
General Carl E. Mundy's Core Values Speech

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The Eagle, Globe, and Anchor has endured, as a symbol of Marine Corps traditions and uncompromising values. As each new generation earns the right to wear our emblem, we inherit the responsibility of living according to a set of values and standards of conduct that have marked Marines as special members of American Society for more than two centuries.

You have heard me express my conviction that the Corps is a national institution, and that Marines are held in the highest esteem by the American people. They expect us to reflect the solid values of our society and our nation. When you wear the Eagle, Globe, and Anchor, you symbolize the epitome of fighting skills and personal honor, and you represent all that our nation expects of its young people.

But with this demand for excellence comes a sacred trust. Each year, thousands of America's sons and daughters are molded into United States Marines. We gladly accept this commitment. These young Americans undergo tough and rigorous training when they go through this rite of passage. They come away with all the pride and dignity that goes with the title Marine.

Being a Marine means adhering to a set of enduring values. I want everyone to understand what these basic values are, and how through word and deed they have been handed down from one generation of Marines to another.

Our core values--Honor, Courage, and Commitment--mold our character. They guide and shape our lives every hour of every day.

At the foundation of our core value system is honor. A person cannot be a Marine without honor. It's the bedrock of our character. Honor is integrity, honesty, and responsibility. It's the quality that guides Marines to

exemplify ethical and moral behavior; never to lie, cheat, or steal; to abide by an uncompromising code of integrity; to respect human dignity; and to have respect and concern for each other.

Courage. It's the heart of our values. Courage to face the challenge of combat and to master fear; courage to do what is right; courage to adhere to a higher standard of personal conduct; courage to lead by example; and courage to make tough decisions in the face of stress and pressure.

Commitment. It's the spirit of determination and professionalism shared by all Marines. It leads the highest order of discipline. It's the ingredient that not only commits total devotion to Corps and country, but fosters an unrelenting determination to achieve a standard of excellence.

Today, as our society changes, it's more important than ever that our conduct is a beacon of these enduring values. Our Core Values are a cornerstone of the Corps and a source of strength for every Marine.

We subscribe to a creed that an individual is entitled to be judged on his or her merit as a Marine, rather than upon differences of gender or ethnic origin. The Corps cannot foster or tolerate discrimination, sexual harassment, physical abuse, or any other form of mean-spirited behavior. I'm concerned about reports of deplorable personal conduct. These things erode what we, as Marines, stand for, and they must be corrected.

As Marines, we owe it to the nation, to ourselves, and to those who served before us to conduct ourselves in a way that reflects honor on our Corps. We must lead the way in ensuring that every Marine is accorded a full measure of respect and dignity. The warrior spirit must not be misunderstood as a replacement for law-abiding adult behavior. Most of all, the leaders in our Corps must lead and teach by example, well above and beyond that expected of subordinates.

The American people rightfully expect from us prowess in combat, but they also expect honor, integrity, dedication to ideals, respect for fellow human beings, and adherence to the highest standards of discipline. We must not tarnish our image with substandard leadership or behavior.

We have a Corps that's tough enough to fight any enemy and smart enough to win any battle. A Corps that understands the meaning of teamwork. A Corps that must continue to believe in and live by high standards and values.

The Marines who have gone before us were drawn into a lasting bond in peace and war. The adversity they faced together strengthened their resolve, and they realized that comradeship, respect for one another, and teamwork make it possible to overcome any obstacle and win any battle.

Today, I look to the pride, discipline, and professionalism of every Marine to renew your personal dedication to the values that we as Marines hold sacred. I want all Marines to focus priorities on reaffirming and achieving the highest standards of ethics, behavior, and respect for each other. To do any less is to be less than a Marine. To do any less is not to uphold our motto that we are "Always Faithful" to each other, to our Corps, and to our nation.

Semper Fidelis, Marines.