point, one of the reasons they box, says Perdew, is so that the first time somebody punches you in the nose you don't freak out," he said. "You don't activate your fight or flight mechanism. So in the military you get used to an environment where there is a significant amount of stress so you can operate more effectively the next time you encounter it."

Observed Trump, "Kelly is quick to credit his West Point education and experience as



an Army officer with giving him everything it takes to face any challenge – in business and in life. After seeing him in action, I'd have to agree. While Kelly is unquestionably a leader, his background has also taught him to follow – a very valuable distinction."

An hour on the phone with Perdew tends to confirm Trump's assessment. He is quick witted and at the same time laid back and quite approachable – a style that like many other things about him seem contradictory.

For instance, though normally he is likeable and polite, it infuriates him that some very important people declined to endorse his book because of his short active duty tour.

Says an agitated Kelly, "That's insane. How will we do a better job of pulling great people into the service and keeping them in unless we take an honest look at what happens when they come out? You can't be afraid to say here are the great things you can do once you get out of the military, because you will lose the people who are in. You just can't be afraid of that. You really have to market all the great things you get in the military if you want to attract great people."

Trump, of course, isn't one of Perdew's naysayers. "In his book, Kelly elaborates on the ten principles he credits for his success, up and including winning "The Apprentice II." Kelly's success principles are:

- 1. Duty
- 2. Passion
- 3. Perseverance
- 4. Planning
- 5. Impeccability
- 6. Teamwork
- 7. Loyalty
- 8. Flexibility
- 9. Selfless Service
- 10. and Integrity

He also interviews a number of business icons who share both these characteristics and his military background. I can certainly vouch that he possesses all these attributes, and has brought them to bear on his work at The Trump Organization," says The Donald. "Winning

The Apprentice should speak to their effectiveness."

But what do they mean and how do they work together?

Despite his lecture on keeping cool under fire, Perdew puts duty number one.

"Duty to me is not the legal definition, like a fiduciary responsibility," he says. "When you sign for something of course you have to carry it out. But it doesn't end there. Do what you're supposed to do when you are supposed to do it." Does that mean commitment to the nine other principles? Maybe. It may also be known to some people as commitment (period). Following through. Doing what you say you are going to do.

And then there is passion. Perdew says it's "critical to success."

"Your enthusiasm is contagious," he says.

"Be passionate about what you do and do what you are passionate about. And if you're not, you have to figure out how to get that way."

Impeccability is a new word for an old chestnut: "If it's worth doing, it's worth doing right." Perdew comes up with a few more just to nail it down: "You only have one chance to make a first impression." "Why would you give anything less than your best." You get the idea.

To drive home the principle of team work, he draws on his interview with Roger

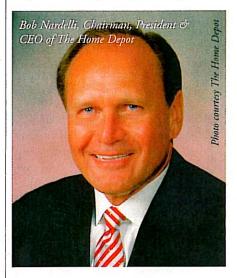
Staubach. A junior at the Naval Academy. Staubach finished up at the Naval Academy, spent four years in Vietnam was drafted tenth by the Dallas Cowboys, took the 3-4 team to the Super Bowl, and became a real estate mogul. Team work is the part about taking the Cowboys to the Super Bowl. In our short interview we didn't have time to go into team work much more, but it should be obvious that Staubach didn't get his Super Bowl ring by himself and his training in leadership came from the Naval Academy.

Agreeing with him was Bob Nardelli, Chairman, President and CEO, The Home Depot who said, "Veterans often embody

"Impeccability is a new word for an old chestnut: "If it's worth doing, it's worth doing right."

many (of Perdew's) characteristics – such as leadership, integrity, teamwork and loyalty – that transfer well into the workplace and make these individuals highly attractive candidates."

"The Home Depot is always looking for the best talent available, and we have found that former military that have joined our organization bring a unique and highly trans-



ferable skill set with them" he said. "Generally speaking, we find that our associates with military experience are used to being in situations where they have had to deliver results, and where they must act strategically as well as tactically."

Susan M. Kratch, Manager, Military Recruiting and Initiatives for GE was also supportive. "At GE, we understand that part of being a good corporate citizen is supporting those who protect and defend our freedoms. At the same time, we appreciate and value the unique skill sets military employees bring to our company. Their leadership, ethics, values and ability to deliver results under pressure fit seamlessly with GE's performance-driven culture. GE is always looking for the absolute top talent

"As much as veterans, we value those who continue to serve in the National Guard and Reserve. Through pay differential and con-

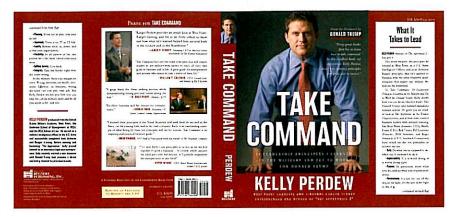


tinuing benefits when they are mobilized, GE is proud to support our military employees. We are also honored by our selection for the 2004 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award, the highest recognition given to employers for their support of employees who also serve in the National Guard and Reserve.

"GE is proud of our employees who have served and for those who continue to serve. We embrace the opportunity to support them and to utilize the tremendous skills they provide," she said.

Wherever he turned, it seemed Perdew also saw selfless service as another piece of the success puzzle that people don't talk about much. For example, how many people know that between fire fights, AOL founder and Army Captain James Kinsey built an orphanage in Vietnam and staffed it with nuns? "A common thread among the six business icons I talked to was the need to give back for no apparent reason except a need to give back." And you can do it at a much more humble level than Kinsey's orphanage; it's just that Kinsey's orphanage is a great story."

On "The Apprentice II," Perdew said they were given too little time, too few resources and too many moving parts. He



credits planning with getting his team through. "If we didn't plan and track accordingly, we weren't going to succeed," he said. "I created an after action review process and a 20-point check list to track what we did right and what we did wrong. Planning is critical."

Loyalty comes from leadership, says Perdew. "And though most people don't know it, there have been people who have been in Donald Trump's organization for 20 or 30 years. To me, that's a testament to great leadership when people are staying around that long."

How's this for a memorable cliché to explain Perseverance: "It's not the dog in the

fight, it's the fight in the dog." That's how Perdew elaborates on perseverance and then he tells the story of Ross Perot who borrowed \$1,000 from his wife and started EDS which was later sold for over \$2 billion. "The guy doesn't understand the meaning of the words 'give up," said Perdew, who is also a software entrepreneur.

Perdew's principle of flexibility is not always associated with military training. And yet, says Perdew, "The person who has the most ways of reacting is going to end up winning in the end."

Perdew says the service teaches just that kind of flexibility. "A company commander is told what to do, not how to do it. That flexibility, that problem-solving capability exists at every level in the military," he says.

On the show one night, his team had been asked to design six full outfits, but their designer was not very well organized and had sketched only two outfits. When she got up to go to the bathroom, Perdew quickly sat down at the table and whipped out four additional outfits. "Whoa," said the designer when she returned, "these are pretty good."

"It may be strange for people to see a military guy designing clothing, but people don't understand that military people are trained to do whatever it takes to solve the problem," said Perdew. "And I think it was one of the outfits I designed that became a best seller." *

"Take Command" by Kelly Perdew \$24.95 | Regenery Publishing Inc. | Available through <u>Amazon.com</u> for \$16.47.



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