



Create cohesive, high-performing teams that foster trust & connection through small group discussions.



BRIDGECHAT

DISCUSSION GUIDE

JUNE 2026

EMPOWERED LEADERSHIP

Have you ever worked for a leader you'd follow anywhere, not because of their rank or title, but because of the trust they built? That's the kind of leadership evolution we're seeing across the Air and Space Force, and it's central to General Spain's vision for Air Combat Command. It's a clear shift away from a "because I said so" mentality and a dedicated move towards a culture where we EMPOWER, TAKE RISKS & LEAD.

General Spain's perspective is direct: "Speed & agility win wars." This isn't just about faster jets; it's about fostering a culture of faster decisions and smarter teams that can out-think and out-maneuver any adversary. To achieve this, the mandate is clear: we must empower our force—especially our Commanders, and in particular our Wing Commanders—to lead boldly and take calculated risks that keep us ahead.

So, what does this look like in practice? It means delegating authority to the lowest responsible, accountable, and expert level—trusting our people on the front lines, both military and civilian, to make informed decisions. It means accelerating our decision-making process by leveraging the best tools available. This isn't about being reckless; it's about effectively balancing speed with a sharp awareness of the risks.

For this to work, we need to ensure information flows freely so that everyone understands the mission and can act with unified intent. And critically, we have a responsibility to continuously evaluate our own processes and remove policies that hinder our warfighting effectiveness. The goal is to clear the path for our people to be as agile and innovative as possible.

This entire model is built on the foundation of authentic leaders who are accountable first. When leaders build that kind of trust, they create the environment for their teams to be bold and fully commit to readiness across all domains.

WATCH...

SMSgt Quentin Davis Jr., 39th SFS 1st Sgt, gives his perspective on empowerment and what it means to truly pay it forward to the future leaders of the DAF.

<https://www.dvidshub.net/video/838431/afn-incirlik-diamond-dialogue-smsgt-quentin-davis-jr-empowerment#>



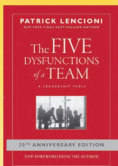
DISCUSS...

1. What do you see as the biggest challenge to implementing this kind of empowered leadership in our day-to-day operations?
2. What is the role of trust and vulnerability in empowered leadership, and how can leaders create a psychologically safe environment where their team members feel comfortable taking risks and learning from failure?
3. How can organizations cultivate a culture of empowered leadership at all levels, rather than being dependent on a few key individuals?

Scenario: Imagine you are leading a team and have empowered one of your team members to take full ownership of a challenging new project. You've encouraged them to be innovative and take risks. A few weeks in, you realize they are heading in a direction that, from your experience, is likely to fail and will waste significant resources.

If you saw this happening, what would you do? How would you approach the situation to guide them toward a better path without undermining the sense of autonomy and empowerment you've worked to build?

Related Resources



The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable, 20th Anniversary Edition
https://books.google.com/books?id=AEIGAAAACAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false

ACC FOCUS AREAS

READINESS ACROSS ALL DOMAINS FOCUS, CULTIVATE & ADAPT <i>Readiness is our foundation.</i> We must: Focus on what we control Cultivate a warrior spirit Adapt to uncertainty Holistic Readiness of Forces: • Fight lines – fly, fix, fight at scale • Focus areas: training, manpower, infrastructure & WBSICAM • Dominate the EM spectrum • Protect & defend weapon systems & networks • Rapi drepogramming • Relevant, effective & available EW • Gain & maintain domain awareness • Revitalize family readiness • Core • Connections • Support • Preparation	WARFIGHTING EXCELLENCE DEFEND, DETER & WIN <i>Every effort contributes to positive readiness outcomes.</i> We must: Defend the homeland Deter aggression Win decisively • Air superiority is a national imperative only we provide • Maintain commander-focus on mission & team combat effectiveness • Defend, project power & win	ADAPTING TO THE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT RESHAPE, OUTPACE & DOMINATE <i>Our adversaries aim to redefine the world order.</i> We must: Reshape operations Outpace threats Dominate the future • Surge, sustain & maneuver under attack • Defend our bases • Evolve the warfighting unit of action • Scale & deploy asymmetric capabilities to create dilemmas	BRINGING THE FUTURE FORWARD BUILD, BE READY & PREPARE <i>The future is coming fast.</i> We must: Build a combat Air Force Be Ready to execute today Prepare for tomorrow • Rapidly field new capabilities & concepts • Act now to prepare formations for future tech	EMPOWERING LEADERSHIP EMPOWER, TAKE RISKS & LEAD <i>Speed & agility win wars.</i> We must: Empower commanders Take Risks with purpose Lead boldly • Delegate authority to the most appropriate level • Accelerate decisions with digital tools • Balance speed with risk awareness • Flatten comms for shared intent • Remove policies that have limited warfighting value
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BETTER TODAY, READY TOMORROW

Together ACC, let's WIN!

AIR COMBAT COMMAND
COMMANDER

Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do and they will surprise you with their ingenuity.

– General George S. Patton

The greatest leader is not necessarily the one who does the greatest things. He/She is the one that gets the people to do the greatest things.

– Ronald Reagan



Connect. Detect. Protect. Equip.

www.acc.af.mil/About-Us/The-Bridge/

RESILIENCY TOOLKIT

Mindfulness Techniques for Stress Management

Building Airmen Who Bend but Don't Break

Mindfulness isn't about clearing your mind—it's about focusing it. These techniques help you stay present, regain control during stress, and sharpen your mental edge. Used by elite military units worldwide, mindfulness is a tactical skill for peak performance.

5-4-3-2-1 GROUNDING

"Rapid Reset Technique"



2-3 minutes

- 5 things you can SEE
- 4 things you can TOUCH
- 3 things you can HEAR
- 2 things you can SMELL
- 1 things you can TASTE

Best for:
Anxiety & Overwhelm

BODY SCAN

"Tension Release Technique"



5-10 minutes

HOW TO DO IT:

Close eyes. Focus on each area for 30 sec. Notice tension. Breathe into it. Release.

- 1 Head & Face
- 2 Neck & Shoulders
- 3 Chest & Back
- 4 Stomach & Hips
- 5 Legs & Feet

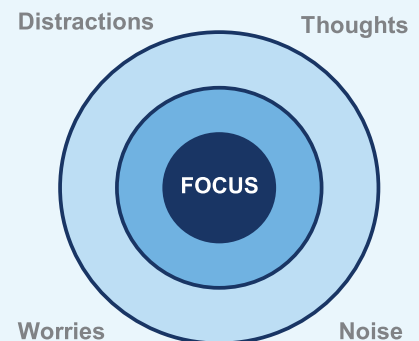
Best for: Physical Tension

FOCUSED ATTENTION

"Mental Sharpening Technique"



3-5 minutes



STEPS:

1. Pick one thing to focus on (breath, object, sound)
2. When mind wanders, notice it
3. Gently return focus—no judgment
4. Repeat

Best for: Focus & Clarity

WHEN TO USE

- Before high-stress missions/tasks
- When feeling overwhelmed or anxious
- During breaks to reset and recharge
- Before important decisions or briefings

THE BENEFITS

- ✓ Reduces stress and anxiety quickly
- ✓ Improves focus and mental clarity
- ✓ Enhances situational awareness
- ✓ Builds long-term mental resilience

CHALLENGE: Practice one technique for 5 minutes daily

Mindfulness is a tactical skill. Train your mind like you train your body.

ACC FOCUS AREAS

READINESS ACROSS ALL DOMAINS

FOCUS, CULTIVATE & ADAPT



Readiness is our foundation.

We must:

***Focus on what we control
Cultivate a warrior spirit
Adapt to uncertainty***

Holistic Readiness of Forces:

- Flight lines – fly, fix, fight at scale
- Focus areas: training, manpower, infrastructure & WSS/CAM
- Dominate the EM spectrum
- Protect & defend weapon systems & networks
- Rapid reprogramming
- Relevant, effective & available EW
- Gain & maintain domain awareness
- Revitalize family readiness
- Core
- Connections
- Support
- Preparation

WARFIGHTING EXCELLENCE

DEFEND, DETER & WIN



Every effort contributes to positive readiness outcomes.

We must:

***Defend the homeland
Deter aggression
Win decisively***

- Air superiority is a national imperative only we provide
- Maintain commander-focus on mission & team combat effectiveness
- Defend, project power & win

ADAPTING TO THE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

RESHAPE, OUTPACE & DOMINATE



Our adversaries aim to redefine the world order.

We must:

***Reshape operations
Outpace threats
Dominate the future***

- Surge, sustain & maneuver under attack
- Defend our bases
- Evolve the warfighting unit of action
- Scale & deploy asymmetric capabilities to create dilemmas

BRINGING THE FUTURE FORWARD

BUILD, BE READY & PREPARE



The future is coming fast.

We must:

***Build a combat Air Force
Be Ready to execute today
Prepare for tomorrow***

- Rapidly field new capabilities & concepts
- Act now to prepare formations for future tech

EMPOWERING LEADERSHIP

EMPOWER, TAKE RISKS & LEAD



Speed & agility win wars.

We must:

***Empower commanders
Take Risks with purpose
Lead boldly***

- Delegate authority to the most appropriate level
- Accelerate decisions with digital tools
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