



Ethics in Leadership



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One is either growing or regressing. There is no standing still. This month's topic is "A Mentor's Influence." Gen. Stephen Lorenz in his book, *Lorenz on Leadership*, discusses the influence one can have as a mentor. "Mentors touch our lives and help shape us into the people that we are today. We value mentorship in the Air Force and develop it in our subordinates while seeking it from our supervisors. One cannot have enough mentors, nor can one mentor enough." He goes on to talk about someone who was a significant mentor in his life.

When Gen. Lorenz was a cadet at the USAF Academy, there was a Colonel who helped him academically. Without him, he would not have graduated or been commissioned. Years later, Gen. Lorenz spoke at the Colonel's funeral. Afterwards, when speaking with the Colonel's son, he learned the "rest of the story." On his way to receive the dreaded news he only had a few months to live, the Colonel surprised his son, who was accompanying him. While in the elevator, he complimented the janitor on how nice and clean the hospital was. After exiting the elevator, they paused at the receptionist's desk. The Colonel greeted her and asked about her son, who was deployed to an active combat billet. He reassured her that her son would be okay because Marine aviators were so well trained. Again, Gen. Lorenz was very impressed that his dying friend would take the time to remember others with such detail.

Reflecting, Lorenz shares, "I like to tell people that they should strive for two things in life: making a difference in people's lives and leaving the campground better than they found it...Go and thank those who have guided you through the years and take time to make a difference in the lives of those you mentor. Our Air Force is only as good as those of us who serve. Let's all work hard to make each of us a little better every day...."

His counsel is relevant in CAP, as well as the Air Force. Because of our actions, we may either encourage or discourage others. We don't have to be in a formal mentorship relationship to influence others. Consider this - How are we making a difference in other's lives? Do we go out of our way to make their lives better? Do they feel better about themselves and what they are doing because of what we do? How do we leave the campground better than we found it? The last one is yet another challenge for each CAP member, not just leaders and worthy of a whole different discussion.

Let us take the opportunity to make Gen. Lorenz's thoughts and experiences active in our lives. Go forward and do good.

Your comments and thoughts on this article are requested. Here is the new link for comments and feedback. rnrchaplancy@rnr.cap.gov.