



Welcome to the Edge Newsletter #3

The third installment of *The Leading Edge* continues the focus on the development of flight-level leadership across the Department of the Air Force. We examine follower development by balancing needs of the force and individual members, while creating a culture focused on mission success. As with previous versions, the reverse side of this newsletter contains topic ideas you can distribute to your flight-level leaders to encourage discussion.

These curated versions of *The Leading Edge* are designed to generate ideas for your courses and serve as a bridge between flight-level leadership expertise at Air University and course directors, lesson managers, and individual leaders in the field.

Course Director Corner

"All that is valuable in human society depends upon the opportunity for development accorded the individual." -- Albert Einstein

This edition continues to look at the last four of eight common guiding principles that provide a framework for you to consider as you build your courses. These principles should guide your courses towards a deliberate development of tactical leadership skills your people need:

- **Train to Mission Demands.** Training that meets mission demands leverages both training resources and duty experience to maximum effect. Your Flight Commander Leadership Courses are designed to do this using experiential learning. Each of the core leadership lessons provided from Air University use guided discussion instead of lecture to extract best practices and ideas from your participants' duty experiences and share them with others. When you use AU-provided lesson guides to tailor lessons to local mission needs, try to follow the same interactive approach to maximize learning.
- **Train like we Fight.** Training programs should be aligned with expected outcomes and provide realistic experience to greatly improve skill competency. What does that mean for your leaders? All of your courses should focus on developing the Airman Leadership Qualities. These leadership-based competencies reflect the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to succeed in any role.
- **Make Training and Education Available.** In today's high-tempo world, the opportunities to train or receive education have become more challenging. Our Airmen and Guardians are busy. Your courses should be frequent and flexible. In today's time of social distancing, consider conducting virtual Flight Commander Leadership Courses or offering portions of your program online.
- **Validate Education and Training Through Wargames and Exercises.** At the end of each wargame or exercise, participants conduct a *hot wash* or After Action Review. These reviews are a place for each participant to learn from the experiences of others. This is exactly what we do in the FCE classroom -- create an environment where learners can save time by talking to and learning from each other in a trusted environment. While learning by doing is valuable; learning by listening to the successes and failures of others is faster and often more productive.

Visit the Flight Commander's Edge website to download FCE experiential lesson plans and lesson guides, plus a Course Director's Guide for ideas on how to pull your own program together.

Application-Focused content to grow your flight-level leaders

Review the "Developing Others" lesson on the FCE AFPIMS site

www.airuniversity.af.edu/GCPME/Flight-Commanders-Edge

Graduates of the inaugural AEDC Flight Commander Leader Course Arnold AFB, TN.



(Tip: Open this newsletter in your browser, then save page 2 as a PDF file to create a 1-page flyer you send out to flight-level leaders!)



As military professionals, we love to talk about leadership. This focus on leadership, however, may induce a blind spot: every single one of us is first and always a follower.

Maj Gen Michael D. Rothstein, USAF
former Vice Commander, The Air University

Followership and the New Normal

Read [Great Leaders Follow First - Nine Rules for Dynamic Followership](#)

Maj Gen Michael D. Rothstein, USAF

Watch [The New Normal.](#)

As the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, CMSAF Kaleth O. Wright introduced a video series to engage all Airmen and Space Professionals during the COVID-19 operating environment.

In his first episode he interviewed Dr. Lori Santos on ways to thrive in the "new normal" and how leaders can encourage their followers to have an "opportunity in the midst of every challenge" mindset.

Watch this 24 minute video--share your takeaways with your team.



Questions to Consider

What characteristics do good followers in the Air Force and Space Force demonstrate?

Ask these questions of yourself and your flight members

What constitutes a good follower?

Followers who are engaged and *do something* are almost always preferred compared to those followers who *do nothing*. Carnegie Mellon University professor Robert E. Kelly once described the best, or exemplary, follower as one that "is motivated, has intellect, is self-reliant, and is dedicated to achieving the mission of the organization." Kelly focuses on two observable behaviors, **critical thinking** and **participation** to determine what constitutes a good follower.

How do we grow good followers?

Kelly recommends you develop a specific action plan for followership development. This plan should address actions and strategies you take to improve followership in yourself and build followership in your flight. One of the best ways to develop followership in subordinates is via mentoring. Check out the guidance for Mentoring Plan in Table A2.2 in AFH 36-2643, *Air Force Mentoring Program* (16 May 2019). Mentoring promotes professional development at every level and is a great way to grow Airmen and Space Professionals into both good followers and great future leaders.

What are your rules for being a good follower?

General Rothstein lists nine great tips for all Airmen and Guardians looking to improve their followership (and leadership). Which of these tips resonate with you? What would you add to his list?



Contact The Flight Commander's Edge

If your unit would like to create its own Flight-level Leadership course using professionally-developed resources from Air University visit

<https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/GCPME/Flight-Commanders-Edge/>

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