



Air and Space Power Mentoring Guide

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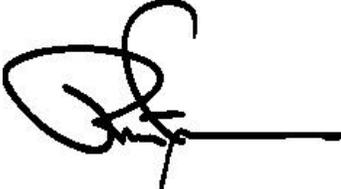
Foreword

Airpower is the most difficult of all forms of military force to measure, or even express in precise terms.

—Winston Churchill

Commanders and Air Force senior officers have a multitude of important duties and responsibilities. Of these, perhaps none is as difficult, or as important, as preserving and transmitting the meaning of our core values and profession. Our profession of arms within the United States Air Force carries with it a rich heritage and vast potential. Our understanding of who we are and what we do, our comprehension of air and space power and the unique nature of operations in the third dimension are shaped in great part by Air Force leadership. Our future depends upon the sense of identity that today's Air Force leaders instill in the leaders of tomorrow's Air Force.

Much of what the Air Force is, and does, cannot be taught in formal education courses. Much of this sense of air and space power resides in the experience, wisdom, and counsel of our senior officers. Of the many important challenges facing Air Force leaders, few are as vital, or perhaps as difficult, as conveying to the next generation a sense of our air and space profession of arms. The task, the responsibility of mentoring is vital and I wish you the greatest success. Our people, our Air Force, our nation depend upon it.



AN
General, USAF
Chief of Staff

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Preface

Mentoring is an obligation of leadership. Through mentoring, the wisdom of the senior is passed to the junior. In acting as mentors, senior officers fulfill a vital obligation to our Air Force by imparting to the next generation of air and space power leaders a sense of our profession of arms.

Air and Space Power Mentoring provides a framework for mentors. Mentors may choose from its “menu” as they see fit to meet their mentoring needs. Through a broad mentoring approach with a specific focus, we can instill in our people a sense of our profession as airmen.

Mentoring passes the wisdom of experience to the next generation of Air Force leaders.

Using this guide, mentors can tailor their programs from a menu of topics.

Introduction

The term *airman* is used throughout this guide to denote any member of the United States Air Force, regardless of rank or gender. The term (like soldier or sailor) describes all members of our arm of the military.

The Air Force is peopled by airmen, male and female; officer, enlisted, and civilian.

Air and Space Power Mentoring is intended to serve as a guide, not a definitive checklist. This guide is not intended to limit, but to facilitate and assist the mentor.

This guide is based on a building block process that recognizes that each new concept must be based on an understanding of related, but less complex ideas. Thus, the discussion here, with our core values as the foundation, begins with the basics of air and space power and progresses through joint operations.

Understanding airpower requires continuing commitment and discipline. Similarly, employing airpower effectively requires skills and abilities that transcend the

technical expertise involved in meeting mission objectives. Put another way, the professional airman is not just an aviator, logistician, administrator, or engineer but also a member of the profession of arms. For

members of the Air Force, that means a primary and unifying requirement to be proficient in the theory and practice of airpower. Airpower is our *common* professional discipline. Specialization follows.



Core Values

In the end people make airpower what it is—they are the airpower providers. To remain the world’s premier air force, we must rely on our people. We do this by adhering to a clear set of core values—values that, together with technological advances and innovative thinking, serve to enhance all that we do. *Integrity first, Service before self, Excellence in all we do*, these are our core values.

Integrity first, integrity is fundamental and provides the basis for trust. Trust is the bond between the American people and their Air Force and between Air Force leaders and those they command. *Service before self* means a quality of selflessness that puts duty above personal concerns. It builds teamwork, inspires others, enables selfless acts of courage and is the foundation for spirit, perseverance, discipline, and the will to win. *Excellence in all we do* is central to the war-fighting ability of the Air Force.

Integrity, Service, Excellence, these values are the foundation for effective leadership and followership at every level in peace and war. Leaders have a special responsibility to set the example—they make core values an outward, visible, and inspirational dimension of their personal and professional lives. Their powerful example creates the environment necessary for a strong, committed, combat-ready team. Leaders also have a special responsibility to their team and for their team’s performance—they must return their subordinates’ trust with the greatest care while at the same time aggressively pursuing mission accomplishment.

Mentoring

Men\$tor (mèn'tôr',-ter) noun [Lat.Gk.Mentôr]

1. A wise and trusted counselor or teacher.
2. Mentor. Greek Mythology. Odysseus's trusted counselor, under whose disguise Athena became the guardian and teacher of Telemachus.

verb

mentored, mentoring, mentors- Informal. verb, intransitive

To serve as a trusted counselor or teacher, especially in occupational settings.

verb, transitive

To serve as a trusted counselor or teacher to (another person). [French Mentor, Mentor, from Latin Mentor, from Greek.]

Word History: The word mentor is an example of the way in which the great works of literature live on without our knowing it. The word has recently gained currency in the professional world, where it is thought to be a good idea to have a mentor, a wise and trusted counselor, guiding one's career, preferably in the upper reaches of the organization. We owe this word to the more heroic age of Homer, in whose *Odyssey* Mentor is the trusted friend of Odysseus left in charge of the household during Odysseus's absence. More important for our usage of the word mentor, Athena disguised as Mentor guides Odysseus's son Telemachus in his search for his father. Fénelon in his romance *Télémaque* (1699) emphasized Mentor as a character, and so it was that in French (1749) and English (1750) mentor, going back through Latin to a Greek name, became a common noun meaning "wise counselor," first recorded in 1750. Mentor is an appropriate name for such a person because it probably meant "adviser" in Greek and comes from the Indo-European root men⁻¹, meaning "to think."

(The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition Copyright 1992 by Houghton Mifflin Company.)

What is Mentoring and Why is It Important?

Air and space power mentoring is intended to instill in airmen a sense of the Air Force profession of arms, the capabilities of air and space power, and a sense of institutional identity. The mentoring process has no defined duration or end.

Mentoring should be pervasive at every level of the organization and should cascade from one level of seniority to the next.



Mentoring is an obligation that is woven in the fabric of leadership and officership. It is a process that can be both formal and informal, preplanned or impromptu. Mentoring is not technical instruction, but rather a means of instilling our institutional culture, identity, and beliefs in the next generation.

Much of what mentors have to offer is not contained in formal education programs or written texts, rather it is wisdom based in experience and tempered by maturity. Preserving this wisdom is the objective of the mentoring process. The process can accelerate the experience track and help instill a sense of institutional identity. Mentoring fosters interchange of ideas, promotes professional development, increases professional competence, improves achievement, and increases professional interaction.



Who Mentors?

Mentoring and leadership are inseparable. The role of mentor is an integral part of the quality leader's repertoire. Mentoring is the leader's obligation to the Air Force and to his or her subordinates. Mentors function in numerous roles, but primarily they promote professional competence and growth.

No ideal mentor-type exists. Mentors blend wisdom, leadership, technical expertise, rank, and personality with intuition and sensitivity. They serve as role models both professionally and intellectually. Through mentoring, subordinates gain not only the insights and wisdom of the mentor, but an increased confidence in the mentor as a professional and leader. Mentorship demonstrates leadership and builds credibility.

How and When to Mentor?

Mentors must seize every opportunity. Mentoring effectiveness is increased with a regular program of mentoring.

The mentoring process is not static. It is a dynamic process that varies with the mentor, the people, and the situation. Although the requirements for mentoring are few, mentors must establish the environment for interaction and encourage their people to participate in the process. The setting for mentoring can be as formal or informal as the mentor prefers.



Anyone may initiate the mentoring session. Questions put to senior officers or NCOs often provide a springboard, or the mentor may initiate the dialogue by asking questions, presenting concepts to discuss, or relating anecdotal stories. Typically, once the session has started, mentors should not be in charge, rather they should encourage the group to set the agenda through questions and discussion.

Mentors should encourage group interaction so that learning and leading are spread among many peers. Mentors should encourage participants to further their professional growth through professional reading, discussion groups, and professional military education.

Each mentor must determine what constitutes a successful mentoring session. In every case, however, the goal should be to instill an increased sense of professional identity and understanding of air and space power.