**Mentorship Outline**

**INFORMATION:** The importance of mentorship, specifically for junior Sailors FINDING a mentor and then developing into one.

**History Segment:** Navigating the Seven Seas, Melvin G. Williams Sr. and Jr.

*Navigating the Seven Seas* is an account of the leadership experiences two high-achieving African-Americans in the U.S. Navy. This father and son duo both achieved leadership ranks in the service of their country by following certain precepts than can applied for success in any profession, both military and civilian.

Melvin G. Williams, Sr. served in the U.S. Navy for 27 years (1951-1978) and reached the highest enlisted leadership rank of Master Chief, with final Navy leadership assignment as a Command Master Chief. His son, Melvin G. Williams, Jr., served 32 years (1978-2010) and reached the rank of Vice Admiral with final Navy leadership assignment as a Fleet Commander). As two African Americans who served the nation for nearly 60 consecutive years across two generations, they hope to provide readers with their perspectives on leadership.

Their book describes how they navigated up through the ranks of the U.S. Navy to positions of greater responsibility by employing their “Seven Cs” of leadership: Character, Competence, Courage, Commitment, Caring, Communicating, and Community.

Their book addresses the questions regarding who a leader is, what a leader does, why and how a leader performs? Although the context of their experiences is with the U.S. Navy, their message is that the seven Leadership Cs are germane to all readers, regardless of occupation or leadership situation (civilian, military, public and private industry, etc.), and regardless of the reader’s background, culture, or gender.

The authors contend that leadership is an art and a science and that leadership can be learned, practiced, and refined and that there is no stereotypical type cast mold for leaders. They argue that if they as members of a minority can rise to leadership roles in the U.S. Navy by following these key principles to navigate across the rough seas of life, then anyone can employ these rules to rise to increased leadership responsibility in any profession or career.

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**I. Introduction**

 A. Attention (Mentorship is the reason I’m still in the Navy. If it were not for several individuals who went out of their way to encourage and develop me, I wouldn’t be here doing this now).

 B. Motivation (Junior Sailors need to seek out a mentor at their earliest possible opportunity. Then, when given the opportunity they need to take what they have learned and pay it forward!)

 C. Overview (Mentorship is critical to the retention of the bright, high functioning people I’m constantly talking about. Especially now. We lose too many people because in the absence of someone that can translate the madness going on around them, they throw their hands up and when it’s their time, punch out. Instead of focusing on retention bonuses like money, we should be focusing on retention through development. They come here to serve and instead of fostering that, we’re demanding far too high a price).

**II. Body**

 A. Main Point 1 (Mentorship?)

 1. Sub-point (What is a mentor?) - A wise and trusted counselor or teacher. An influential senior sponsor or supporter.

 2. Sub-point (Mentor) – At the level I’m going to be focusing on, you should most likely be looking for a mid-level leader. We’re talking a warfare qualified third or second class petty officer that is setting the world on fire. The person you look at and are like “YES. THAT is what I want to be”. You will know it when you see it.

 3. Sub-point (Protégé) – A person under the patronage, protection, or care of someone interested in his or her career or welfare. This is YOU. You need to be open and willing. Really strong leaders that recognize you need a mentor will initiate regardless but far more can be solved by YOU seeking THEM out.

 B. Main Point 2 (Seeking a mentor)

 1. Sub-point (Why?) – Your first year in the Navy is already a complete resetting of your reality. Everything you have ever known gets flipped upside down and that can shake someone’s sense of self. The stress is mind-bending. Your mentor is your guide through the process. They have the map. They are there to help you through, help you avoid pitfalls and make the journey easier by relying on their experience.

 2. Sub-point (What am I looking for?) – After selling young Sailors on the importance of mentor, the inevitable next question is “How do I know who to ask?”. As I mentioned briefly earlier, you will know it when you see it because it will be like looking in a mirror through a time machine. You will see this individual and they will reflect who you are now and who you ASPIRE TO BE. Find the qualities you desire in yourself. Find someone that will CHALLENGE YOU. They’re not just a shoulder to cry on (though they are), but if they’re the right person they’re also a kick in the pants (when needed).

 3. Sub-point (How?) – So you found them. Now what? ASK. It’s that simple. Walk right up to them and state, point blank, “I would like it if you would be my mentor”. From your perspective, being new to the Navy, this can be extremely intimidating, and understandably so. These are your superiors, supervisors, people you look up to! Put yourself in their shoes. They’ve been waiting for you. They will feel honored. They will jump at the chance and relish the responsibility. They will hold you to a high standard and push you to be better.

 C. Main Point 2 (Being a mentor)

 1. Sub-point (Responsibility) – When you accept this role, and you will, understand it as a responsibility. The effect you have on a brand new Sailor is so far reaching and profound and we take it for granted. Messing with them as some misdirected rite of passage or means for them to earn their place “like you did” is why we have problems. Break the cycle. Be there for them so they don’t have to have the same negative experiences you did when you were the “new guy/girl”.

 2. Sub-point (Accountability) – This is NOT a friendship. It can develop into that with time, but you are not their buddy. You’re their MENTOR. You’re here to do what’s best for them which is not always the beaten path. Push them towards their goals and out of their comfort zones. Put them in the position to succeed and HOLD THEM ACCOUNTABLE. Don’t let things slide. If they’re behind on a qual they supposedly want, light them up! I promise you they will thank you later for the push.

 3. Sub-point (Never stop being a protégé!) – In transitioning from your role of protégé, never stop seeking your next mentor! I’ve been doing this 15 years and I do A TON of mentoring, from E-1 through E7 AND junior officers. But I still call my mentor routinely when I’m lost or need someone to come upside my head and tell me to get back to work. Never allow yourself you “arrive”. There is always another challenge ahead.

**III. Conclusion**

 A. Summary (We talked about…)

 1. What a mentor and protégé are…

 2. How to seek out and find a mentor

 3. How to be a mentor and a good protégé

 B. Re-motivation (Junior Sailors need to seek out a mentor at their earliest possible opportunity. Then, when given the opportunity they need to take what they have learned and pay it forward!)

 C. Closing – Quality mentorship beginning at the most junior level would solve so many problems encountered during the early development of Sailors. And by doing so, retention would go through the roof. And I’m not talking about formal mentorship programs where we sign an agreement, file it in a binder and never follow up on any of it. I’m talking about caring enough about the development of a person going through the same struggles you did to go out of your way to help them through it. Help them have a better experience – PAY IT FORWARD. For all the complaining done at the junior levels as we experienced it, when you are in the position to effect positive change it is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to do so. So do it. Pay it forward to the next wave of junior Sailors to make their experience and our Navy better.

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