**What Makes A Good Leader:**

**Five Minutes to Thrive: 19-23 Mar 18**

**NOBILITY**

Lt Gen Steven Kwast, AETC/CC, was the Commander of Air University at Maxwell AFB in 2015. It was there that I heard him deliver the most inspiring and profound admonition to future AF leaders on what it truly means to lead. He espoused four key pillars of character required of all successful leaders: nobility, humility, courage, and compassion. In that we are *all* leaders in some form, at some time, and with some people—and because the development of these traits is a journey, rather than something with which we’re born—the next several 5M2Ts will focus on each of these important characteristics, in turn. First up this week: **Nobility**.

If you’re like me, when you hear this word, your mind immediately flashes to images of royalty. The connotation is deliberate; early monarchs (but certainly not all) were chosen for their noble character, for the virtue they demonstrated in their dealings with others, for their unquestioned integrity reinforced by their moral actions, and for the goodness with which they treated everyone under their influence.

Yes, the above picture is a screenshot from the movie *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, of the Chronicles of Narnia series by C.S. Lewis. If you’ve read the book or seen the movie, you know that these four children were unexpectedly thrust into regal positions which required them—like it or not—to act with nobility. Sometimes they succeeded; other times they fell short. Likewise, at any given time certain (anticipated or unexpected) circumstances may call upon us each to assume a (formal or informal) role requiring the trait of nobility. In this, we must **choose to do what is *right* over what is *easy***. We choose to work late to finish the job, and to thus sacrifice time with our families. We take the extra time to mentor a fellow Airman who is clearly struggling but who doesn’t yet have the courage to ask for help. We go out of our way to help a stranger, because *it’s the right thing to do*. We hold others accountable—and we hold ourselves to the same standards (better yet, we set the example)…and we do it without ego.

- **Accept your nobility.** We all have the capability, but first we must make the commitment. Look no further than the Air Force Core Values as a guide: by pledging yourself to Integrity first, Service before [your]self, and Excellence in all [you] do, you begin to grasp nobility.

- **Demonstrate your virtues (and integrity to them).** This boils down to both talking the talk AND walking the walk. Let others *know* where you stand on the important issues (i.e. work ethic, teamwork, physical fitness, etc.), *show* them the standard, and then *help* them attain it.

- **Seize the call to action.** You never know which crucial moments will make a resounding impact on someone’s life; often, they’re the events you wouldn’t suspect! *Carpe diem* to make a difference for someone else. It only takes a little extra effort, applied regularly over time, to have an indelible influence on another’s journey; Lt Gen Kwast surely had that effect on me.

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