

## **“GETTING IT” Advice from a Plebe-No-More**

Last year, my former plebe was sometimes frustrated by fellow plebes who "just don't get it". I asked him what it meant to "get it". His reply:

"This isn't a personal challenge to be overcome. This isn't about shining or excelling. It's about being a professional military officer, which means serving those whom you lead, and serving your country. The country made an investment in me, and I intend to ensure it pays off for them. You do more sit-ups than you did last week because that's your job. You do push-ups after Navy scores a touchdown because that's your job. And so on. We're being paid to learn to be Navy and Marine Corps officers. If you don't do something you're supposed to do, you're not earning your pay. Everything they measure here, everything that's important here, in some way makes you a better officer. The most important thing is to keep that as your framework: learning to be a professional officer and leader. When you do so, you will grow in the things that are important qualities for an officer to have, and that's what matters here."

Therefore, he explained, the following successful behaviors are by-products of viewing yourself as a professional officer, and not goals in themselves:

1. Teamwork...always look to help and encourage your teammates...always.
2. Determination...never give up...no matter what.
3. Lead by example...walk the talk.
4. Continuous improvement...strive for excellence in everything you do...step by step.
5. Efficiency and effectiveness...work smart and work hard...make the best use of your time.
6. See yourself objectively...don't take anything personally, just filter feedback for info and learn from it.

So his advise is, the sooner a plebe adopts the mindset of a professional, the better off they will be, and the better off our country will be. Adopting the professional attitude is the best way to fulfill the saying, "What the mind can conceive, and what the spirit can believe, the person can achieve."

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