
Leaps Symposium Q&A Session

Unanswered Questions



RADM Gillingham:

Q: With the ongoing pandemic response and the continued rollout of MHS Genesis, are there plans for more Joint MTF Facilities and, if so, how will they impact billets for current and future MSC Officers?

A: We confirmed with CHENG and the MILCON program at DHA has no future Joint MTF facilities (AKA WRNMMC). There may be several hybrids from a staffing perspective but not from a facilities resourcing in the DHP MILCON program.

RDML Weber:

Q: What do you see as the next greatest challenge that our Corps will face and how will the agility that we have displayed during the COVID-19 crisis apply to that challenge?

A: The largest challenge is ensuring our Corps is well positioned to handle any finalized divestitures and the simultaneous MHS Transition/NMRTC establishment. Inevitably, change is here and more changes are on the horizon as the Navy continues to focus on CNO's Mission One for every Sailor – be operationally ready. For Navy Medicine, this means that we remain laser focused on Navy Medicine's mission – provide well-trained medical experts, operating as high-performance teams to project medical power in support of Naval superiority. As a Corps, we must remain focused on this mission set and all that it entails while we support the evolution of Navy Medicine and DHA. Simultaneously, we are still battling the challenges from COVID-19, pushing to vaccinate the force and beneficiaries, and maintaining readiness across the Corps in a restricted movement environment.

- Divestitures will impact some specialties more than others, but overall it will shape how we conduct business in the future in order to better support the Navy and Marine Corps Team. We will need to ensure that we use all available tools (recruiting, training, and retention) to ensure our Corps remains healthy so we can meet our mission and

manpower requirements. WAY AHEAD: As we have always done, our Corps will adapt to this changing environment while continuing to ensure we have healthy specialty communities and Corps. Hence, our focus on transformational leadership, open and transparent communication, and understanding the impact of any divestitures so that mitigation strategies can be employed if required/necessary.

- MHS Transition is not a new concept, but a known fact for several years through NDAA releases each FY. Understanding and explaining the end result has been difficult as all of the services and DHA are figuring out the relationships, roles, and responsibilities as we execute. As we recently transitioned to NMRTC and will soon add EMF structure/leadership, it will be important that our Corps be involved in the process. WAY AHEAD: Involvement across all specialties will be required for success of the transition and continued relevance for our Corps. It is impossible to see the exact future of the transition, but we must be part of the solution that ultimately will lead to success.

Dr. Brouker:

Q: In regards to leadership and our most recent move to remote- what are your views on social media platforms with leaders and connecting with Juniors?

A: Opportunities to show that you care and earn trust occur hundreds of times each day. They're in abundance and lay dormant in every interaction—at the water cooler, at a meeting, when passing in the hallway, in your text message, in a post, during a social event, and... yes...via social media. The bottom line is I'm all for using social media ...but with a big warning – make sure to 'spread the wealth'. Ensure you reach out to *all* members of the team and, in a perfect world, equally.

Here's an article I wrote and was published in HR magazine that speaks a bit more about leading in the new world we live in...enjoy!

The article is on page 21 of this link:

http://design.hr.com/ExcellenceEssentials/LE/2020/October/page_21.html

Q: In our drive to HRO with a preoccupation with failure, how do we balance an optimistic leadership style with anticipating what could go wrong next?

A: Great question! Let's make the question more challenging...let's broaden it to this: *How do you lead with optimism when things look bleak?*

BLUF: It is imperative that the leader maintains an optimistic attitude. In leadership, pessimism is poison.

Colin Powell says it best:

“Perpetual optimism is a force multiplier... a leader's enthusiasm, hopefulness, and confidence multiply as they radiate outward through the organization....

Cynicism, doubt, and negativity are force shrinkers...leaders who persist in seeing the world negatively are very likely to demoralize, demotivate, and undermine the effectiveness of colleagues.”

Of course, leading with optimism is much easier when all is going well. The challenge is how to lead with optimism when all is *not* well. The key is to lead with optimism but, at the same time, appropriately address the challenges. Practicing optimism is as complex as it is crucial. It is a delicate balancing act. As mentioned, leading with pessimism demoralizes, demotivates, and undermines the effectiveness of the entire team. However, blind optimism—or optimism that is not grounded in the reality of the challenges that must be faced—can be just as damaging - the leader will appear naïve and out of touch. This quandary has been coined the “Stockdale Paradox.” Check out my blog on that very topic:

The Stockdale Paradox - Brouker Leadership Solutions

Leaders face the paradox of putting a threat in its appropriate place without paralyzing the masses with fear. All leaders will face this paradox—the need to maintain an air of optimism in the face of significant challenges. The sweet spot is to appropriately address the reality of the situation without negatively impacting morale.

To tame the paradox, here are some tips (From Dr. Brouker’s book: “Lessons Learned from the Navy” p. 146:

- Identify what is within your span of control and what is not. Be transparent, and freely communicate this reality to your team.
- Take action on those issues that you can influence.
- Find and celebrate the small victories; discuss them at the beginning and end of meetings.
- Acknowledge the challenges that are outside your span of influence, but don’t become mired in them; discuss them in the middle of meetings.
- Don’t let anyone hijack or control conversations with their negativity.
- When you sense negativity, don’t be a passive participant. Be disciplined—avoid sarcasm and lead with positivity.
- Be mindful of your body language and choice of words. Use words that place the challenge in its appropriate place without creating fear.