



The Littlest Green Beret

On Self-Reliant Leadership

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Leadership, like life, presents us with numerous challenges. Some of the challenges are external while many of the obstacles are internal. Becoming a self-reliant leader is about embracing all challenges, and doing more than you ever thought possible.

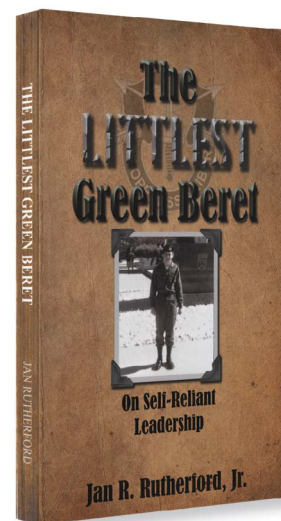
No one has the “formula” for optimal leadership. There is no set of traits, or a perfect template. What we all have, however, is the opportunity every day to develop self-awareness, selflessness, and self-reliance, which are at the heart of effective leadership, says Jan Rutherford. Overcoming the stigma of whatever limitation one may have, is part of the self-reliant aspect Rutherford talks about. Setbacks and even failures are valuable learning and growth experiences provided one uses solitude for introspection. How to learn from the everyday crisis is the crux of leadership development, according to Rutherford.

Rutherford provides a pathway for leadership growth that is exemplary and positive, inspiring and trustworthy, and influential and impactful.

The Littlest Green Beret provides guidance that will help you develop a pathway to learn from your own experiences and build effective leadership skills.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- What is self-reliant leadership?
- How do crucibles, adaptability and discipline help form someone as a leader?
- How does an effective leader navigate change and dysfunction?



by Jan R. Rutherford, Jr.

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THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: THE LITTLEST GREEN BERET

by Jan R. Rutherford, Jr.

The author: Jan Rutherford entered the U.S. Army at age 17, measuring five feet four inches, and weighing 114 pounds. He spent six years in Special Forces as a medic and “A” team executive officer and three years as a military intelligence officer. Since then, Rutherford has acquired over 25 years of business experience and has held executive roles in business development, marketing, sales, training, product management, and as a CEO. In 2011, Rutherford founded Self-Reliant Leadership, LLC – a leadership development firm focused on helping leaders and teams develop self-reliance to create powerful results through executive workshops, custom programs, coaching, keynote speeches, and wilderness expeditions. As a Senior Instructor at the University of Colorado Denver Business School for over a decade, Jan teaches leadership courses to MBA students and Doctor of Nursing Practice candidates, and a class each summer in Ireland.” *The Littlest Green Beret: On Self-Reliant Leadership* by Jan R. Rutherford, Jr. Copyright © 2011 by Jan R. Rutherford, Jr. Summarized by permission of the author. Published by Pylon Publishing LLC. 163 pages. ISBN 978-0-9829676-8-3. Summary Copyright © 2015 by Soundview Executive Book Summaries®.

Introduction

Leadership can be an illusion of control, but changing your perspective on everyday experiences can provide inspirational learning opportunities for personal growth and development. Self-Reliant Leadership is synonymous with knowing which questions to ask yourself and having the courage to answer them and act.

What questions should you routinely ask yourself? On a daily basis, what steps should you take to find personal success in your life’s work? A key determinant of success is whether you can rely on yourself for self-coaching. However, self-reliant leadership is dependent on achieving a balance between independence and the interdependence of working with others to accelerate your own personal growth and development.

Self-reliance and Leadership may seem to be contradictory notions, but there are three mutually supporting concepts.

Self-Awareness: Leadership requires Self-Awareness. Leaders understand their strengths and shortcomings and how those traits affect their ability to create willing followers.

Selflessness: The second is Selflessness. A leader needs to have a steadfast passion for serving others, and that requires putting others first.

Self-Reliance: Lastly, Self-Reliance is essential because leading means being out front, and there are more naysayers than supporters, when trailblazing. Self-Reliant Leaders believe in leading by example to develop followers who have initiative, persistence and determination.

Self-awareness, Selflessness and Self-Reliance are the three character traits that are the lifelong pursuit of effective and outstanding leaders. ●

Self-Reliance

It’s fascinating to study why some lead and some follow.

It takes the same self-reliance to survive in the brush as it does to survive in a position of leadership. A person needs the same ability to take risks if he or she is jumping out of a plane or taking an organization in a radical new direction.

To become a leader who inspires others to greatness (or at least to do their best), you need to turn yourself into a “living laboratory.” Everyone is molded by his or her experiences — including and especially by his or her mistakes. Great leaders learn the lessons from their experiences faster than other people.

You may have heard the suggestion that you should “dress” for the position you want. You should start your career in leadership by thinking like a leader, no matter what your position.

Even under the best circumstances, your current trajectory will require periodic adjustments. During land navigation training in the Army, for example, you learn that even the tiniest error with a compass becomes more significant the farther you travel. You learn to focus on a point that you can see, such as a large knot on a tree, and make sure you have the correct heading to that particular point. You then do the same thing over again



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once you get to each marker. A five-mile trip through the underbrush might really be 20 short trips with constant course corrections.

This same principle applies to your own leadership development: Your journey will include many measurements with plenty of course corrections that sometimes involve going back a few steps to ensure the path is correct.

You must constantly adapt and change — constantly change — not because of outside demands but because your internal laboratory will be telling you, “This doesn’t work,” or “This works much better” and “This is the way a great leader would act.”

Experience is the best teacher. Seventy percent of success is really about showing up, and that idea encompasses whole worlds of thought. You show up and bring your body and your mind and your spirit. To spend your time in the right place, you will need to sacrifice something. That shouldn’t be a scary word. Sometimes you have to forego immediate gratification for later gain. You must stay focused, and to do that you need unwavering discipline to persevere. Embrace obstacles and adversity, as they can serve as a source of strength and personal growth.

Leverage your time, and enhance your powers of observation to gain insights that accelerate your own personal growth and development. Think like a descriptive writer. Observe everything and make mental notes: Connect the dots, see complementary and opposing forces, make correlations and draw conclusions (even if you’re wrong, you’ll learn from it!). Make new behaviors a habit that will strengthen your character to make a difference in the lives of others.

But first, you have to know yourself.

- What was the earliest adversity you faced, and how has it affected your life?
- Who are the leaders you admire, and what are the traits that make them effective?
- What does self-reliance mean to you? ●

Crucibles

Effective leaders are known for having an inquisitive mind and an insatiable appetite for learning about what makes people tick. A crucible provides the opportunity to reflect on what you see, hear and process — especially during the tests of adversity.

One day, while sitting on the edge of the school’s track during lunch, a bunch of kids grabbed me from behind, picked me up and threw me in the cafeteria’s dumpster. Instead of being covered with food, I was covered in

pencil shavings and had some pencil lead poked under the skin on my arms and hands. I was humiliated, and I was mostly frustrated that I had no control over the situation.

I decided then and there that I would show the kids that I wasn’t just some smaller version of them. Despite society’s obsession with a child’s growth, as if it’s controllable, I’d have to use my wits to build credibility as a “normal” kid. I surely didn’t understand the concept at the time, but I was making a conscious decision to become a fake extrovert to exert more control over my own fate and put forth some semblance of self-control and influence over others. The outcome of my own forced personality transition was that I was becoming an astute observer of human behavior. If I indeed took control of how I responded to the environment, I could change, enhance or temper a given situation, and that meant I had to be proactive and goal-oriented. The sharper the goal in my mind’s eye, the more optimistic I became at achieving the goal, and when I achieved small wins, I became more optimistic about accomplishing goals that were more ambitious.

Understanding how you’ll react to adversity helps to remove doubt, while focusing on short-term sacrifices for long-term gains. There’s nothing like a crucible to help you understand what you’re good at and what you enjoy. There are a number of resources available for self-discovery, and a first-rate and down-to-earth starting point is to write out your own beliefs and core values. Values are the foundation upon which a leadership philosophy is honed that fits your interests, skills and expectations.

Whether you are looking for concepts to jump-start an idea or because you are looking for motivation or inspiration, consider three of the most important questions you can ask when facing an obstacle or trying to advance your objectives through others:

- **Where am I?** It’s a broad question that requires a great deal of introspection. This is difficult because it requires you to be painfully honest with yourself — honest about your strengths and honest about parts of your character that may be holding you back.
- **Where do you want to be?** This helps you focus your purpose. What does success look like and feel like to you? It is fine to dream big, but the important thing is to dream. It is critical that you decide your life’s passion, because creating a vision will mean making a difference in the lives of others.
- **How will I get there?** What are the details of how you will make a difference? The difference you want to make in this world requires some degree of influence with others. Think of the difference you will make as a form of service. How will you get to the

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place you so eloquently described for your team? How will you track your progress in order to adjust for optimal performance? ●

Coaching

Teaching and coaching can be interchangeable when the objective is to guide people to the source of their own power, and coaching is a fundamental skill of effective leaders.

Growing up, my neighbor was a good old boy from Alabama and a former Marine. Jerry Snell was still in great physical shape, and he took me under his wing to teach me how to hunt and fish — the first person who inspired in me the concept of self-reliance. You have to be squared away first before you can ask anything of anyone else.

One time, when we were out all day in waist-deep water with water moccasins and alligators all around, he said, “Now take us back to camp.”

I protested and said, “I can’t do that — I’ve just been following you and watching for snakes.”

He said, “Well, it’s going to be a long night then.”

I led us back to camp eventually, and we got in as darkness descended. Instead of congratulating me on my land-navigation skills, Jerry said, “Next time, pay attention. What would you do if something happened to me?”

He had a point — actually, he had two points: I needed to rely on myself, and I needed to think about contingencies for others. Adapt, conserve energy and keep it simple: Leadership defined.

Consider the people who have truly touched your life. Chances are they mentored you in some way, i.e., they illuminated and brought out a passion that you developed into a strength. The teacher/mentor/coach truly demonstrated leadership by communicating to you in a clear, respectful, stimulating and consistent manner. He or she inspired you to reach higher.

Coaching requires different skills and approaches based on where an individual is with regard to performance. If you’re new to a team or have a new member on your team, the first order of business is to establish trust and set performance standards so you can assess performance and results. Your team will be assessing whether they can trust you, whether you care about them and if you are committed to their success. The best way to answer those concerns is to do what’s right, do your best and treat others the way you would like to be treated (simple stuff you learn at an early age, but behavior that requires constant tweaks and reminders).

Coaches are people who have the ability to hold a special mirror in front of you that provides insight that others cannot. This comes from understanding a person’s values and beliefs and elevating that person’s own esteem and expectations. ●

Adaptability and Discipline

What separates runners of equal ability on the hills is their disciplined ability to adapt and endure suffering a little more than the other racers. In other words, understanding when and how to channel energy for that extra edge is a critical determinant of success — especially for leaders.

I learned a lot about myself in basic training through my interaction with other trainees and the drill sergeants. Some of the soldiers were coming from far rougher environments than anything the Army could throw at us, and it was an eye-opener for me to be around some pretty tough people.

During the first part of basic training, my squad leader got caught leaving the area and lost his leadership position after just a few weeks. The drill sergeant had noticed that I assumed a role in coaching other soldiers and picked me to be the new squad leader. I was more organized and had picked up on things quicker than some of the other soldiers.

So, here I was, the smallest soldier in the platoon. I was in charge of a kid who just got demoted and an assortment of characters who weren’t accustomed to taking orders in any form — from anyone. I adapted and chose to coach and collaborate rather than dictate. My efforts paid off, as I was picked by the drill sergeants as the top trainee of the platoon. More than anything, this phase illustrated the value of adapting to an environment and having the self-discipline to thrive. The most valuable lesson is that if you want something bad enough and you’re willing to sacrifice comfort and pleasure, the goal is quite attainable.

A great deal has been written about leadership crucibles as severe tests of how people handle adversity. How a leader handles adversity and hardship can certainly highlight strengths and weaknesses, and it’s good to know how you’ll react before leading others because leaders will inevitably be tested with a crisis at some point.

In the absence of crisis, leadership can be collaborative, managerial and mundane. It can also involve strategy development, planning and contingency preparations. In a crisis, a leader’s decisiveness and ability to focus will be tested, and it’s good to know how you’ll respond when others are dependent on your ability to pass the ultimate test. ●

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As an Art ... from the Heart

The goal of leadership is to gain willing followers who are committed and not merely compliant. Leadership is ultimately a balancing act, much like the concepts of yin and yang — two opposing but complementary and interdependent forces found in all things. Leadership, like yin and yang, is something that requires balance — as one increases, the other tends to decrease, and vice versa. A highly energetic person can also be a very impatient person; that is, a strength can ultimately be a weakness.

Self-reliance can serve as a fulcrum on which to balance compassion and discipline as indicators of leadership effectiveness. Articulating where you're going, how you'll get there and why it's important is the mechanical part of leadership. The art is in working towards a balance to build trust and gain a voluntary commitment from those you seek to influence (also known as emotional intelligence).

For example, missions need to be accomplished but can only be done through the successful management/balancing of human relationships. A leader needs strength of character but also needs a measure of humility. A leader needs to do the right things while also managing to do things right. Tasks need to be accomplished, processes need to be initiated and followed, and creativity needs a good dose of pragmatic behavior. One can drive compliance, but having true commitment is another matter. Micro-management is the bane of most teams, while unchecked autonomy is not conducive to great team accomplishments, either.

In the end, it's really about communicating a vision in such a way that the leader is able to gain willing, engaged and motivated followers who are truly committed, not blindly obedient drones. The vision needs to strike a balance between expending energy on short-term objectives while achieving long-term goals so people are engaged, energized and passionate. ●

Learned Optimism

We only possess two innate controllables: where you spend your time and how you respond to your environment. How you respond to your environment is analogous to choosing your attitude by way of controlling your emotional response to other people and situations.

While I served at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, the Army's special-operations university, I had the honor of working with a man who had a phenomenal story of demonstrating hope and optimism in dire circumstances. His name was James Nicholas (Nick)

Rowe. In 1963, he and two other soldiers were captured by the Viet Cong, and he was taken and kept prisoner in the U Minh Forest, known as the "Forest of Darkness," in southern Vietnam. He was held for five years, spending most of the time bound and suffering from dysentery, in a small bamboo cage. He was hopeful for escape yet realistic with how long he might be held against his will. He confronted the brutal facts of his situation and did everything possible to survive physically, mentally and emotionally. He controlled how he responded to his environment and prevented his captors from entering his remaining area of control and stealing his hope. In 1968, on his way to be executed, he managed to escape and was rescued 11 days later by a U.S. helicopter. He was one of only 34 American prisoners of war to escape in Vietnam and the only one to have escaped from the Viet Cong. Rowe had the unwavering optimism that the enemy could not break his spirit and that he would eventually be rescued or escape.

When people face adversity, you see different things in them than when they're relatively comfortable. No pain, no change.

A plethora of new research is demonstrating that developing an optimistic outlook and approach can be a learned behavior that has benefits for your health far beyond leadership. One such study was by Toshihiko Maruta, M.D., a psychiatrist at Mayo Clinic. Maruta found, "It tells us that mind and body are linked and that attitude has an impact on the final outcome — death." He went on to say that optimists might be less likely to develop "learned helplessness," which is the polar opposite of self-reliance.

Becoming an effective leader starts with a passion to enhance the human condition and the realization that you can't go it alone. Developing effective leadership skills is the desire to understand others and your effect on them. Human interaction is not like a science experiment, with controlled conditions and repeatable results. Interactions and interventions amount to infinite possibilities. Every day, every person and every situation are nuanced in some intricate and fascinating circumstance. If the recipe existed, we would be able to test aptitude and leadership quotients and make effective leadership easily repeatable. But we can't. Since the beginning of recorded history, philosophers have opined about the dearth of leaders. What we can do is embrace the apprenticeship and become extraordinary learners who constantly and consistently study what works within the context of different events, different times and different people.

Learning to lead boils down to focusing your time and managing how you respond to your environment. Your passion about a given undertaking and your attitude to-

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wards the people you lead must match your rhetoric. ●

Conflicts and Dysfunction

Leaders will always encounter disruptive and negative individuals, and like bad apples, they can sour the entire team. When there is poor morale and high turnover, it can usually be traced back to misaligned expectations due to failed communications. This creates a dysfunctional team.

For any organizational position, the people who support your leadership position need clear and concise job descriptions with enough detail, so roles and responsibilities are clearly understood and acknowledged. The coaching sessions and formal appraisals that follow need to be consistent with what was initially outlined as the expectation.

Misaligned expectations are expectations that could have been aligned had there been mutual trust, communication with candid assessments and frank feedback. Being transparent when it comes to balancing rewards and reparation is the best way to align expectations and facilitate healthy communication.

After every exchange with the people you work with, ask yourself, “As a result of this interaction, am I exerting influence and in what way? Am I viewed as an adversary or an ally for the people who depend on me?”

The language of leadership needs to be clear, respectful and congruent. Clear language reduces ambiguity and aligns expectations. Respectful language is the basis for trust and a collegial relationship. Congruent language means the leader walks the talk — i.e., there is alignment between his or her words and deeds, which leads to a model of integrity. ●

Building Teams

When I was a platoon leader in the military intelligence battalion that supported the infantry division, my platoon sergeant would take care of the day-to-day minutiae. He taught me that I needed to understand my role as a leader.

I needed my interactions with the platoon to be “measured.” I needed to ration my time to enhance my impact. I needed to spend time thinking about what I wasn’t going to do, because overexposure actually detracted from my ability to be seen as the leader when it counted. I needed to prioritize and focus on just a few things. I decided the top three things were training discipline regarding job skills, the ability to absolutely rely on each other (teamwork), and the endurance and stamina that only come from a high level of physical fitness. This lesson

of discerning activity from results has served me well and is a lesson many leaders frequently fail to heed.

When new initiatives are started, the effective leader has to spend time deciding what will be discarded. It is the art of focus. After all, a leader cannot be all things to all people; this leads to confusion, failure and a lack of clarity. Even the questions leaders ask convey insight as to what is an important priority. It’s often said that you can’t manage what you don’t measure, but questioning everything ultimately means you lack focus on the important priorities for the team you lead.

Leadership can take two tacks. One approach is that the leader initiates change without any external stimulation to alter and improve the organization. The other is when a crisis is thrust upon the person in a leadership position and tests him or her, for all to see. The latter requires a different set of skills and the ability to see the situation, gather the facts, confront the realities, develop and test courses of action and decisively move the organization beyond the crisis. In both instances, the leader must create a vision for the organization and articulate that vision in such a way that the team willingly commits and executes the strategy based on the leader’s vision. The vision is the *why* that creates purpose and a sense of optimism for the team.

As a leader, you need a vision that comes from passion. You need to deeply yearn to accomplish something you can only do with the help and assistance of others who are equally committed. Your success lies in knowing the difference between activity and real results. Achieving real results will require you to lead by example.

Characteristics of an Effective Team

The three major characteristics of an effective team are shared accountability, a distinctive purpose and real work. Is the accountability truly shared? Did you give up some measure of power and control so your team members are empowered beyond a doubt? Do team members know their distinctive purpose — where they’re going and why?

While figuring out how to build a team to make a difference, how you approach your goals will be a key determinant of your success. Along with knowing where you want to go, you will need unbridled energy and enthusiasm, because optimism (or pessimism) is contagious. You’ll also need an eye for the external environment, for purposes of adaptation (i.e., course correction). Lastly, you will need a disciplined focus for your energy to ensure you make small steps daily towards your higher goals. Self-awareness and self-coaching are the catalysts for leading yourself, building your team and motivating team members to new heights of accomplishment. ●

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Instigating Change

Leadership is nothing if not change. As leaders, we know affecting positive change starts within. We tend to think change is something we do rather than something we think. As a lesson in leadership, pay close attention to what works for you when it comes to successfully navigating change. Any Boy Scout remembers to be prepared, and the role of the “10 Essentials” serves as part of an outdoor creed and checklist for safe passage through the woods of any eventuality: compass, map, headlamp/flashlight, fire starter, first-aid kit, extra clothes, extra food and water, matches, knife and sun protection. It takes 10 Self-Reliant Leadership Essentials to affect change — first in yourself and then in others.

1. Passion. Your passion serves as an internal compass and helps establish direction. Zeal for your mission’s purpose begets commitment.

2. Vision. Passion can be fleeting, so you need a vision that will sustain you when the going gets tough. Knowing where you’re going is needed before you can convince others to willingly follow you to the destination. What you see as your vision also serves as the map for others to “see” your destination.

3. Consideration. Considering and contemplating all available options for a vision provides insight the same way a headlamp/flashlight illuminates what was previously unseen.

4. Intention. Intent ignites passion the same way a spark precedes a fire. It’s analogous to transposing thoughts into action. Clarify what’s possible and what others can contribute.

5. Planning. Planning is all about anticipating alternatives, just as packing a first-aid kit is a thoughtful contingency for any adventure.

6. Commitment. Commitment is defined as the act of binding yourself (intellectually and emotionally) to a course of action. Packing extra clothing for an outing in the woods means you’re determined and committed to the journey, and no matter what’s thrown at you, you’ll persevere.

7. Sacrifice. There is no single trait that’s a more important determinant of leadership success than the ability to unreservedly sacrifice in order to achieve deliberate outcomes for the greater good. The act of bringing along extra food on a hike means you’re carrying extra weight and have as a contingency the knowledge that current provisions could run dry. It means knowing that whatever discomforts you’ll experience, the destination will be worthwhile.

8. Discipline. It’s hard to sacrifice anything without self-discipline, much less sustain momentum towards a goal. Matches are essential to start a fire and provide a sense of security, just as discipline is required for a desired outcome to be achieved.

9. Action. Before a knife is used to cut, the user envisions what the knife will help create or alter. Action is the tool that follows intent and planning. The sharper the knife, the easier the cutting, and the more focused the action, the greater chance for momentum and achievement.

10. Habit. A result of repeated sacrifice, discipline and action are something analogous to a routine. Just as you know sun protection can prevent painful sunburn in the short run and prevent cancer in the long run, you’re also aware that good habits have short- and long-term benefits. Predictability creates trust in others, which is a result and benefit of discipline and sacrifice.

The last marker of personal change is not so much an action but a result of a disciplined approach to the 10 steps: Character (moral fiber) is built through the process of making a positive difference in the lives of others. ●

Continuous Learning

If you don’t learn from your mistakes, you’re apt to repeat them until you do. Successful leaders have the ability to know where they belong and where they can apply their strengths to succeed.

The ability to identify and attract quality mentors is a skill that provides an extraordinary advantage for learning to lead. With job changes becoming more and more frequent, the ability to attract mentors will be a critical success factor for aspiring leaders.

Your continuous learning can take place at work, on your own or through charitable organizations. Your learning can take place anywhere you are able to work with others with similar convictions but where you are likely to have next to zero positional authority.

Since leadership is part psychology, part sociology, part anthropology, part philosophy and part political science, verbal communication skills and interpersonal skills are important determinants of effectiveness and success. Of course, there are traditional means by which to learn: seminars, courses, classes, tradeshow, lectures, journals, articles, magazines and books.

A learner mindset will require a steadfast commitment to enhance your experience, and the real challenge will be to develop candid channels for feedback on your progress.

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The Ultimate Team

Successful journeys all start out the same way — a vision with detailed planning. Lewis and Clark co-led the ultimate team as the Corps of Discovery. The expedition was extraordinary in so many ways — not the least of which was extreme hardship, unspecified timeframes and an unknown outcome.

President Thomas Jefferson created a vision for the journey through a very specific question: Where is the United States with respect to the fur trade, and is there a quick overland route to the Pacific?

Jefferson and Lewis rolled out a map and said, “This is what is known about the United States.” They made an assessment of where they were. The second thing Jefferson and Lewis did was point at the area that was uncharted. Jefferson said to Lewis, “Your goal is to explore the Northwest Territory via the Missouri River and find an overland route to the Columbia River and on into the Pacific Ocean.”

The direction Jefferson provided (oral and written) was crystal clear and focused on the *what* versus the *how*. The instructions Jefferson wrote for Lewis left no doubt what his objectives were. Lewis knew where he needed to go, what he needed to report and what success looked like.

It was then left to Lewis to choose how to get there. He determined the structure, logistics, and most importantly, decided what type of men he needed on the expedition to be maximally effective and successful.

First, he took ownership of the mission and responsibility for his own self-development. Lewis knew which questions to ask himself, and he had the courage to answer them and act. One of the smartest decisions he is credited with, in planning, was asking William Clark to be his co-leader. Lewis knew his strengths, and he was acutely aware of his shortcomings. He knew Clark was better with people.

How would he evaluate the success of the journey? His ultimate measurement was the successful exploration, mapping and intelligence collection for his commander in chief. It was clear where the mission started, how it concluded and what the outcome would mean to the leaders, their men and their country.

Where are you? Where are you going? How will you get there?

Plot your **location**, determine your **destination**, navigate with clear **direction** and constantly **evaluate** the team’s progress. But remember, the real learning will take place during your crucibles as your adversity quotient is tested. It’s how you respond when you get lost, run out of supplies, lose people, forgo sleep and make apparently mutinous decisions. ●

Hear the Unheard

Hearing the unheard refers to a commitment to develop your communication skills by being observant, empathetic and listening. It’s a matter of self-reflection and self-discovery, along with accumulating expertise in the field in which you lead. The unheard is hearing your inner voice. It’s about asking yourself hard questions and working long and hard on the answers. It is not about immediate answers. How can you focus your energy to produce the greatest impact? For whose good do you serve? Are you easy to follow? ●

Epilogue

We are in desperate need of leaders. Mastery of any art only comes from practice and experience. You need to stick your neck out.

If so, you are accepting a heavy burden and a privilege: leading men and women to accomplish great things. A good leader remains a student of leadership and uses his or her acquired experiences to teach, coach and inspire others to reach their potential. Learn to inspire yourself. Your leadership impact might influence only one person a little bit. At the same time, it could impact thousands.

Use what you have learned to speed up the learning process. Challenge yourself to change, and be open to more change. Accept and even welcome adversity because it will be your prime teacher.

I believe you have control over two things in your life: how you spend your time and how you choose to respond to your environment. If you do each well and wisely, you will become an extraordinary leader. ●

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *The Littlest Green Beret*, the author recommends:

***Undaunted Courage* by Stephen Ambrose.** A look into the exceptional leadership of Lewis and Clark during one of the great journeys of discovery.

***The Social Animal: The Hidden Sources of Love, Character, and Achievement* by David Brooks.**

***The Future of Management* by Gary Hamel.** A call for leaders to create new ways to manage the energies of others.

***Creating the Good Life: Applying Aristotle’s Wisdom to Find Meaning and Happiness* by James O’Toole.**