



What are 3 things you have learned as a cadet in your JROTC program and why are they important?

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The Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFJROTC) has instilled many meaningful skills within each cadet. However, among the myriads of valuable skills that have impacted me the most, three stand out: leadership, discipline, and effective communication. These fundamental skills are not only intended to help cadets achieve personal aspirations but also to mold cadets into significant contributors and leaders within their local communities.

To Leadership is the action of inspiring, influencing, and guiding an individual, group, or organization to accomplish the mission. This is one of the most impactful skills to learn and develop. It goes far beyond simply holding a title or position. It is ultimately what you do with it once you have it. Leadership without people is a boat without an oar. From day one in Higley AFJROTC, I was challenged to guide my peers and take responsibility for outcomes. The way I practiced, wore my uniform, and participated in class, I was constantly being looked at by others as the example. I set the tone as a freshman, and I have not let up these past three years. In fact, I have grown more focused on being better and leading from the front. As a third year JROTC cadet at Higley High School, I have learned to inspire others with a duality of authority and purpose as well as a healthy dose of empathy because it is truly our passion to lead, not dictate. Anyone can throw out orders and tell their subordinates to follow. However, I do not have subordinates, I have fellow teammates, and they expect me to treat them with infinite dignity and respect. Senior Master Sergeant Danny Alltop modeled these behav-

iors and did so with an extreme passion for getting individuals to their absolute best each day. Last year, I was honored when I earned the position of Drill Team Commander. Throughout the year I watched several cadets grow as leaders, but was impressed to see how one cadet rose to the top. I met this cadet at a recruiting event – a small, skinny, but goodhearted middle schooler unsure about joining the program and the drill team. When talking to him at practices, he would ask to stay after for tips to improve and I enjoyed spending extra time mentoring and watching him grow from a new cadet into a strong and confident leader. When he would hit a “wall” mentally, I was there to pick him up and provide an encouraging word. My job was to “stretch” him beyond his perceived limitations and I did so with grace and honor as well as “tough love.” Through my leadership and daily mentorship as well as his hard work and commitment to excellence, this cadet was recognized with the “freshman of the year” award and the promotion to Vice Drill Team Commander. Personal connections and experiences are what define you as a true leader. Once you have established these connections, individuals will become more trusting to follow you.

Discipline is the practice of regulating one’s attitude and behavior. Furthermore, it helps maintain order and achieve goals through self-control, consistency, and adherence to a set of standards. A former mentor of mine, Andrew Sheehan, demonstrated self-discipline by maintaining consistency and ambitious standards during all aspects of AFJROTC. When a situation is at its absolute worst, the leader must be at

their absolute best. Andrew Sheehan led this way, and I have done my part to carry on his legacy. As a young cadet, I was determined to meet the highest standards. I joined the drill team two weeks before the first drill meet, I dedicated several hours a day practicing routines and studied the cadet knowledge questions to be sure I was ready to not only march 8 out of 10 sequences, but the most rigorous and respected Armed four-man routine. My instructor honored my determination and commitment to the team by giving me the confidence to become the first freshman to win the Armed Solo at the State Championship Drill Meet. Self-discipline, control, and a high degree of fearlessness helped shape me as a disciplined cadet that stood out from others.

Effective communication is the ability to convey information, ideas, or emotions clearly and accurately in a manner that is understood and received as intended by the audience. I have learned this is a cornerstone to success, not only within JROTC but also in relationships, team sports, etc. Through team sports, written reports, and public speaking I have begun to articulate my ideas clearly, effectively, and confidently. Colonel David Vaughn, Senior Aerospace Science Instructor (SASI) has shown me repeatedly how effective communication is the key to a team's success. This year I am honored to be the Support Squadron Commander, where I applied the communication standard by being the messenger between corps leadership positions and the SASI. I oversee the following corps leadership positions: Wellness, Logistics, Public Affairs, and Recruiting. I coordinate and streamline new events, give, and receive feedback to the leadership team and ensure effective communication across all levels. My leaders depend on me communicating with them on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. Without effective communication, our mission is severely compromised. That said, during our most recent HQ/

AFJROTC inspection, communication within the corps was highlighted as "Exceeds Standards."

Leadership, discipline, and effective communication are my personal pillars. They are what I strive for as an AFJROTC cadet and throughout my personal and professional life. These pillars are not only intended to help me achieve my personal aspirations but become a significant contributor within my AFJROTC program, school, and community. Together these traits uphold the Air Force's commitment to ethical behavior and continuous improvement. Leadership, discipline, and effective communication are the foundations of our Air Force core values of integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all we do. These principals guide me, not only as a JROTC cadet but also as leader in my community.

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