



How to Grow Character: Lessons from West Point and the Army

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Army Values

LOYALTY

Bear true faith and allegiance to the U.S. Constitution, the Army, your unit, and other Soldiers.

DUTY

Fulfill your obligations.

RESPECT

Treat people as they should be treated.

**SELFLESS
SERVICE**

Put the welfare of the Nation, the Army, and subordinates before your own.

HONOR

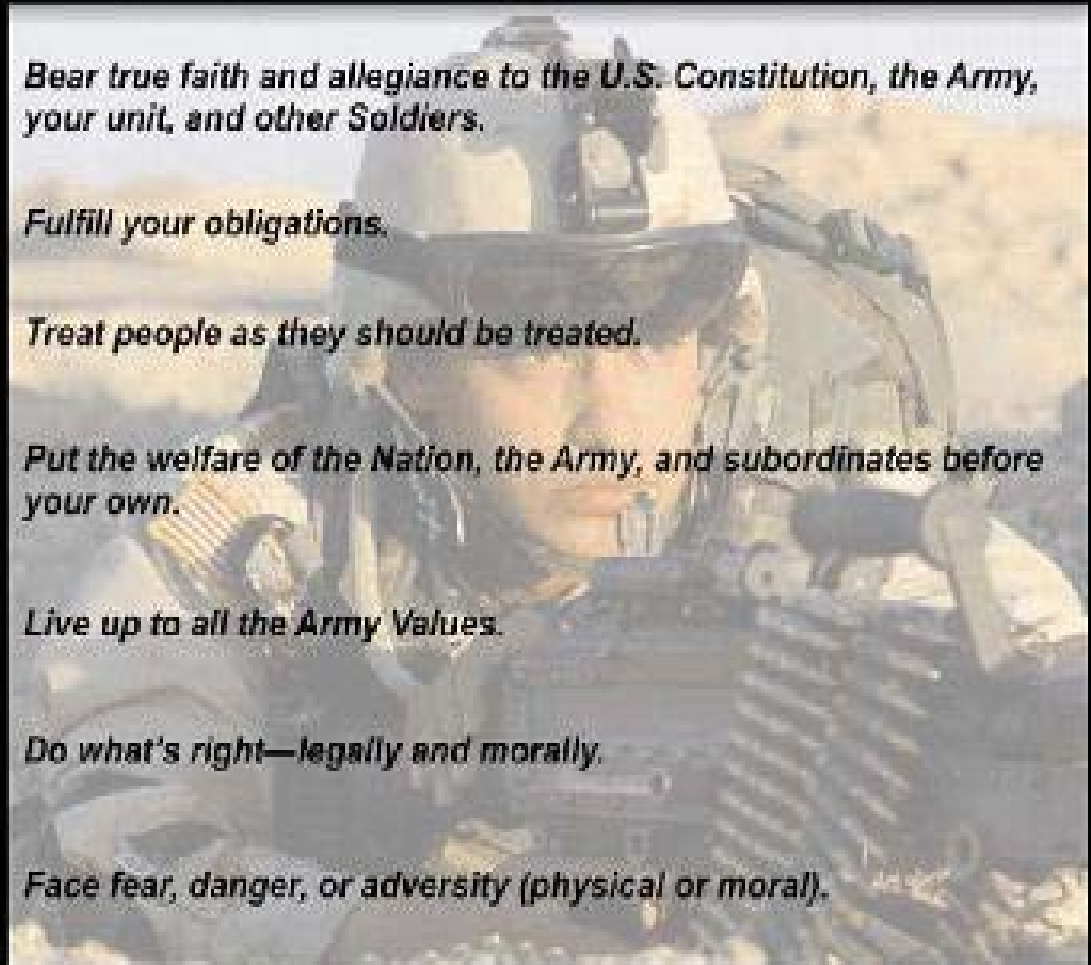
Live up to all the Army Values.

INTEGRITY

Do what's right—legally and morally.

**PERSONAL
COURAGE**

Face fear, danger, or adversity (physical or moral).



USMA Mission: To educate, train, and inspire the Corps of Cadets so that each graduate is a commissioned leader of character committed to the values of Duty, Honor, Country and prepared for a career of professional excellence and service to the Nation as an officer in the United States Army.

USMA Vision: To be the world's preeminent leadership development institution.

West Point Leader Development System

- WPLDS
- A system designed to develop and sharpen positive character through the 47 month education and training experience of West Point cadets
- High standards
- Allows cadets to learn from failure
- A community-wide initiative

Historical Context

| | Structure | Cadet Focus | Outcome | System |
|-----------|--|---|---|-------------------------------|
| 1802-1990 | 4 th Class System | Plebes | Compliance | Attrition |
| 1991-2012 | Cadet Leader Development System (CLDS) "4-Class System" | All Cadets | Officership -Mem of Prof -Ldr of Char -Serv of Ntn -Warrior | Attrition & Development |
| 2012-2017 | WPLDS 1 -WPLDS Hnbk -BCL -CDS | All Cadets (& specific S&F roles) | Ldr of Char - 8xOutcomes | Development |
| 2018-UTC | WPLDS 2 -"Developing Leaders of Character" | All Cadets (all S&F have the same role) | Ldr of Char -Live honorably -Lead honorably -Dem expertise | Development to Accountability |

Develop = Educate, Train, and
Inspire

from USMA's mission statement

A leader is someone who
influences others to accomplish
a mission or fulfills a purpose.

Army Leadership (ADP 6-22, p.1)

The Five Facets of Character

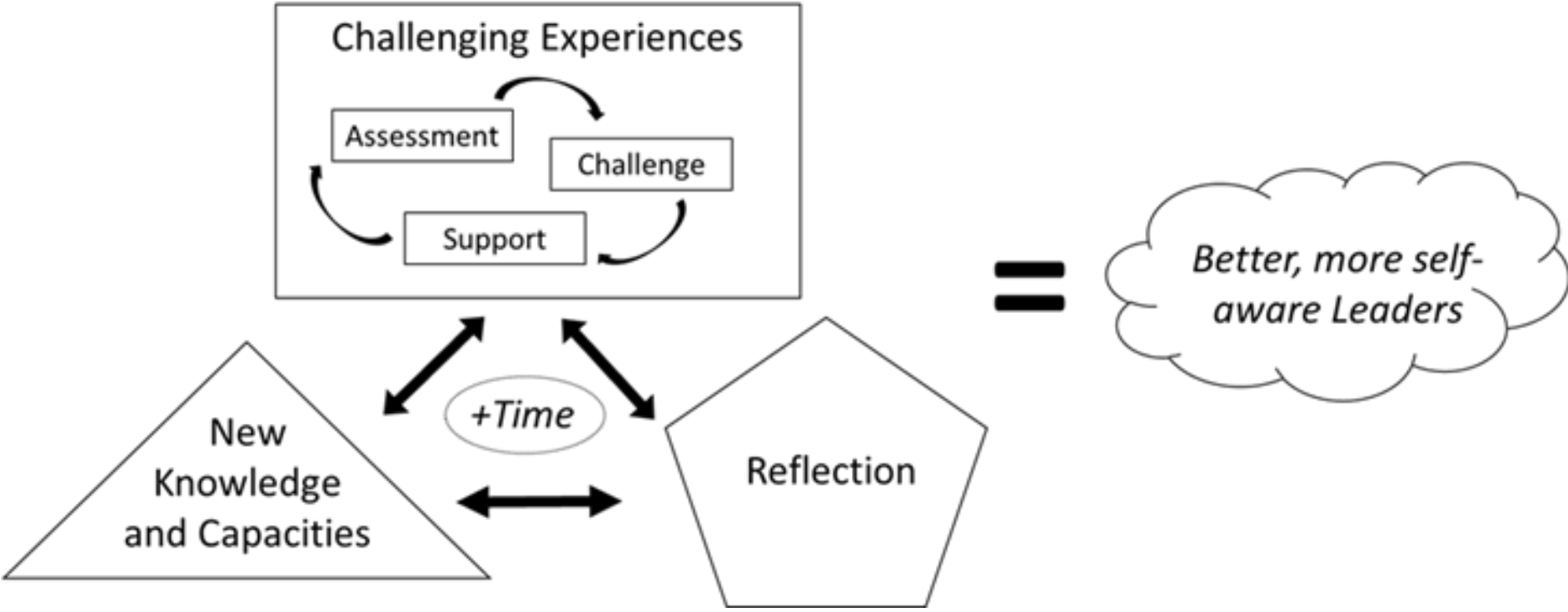
- Moral
 - Social
 - Civic
- } Live Honorably
- Performance
 - Leadership
- } Demonstrate Excellence
- } Lead Honorably

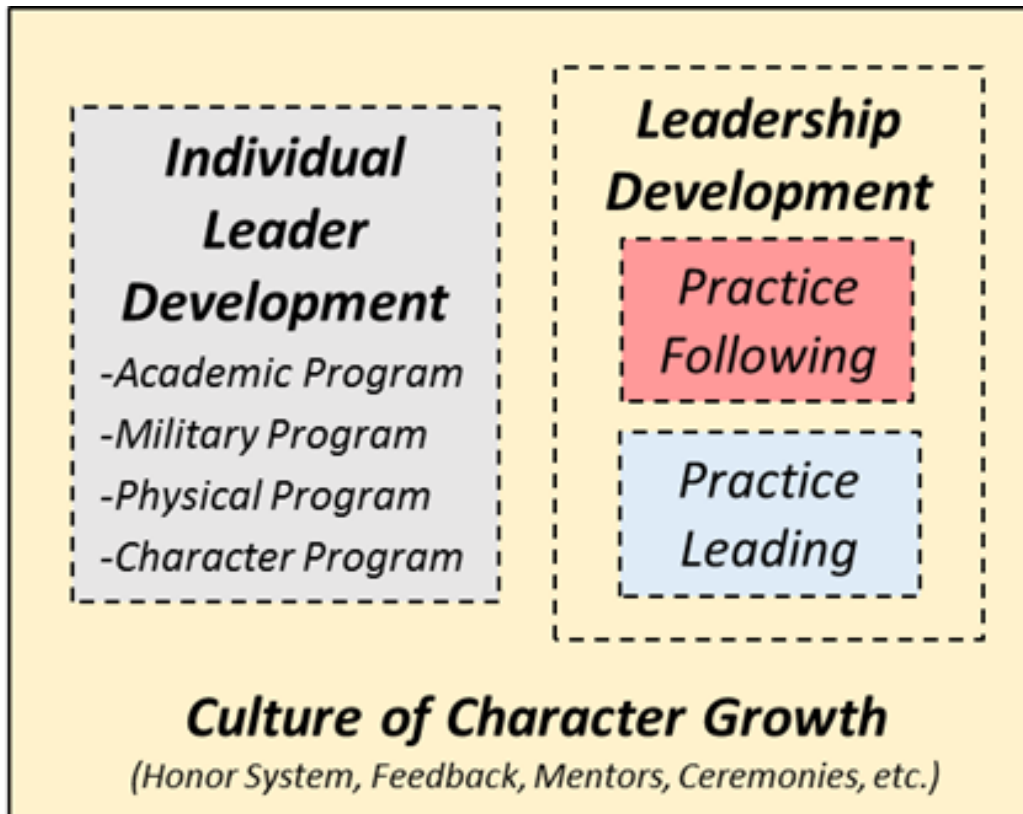
| | Stage 2: <i>Imperial</i> | Stage 3: <i>Interpersonal</i> | Stage 4: <i>Self-authored</i> |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| Person's Focus | Self-focused | Other's approval-focused (team) | <i>Duty-Hnr-Cntry, 7-Army Values, 5-Facets of Character</i> |
| WPLDS Expectation | New cadets | Upperclass | Graduates |



- Set and enforce high standards
- Put in shared team activities
- Provide Stage 3 role models

- Give choice of thought and authority
- Contexts where identities conflict
- Facilitated deliberate reflection





Leader of Character

- Live honorably
- Lead honorably
- Demonstrate excellence

WPLDS' Core Leader(ship) Development Experiences

| | | Freshman (Plebe) | Soph. (Yearling) | Junior (Cow) | Senior (Firstie) | | |
|---|--|---|---|------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|--|
| | | Cadet Company Tactical Officer & Tactical NCOs are primary integrators of each cadet's experience | | | | | |
| | | Faculty and Staff are role models for all cadets | | | | | |
| Culture of Character Growth | Individual Leader Development | Academic Program | Academic Curriculum (Bachelor of Science)* 30 x Core Courses (STEM & Humanities) and 10 x Electives Choose 1 of 38 Academic Majors, 1 of 5 Engineering Tracks, and 1 of 7 Language Req. | | | | |
| | | Military Program | <u>Cdt Basic Tng skills*</u> | <u>Cdt Field Tng skills*</u> | | <u>Cdt Ldr Dev Tng skills*</u> | |
| | | | Intro. to Warfighing* | Fund. Army Opns* | Platoon Operations* | | |
| | | Physical Program | 2 x APFT* | 2 x APFT* | 2 x APFT* | 2 x APFT* | |
| | | | | IOCT* | IOCT* | IOCT* | |
| | | | Boxing* | Personal Fitness* | Combatives* | Unit Fitness* | |
| | | | Military Movement* | Survival Swimming* | Lifetime Physical Activity*^ | | |
| | | Misc | Competitive Sports (intercollegiate, <i>competitive club</i> , or <i>company athletics</i>)* | | | | |
| | | Character Program | <u>AIAD/MIAD/PIAD^</u> | | | | |
| | | | Cadet Character Development Program | | | | |
| | Leadership Development | Practice Following | Leader Challenge | | | MX400: Officership* | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | Practice Leading | Misc | <u>CBT Mem. of Sqd *</u> | <u>CFT Mem. of Sqd **</u> | <u>Sum. Ldrship Detail</u> SL/PSG/PL/staff** | <u>CLDT Patrol Leader</u> SL, PSG, PL** |
| | | | 1st Acad. Sem. MOS** | 3rd Acad. Sem. Team Ldr** | 5th Acad. Sem. SL, PSG, or NCO** | 7th Acad. Sem. PL, CO, Officer, or Tm CPT** | |
| | | | 2nd Acad. Sem. MOS** | 4th Acad. Sem. Team Ldr** | 6th Acad. Sem. SL, PSG, or NCO** | 8th Acad. Sem. PL, CO, Officer, or Tm CPT** | |
| <u>Cadet Troop Leader Training (CTLT)*^</u> | | | | | | | |
| Environment | | Life in the Corps: cadet companies, chain of command, regulations & standards, stewardship Honor System and Code* | | | | | |
| | Aspirational Creeds: Cadet Creed, Worth's Battalion Orders, Schofield's Def. of Discipline, etc. | | | | | | |
| | Cadet Character Committees | | | | | | |
| Feedback | Cadet Observation Reports (CORs)* | | | | | | |
| | Periodic Develop. Reviews (PDRs)* (4 x semester providing a 360-degree eval) Cadet Development Reports** (1 x semester) | | | | | | |
| Mentors | Plebe Sponsors | | PL300 Mentors | | | | |
| | Department Academic Counselors (DACs) | | | | | | |
| Ceremonies | Oath; Acceptance | CFT Graduation | Affirmation | Ring; Commissioning | | | |

| Legend |
|--|
| <u>Bold & Underlined</u> = occurs during summers |
| <i>Italicized</i> = cadet led |
| * = performance assessed, ** = performance assessed in a force-distributed way |
| ^ = must complete at least once during cadet career |

| | | WPLDS Outcomes | | |
|--|--|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | | Live Honorably | Lead Honorably | Demonstrate Excellence |
| Source | Army Ethic | Honorable Servant | Steward of the Army Profession | Army Experts |
| | Army Professional Certification | Character | Commitment | Competence |
| | West Point Values | Honor | Country | Duty |
| | Five Facets of Character | Moral, Civic, Social | Leadership | Performance |
| Note: ADRP 1 provides official Army doctrine on professional certification and the Army Ethic. | | | | |

All USMA employees'
foundational responsibility
is to develop leaders of
character.

A Touch of Theory

What is Character?

- Character reflects a person's positive relationship with the world around them
- The attributes that make up character must vary across time and place, in order to meet situational demands
- Individuals have unique constellations of character attributes – success in life may be linked to different aspects of character

How does Character Develop?

- “Mutually beneficial person ↔ context relations”
 - Alignment of youth strengths and strengths of the setting
- Youth have agency to develop their own character
 - Intentional self-regulation skills, executive functioning important
- Successful character development programs leverage relationships, empower youth agency, take a holistic and developmental approach
 - PRIMED model

Moral Virtues & Character Strengths

| <i>Wisdom & Knowledge</i> | <i>Courage</i> | <i>Justice</i> | <i>Humanity</i> | <i>Temperance</i> | <i>Transcendence</i> |
|-------------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Creativity | Bravery | Teamwork | Capacity to Love | Forgiveness | Appreciation of Beauty |
| Curiosity | Persistence | Fairness | Kindness | Modesty | Gratitude |
| Judgment | Integrity | Leadership | Social Intelligence | Prudence | Hope/ Optimism |
| Love of Learning | Vitality | | | Self-Regulation | Humor |
| Perspective | | | | | Spirituality |

Classification of Character Strengths

- Based on years of research
- Linked to
 - Positive adjustment
 - Improved performance
 - Increased resilience
- Signature Strengths

PROJECT ARETE

A Study of Character and Leadership Development
among Cadets at the
United States Military Academy

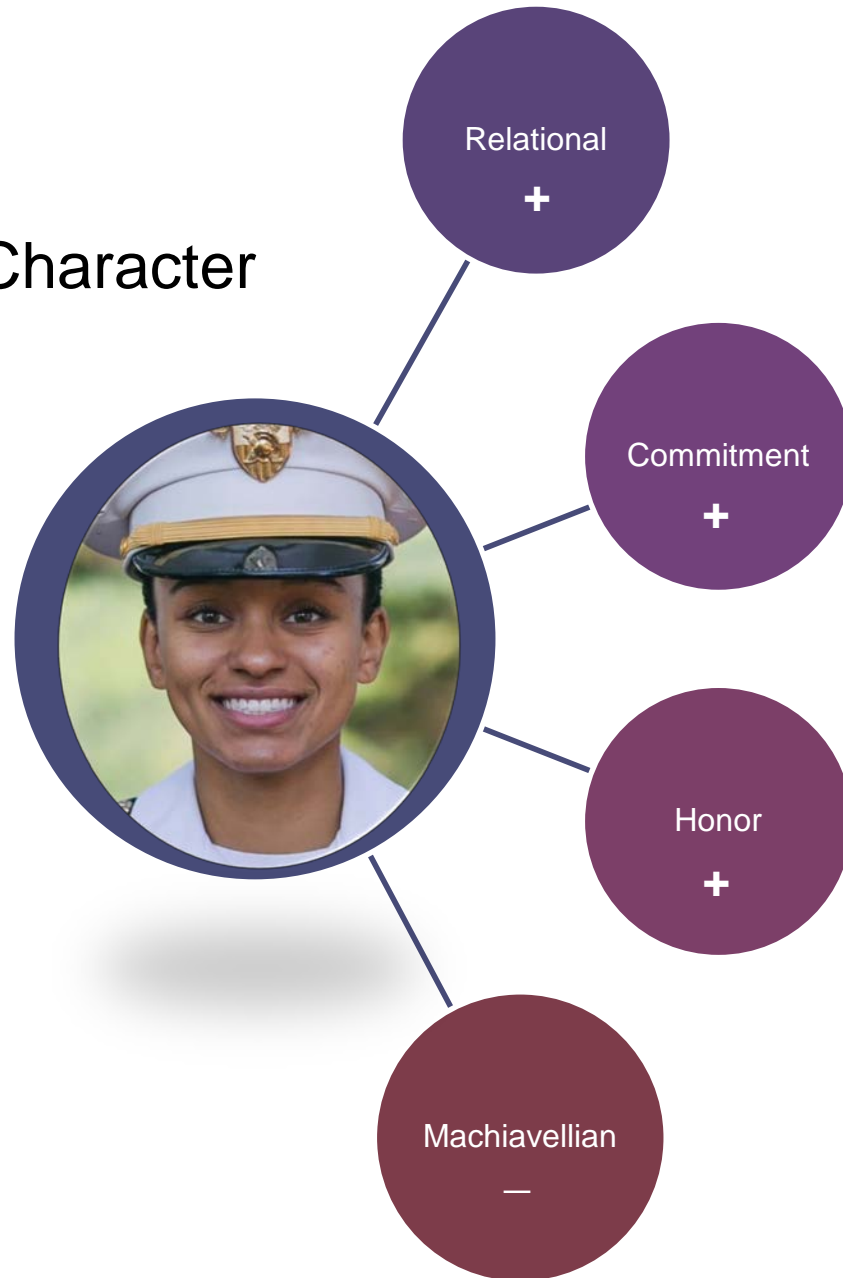
Funded by the Templeton Religion Trust

Collaboration with West Point

- **Project Arete** builds on a decade of existing research
 - Grit (Duckworth, Matthews, Kelly, et al.)
 - Hardiness (Bartone, Matthews, Kelly, et al.)
 - Values-in-Action (Matthews, Kelly, et al.)
- Study is first of its kind: longitudinal, multi-rater, multi-method, linking different data sources
- This new study addresses the multi-part “what” question to describe how character develops for more targeted feedback and intervention

Initial Findings

4 Key Components of Character



4 Key Components of Character

- Relational
 - Leadership, Intellectual Openness, Relational Humility, Social Intelligence, Empathy, Teamwork
- Commitment
 - Hardiness-Commitment, Optimism, Hardiness-Control, Purpose, Grit
- Honor
 - Honesty, Integrity, Bravery
- Machiavellian
 - Control, Status, Distrust, Manipulation, Intellectual Arrogance

Developing Leaders of Character

Project Arete investigates:

- What is the relationship between character and leadership?
- How are character and mastery related in cadets' professional development at USMA?
- How can these findings be applied to other youth-serving organizations, out-of-school time activities, service academies, the larger Army?

How Might These Ideas Translate to K-12?

- Group discussion

A man with glasses and a beard, wearing a red jacket, is sitting at a table in a library, reading a book to two young children. The children, a boy and a girl, are looking at the book with interest. The background is filled with bookshelves containing various books. The man's jacket has a logo that says "CITY YEAR".

Parents, educators, and practitioners often ask: What is the “right amount” of character?

Better Questions: What are this young person’s strengths? What are the resources available in our family, community, school, installation, to help optimize their strengths?