



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



386th AEW Police Week 2025



Team Tyndall highlights warrior ethos during Warrior Day

## DISCONNECT TO CONNECT

We live in a world at our electronic fingertips. Between email, countless text messages, social media, Google searches, and now AI, we feel more connected to the outside world than ever. But in our Air Force, is this constant digital connection actually strengthening our teams and mission readiness, or subtly eroding the vital human connections we need to succeed?

Professor Albert Mehrabian, Professor Emeritus of Psychology at UCLA, in a foundational piece from 1981, revealed a startling truth: only 7% of communication relies on the words we use. A critical 38% is conveyed through tone and voice, and a dominant 55% through non-verbal cues like body language. Think about that: when we rely solely on written communication, we're missing over 90% of the message.

In the cockpit, on the flight line, in the ops center, or during a critical deployment, a missed glance, a subtle shift in tone, or unread body language isn't just a misunderstanding – it can be the difference between mission success and failure, or even safety and danger.

This isn't just about 'feeling connected', it's mission critical. Why? Because our ability to trust, adapt, and perform under pressure depends on truly knowing our fellow Airmen. An email can't convey stress in a teammate's voice. A text won't reveal hesitation in their eyes. Only face-to-face interaction shows the real signs of burnout or struggle. These are the cues that enable us to lead, mentor, and support each other effectively, ensuring no Airman is left behind and no mission is compromised.

So, the solution is deceptively simple, yet profoundly powerful: sometimes, to truly connect, we need to "Disconnect to Connect." Stepping away from our phones and computers and taking in the world – and the people – around us. When we embrace face-to-face conversations – whether it's a quick chat in the hallway, a debrief after a training exercise, or sharing a meal in the dining facility – we unlock:

- **Enhanced Situational Awareness:** Beyond the words, we grasp true intent, emotional states, and subtle warnings that written text can never convey. This is critical for rapid, informed decision-making.
- **Stronger Team Cohesion & Trust:** Deep personal bonds are forged through shared presence and mutual understanding, vital for high-stakes, high-stress environments.
- **Improved Problem Solving:** Nuance and context clarify complex challenges, leading to more robust and creative solutions born from genuine collaboration.
- **Proactive Support & Resilience:** We can identify and address issues with teammates, from morale dips to potential safety concerns, before they escalate, building a more resilient and supportive force.

Our Air Force's strength isn't just in our technology or our aircraft; it's in the unbreakable bonds of our Airmen. Let's prioritize authentic human connection, because in our line of work, it's not just a nice-to-have – it's mission critical. Disconnect to truly connect and strengthen our force from within.

### WATCH...

432 AMXS Airmen 4 Life <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/967270/432-amxs-airmen-4-life>

Time to Care <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/773751/time-care>



### DISCUSS...

1. How often do we text back and forth for 15 minutes when a 5 minute meeting or phone call would produce more clarity?
2. As a supervisor, do you truly know how your subordinates feel about a policy if you simply send it out in an email?
3. Do you allow phones at the dinner table, on a drive, at the beach, or other times when you could hold meaningful personal conversations?
4. If you took the time to have more face-to-face feedback sessions to get to know your folks, would you actually be a more effective, coherent work center?



🗣️ **We need to have more Face Look and less Facebook.** 🗣️ – General Mark D. Kelly, former COMACC

🗣️ **To become successful leaders, we must first learn that no matter how good the technology or how shiny the equipment, people-to-people relations get things done in our organizations. If you are to be a good leader, you have to cultivate your skills in the arena of personal relations.** 🗣️

– Gen. Ronald R. Fogleman, CSAF 15

## Unite Through Activity

Try having a 'no phones' day at the office or work area. If you need to tell someone something, go see them in person or, at a minimum, call them instead of using email, Teams, or text. If that goes well, try a week with no phones.

## Related Resources

Mehrabian's 7-38-55 Communication Model: It's More Than Words.

<https://worldofwork.io/2019/07/mehrabians-7-38-55-communication-model/>

13 Times In-Person Communication Is Better Than Electronic Exchanges.

<https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbescoachescouncil/2020/07/17/13-times-in-person-communication-is-better-than-electronic-exchanges/>

The power of face-to-face communication.

<https://www.iese.edu/standout/face-to-face-conversations-power/>



# 8 Solutions to Cope with Stress

When we are stressed, it may feel like nothing helps. Having effective coping, problem-solving, and communication skills can make a big difference.



### PRACTICE RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

Reduce stress through deep breathing, meditation, prayer, yoga, calming music, or time in nature.



### STAY CONNECTED

Support from friends and family can improve well-being when facing stress.



### STAY HYDRATED

Choose healthy drinks like water, as alcohol—especially with medications—can increase stress.



### GET GOOD SLEEP

Poor or insufficient sleep has a significant negative impact on your health.



### EXERCISE REGULARLY

Cardio and strength training can reduce stress levels and keep you mission ready.



### GET INVOLVED IN HOBBIES

Art, for example, can be a positive, creative way to express feelings.



### UNPLUG

Take a break from the news or social media if those activities cause you stress.



### SEEK SUPPORT

Talk to a health care provider, counselor, or chaplain.