



# BRIDGECHAT

<https://www.acc.af.mil/About-Us/The-Bridge/>

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## Bridge Chat Overview and Importance

Followership is a reciprocal process of leadership that refers to the willingness to follow with a team or organization. Being a great follower is having appropriate situational awareness of priorities and how to best support those efforts. Airmen and Guardians must be able to collaborate and maintain good relationships with those in various positions in the leadership chain. Exceptional followers make the best leaders because they view others as equals, teach others as humans with similar struggles and shortcomings, and value the contributions of others. The best followers also understand how their leader makes decisions, are aware of critical challenges their leader faces, and have personal leadership skills that enable confident responses to what their leadership or organization needs. Another critical part of being a good follower is practicing servant leadership. When acting with the intent to serve others, natural followership emerges and further builds the organizational team at every level.

### 10 Practices of Great Followers

Maj Gen Michael D. Rothstein, Former Vice Commander of Air University

- Think two levels up
- Speak truth to power
- Bring the boss a proposed solution, not a problem
- Internalize and work on the boss's priorities
- Give good readbacks
- Hold yourself accountable for your performance
- Demonstrate professional loyalty
- Excel at your job
- If you see a problem, fix it
- Work hard, but don't forget your family

## Followership

Bridge Chat Purpose: Create cohesive, high-performing teams that foster trust and connection through flexible and consistent small group discussions; in direct response to overwhelming feedback from the CSAF 21's Resilience Tactical Pause.

### Getting the Conversation Started

**VIDEO:** Watch the video "Leaders and Followers: What Tango Teaches"  
[https://ed.ted.com/best\\_of\\_web/ypFEhSjj](https://ed.ted.com/best_of_web/ypFEhSjj) (7:32)

**"Success for any organization is a team sport requiring significant parts of both leadership and followership."**

– Maj Gen Michael D. Rothstein

### Related Resources

Simon Sinek: The Best Leaders are the Best Followers

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V5wtzze9L\\_M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V5wtzze9L_M) (4:52)

The following article, Dynamic Followership: The Prerequisite for Effective Leadership, was originally published in the Winter 2004 issue of Air & Space Power Journal.

<https://govleaders.org/dynamic-followership.htm>

Great Leaders Follow First by Maj Gen Michael D. Rothstein, USAF

[https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Portals/10/ASPJ/journals/Volume-33\\_Issue-2/SLP-Rothstein.pdf](https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Portals/10/ASPJ/journals/Volume-33_Issue-2/SLP-Rothstein.pdf)

**If leaders look for opportunities to follow, they will instill confidence in those who are leading, the team will become stronger, and the formal leaders will become more effective in their roles."**

– CMSgt Tracy Cornett, Command Chief, 908th Airlift Wing

## Chat Reminders

- ▶ **Based on feedback from the field:** August 2019 resilience tactical pause feedback told us that our teammates overwhelmingly want continued, sustained and consistent opportunities to talk with their leaders.
- ▶ **Leaders have flexibility.** HQ ACC provides the topic, but the timing, delivery, and discussion questions are at the commander's discretion.
- ▶ **Cohesive teams built on trust and synergy are more effective**

**Above all else...**

**Demonstrate respect for human dignity**

## Suggested Discussion Questions ▶

1. What is followership?
2. What are some key traits that embody a good follower?
3. How can followers be developed?
4. Are those in positions of authority leaders, followers, or both? Explain.
5. How do you see followership practiced in your unit?
6. What are the organizational impacts of effective followership?



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