

# The Leadership Secret Every Navy SEAL Knows

## ***What can my church learn from the mission-focused leadership of the United States Navy SEALs?***

A clear, executable mission is the key to success for every branch of the military. An outstanding attention to teamwork and training make the United States Navy SEALs the most formidable fighting force on the planet. Leadership is just as important to each SEAL Team as it is to your church.

### **THE QUICK SUMMARY - [Extreme Ownership](#), by Jocko Willink and Leif Babin**

Sent to the most violent battlefield in Iraq, Jocko Willink and Leif Babin's SEAL task unit faced a seemingly impossible mission: help U.S. forces secure Ramadi, a city deemed "all but lost." In gripping firsthand accounts of heroism, tragic loss, and hard-won victories in SEAL Team Three's Task Unit Bruiser, they learned that leadership?at every level?is the most important factor in whether a team succeeds or fails.

Willink and Babin returned home from deployment and instituted SEAL leadership training that helped forge the next generation of SEAL leaders. After departing the SEAL Teams, they launched Echelon Front, a company that teaches these same leadership principles to businesses and organizations. From promising startups to Fortune 500 companies, Babin and Willink have helped scores of clients across a broad range of industries build their own high-performance teams and dominate their battlefields.

Now, detailing the mind-set and principles that enable SEAL units to accomplish the most difficult missions in combat, *Extreme Ownership* shows how to apply them to any team, family, or organization. Each chapter focuses on a specific topic such as Cover and Move, Decentralized Command, and Leading Up the Chain, explaining what they are, why they are important, and how to implement them in any leadership environment.

A compelling narrative with powerful instruction and direct application, *Extreme Ownership* revolutionizes business management and challenges leaders everywhere to fulfill their ultimate purpose: lead and win.

### **A SIMPLE SOLUTION**

Today's Naval Special Warfare operators – SEALs, for Sea, Air, and Land – can trace their origins to the Scouts and Raiders, Naval Combat Demolition Units, Underwater Demolition Teams, and Motor Torpedo Boat Squadrons of World War II. Their pioneering efforts in unconventional warfare are mirrored in the missions and professionalism of the present Naval Special Warfare teams.

The principles critical to SEAL success on the battlefield – how SEALs train and prepare their leaders, how they mold and develop high-performance teams, and how they lead in combat –

are directly applicable in any group, organization, corporation, or business.

For SEAL teams, the beginning and foundational leadership principle is this: the leader is truly and ultimately responsible for *everything*.

*The best leaders don't just take responsibility for their job. They take Extreme Ownership of everything that impacts their mission.*

This fundamental core concept enables SEAL leaders to lead high-performing teams in extraordinary circumstances and win. But Extreme Ownership isn't a principle whose application is limited to the battlefield. This concept is the number-one characteristic of any high-performance winning team, in any military unit, organization, sports team or business team in any industry.

When subordinates are not doing what they should, leaders that exercise Extreme Ownership cannot blame the subordinates. They must first look in the mirror at themselves. The leader bears full responsibility for explaining the strategic mission, developing the tactics, and securing the training and resources to enable the team to properly and successfully execute.

Extreme Ownership requires leaders to look at an organization's problems through the objective lens of reality, without emotional attachments to agendas or plans. It mandates that a leader set ego aside, accept responsibility for failures, attaché weakness, and consistently work to build a better and more effective team.

Such a leader does not take credit for his or her team's successes, but bestows that honor upon his subordinate leaders and team members. When a leader sets such an example and expects this from junior leaders within the team, the mindset develops into the team's culture at every level.

Jocko Willink and Leif Babin, [\*Extreme Ownership\*](#)

## **A NEXT STEP**

As the senior leader of a staff team, or as a staff member leading a ministry team, the principle of Extreme Ownership means that you have the responsibility for everything that occurs with your team – everything.

To begin utilizing the concept of Extreme Ownership, select a recent ministry activity that did not go as well as you had planned. On a chart tablet, write the activity and date at the top.

On the chart tablet, review the development of the activity, by listing the genesis of the idea, discussion and planning prior to the activity itself, and all individuals along with their specific responsibilities in carrying out the activity. In addition, list any external factors that may have impacted the result of the activity.

Go over the chart tablet in detail with the following questions in mind:

1. What leadership support did I provide in the genesis of the activity?
2. How did my words and actions affect the initial planning of the activity?
3. How involved was I through direct or indirect decision-making in the initial planning?
4. Once initial planning had begun, did I connect on a regular basis with the leaders of specific tasks?
5. If so, did I encourage them, offering additional training or insights as needed?
6. Did I pull all the leaders together regularly to briefly review their individual progress toward the common goal?
7. If so, did I help them understand how their individual and team success would lead to the success of the overall goal?
8. On the day before the activity, did the team meet to verbally run through the activity's main actions?
9. If so, what was your level of participation? Did you verbally support and affirm your subordinate's plans or critically suggest other options?
10. At the activity itself, what was your role?
11. How often did you circulate around during the activity and speak to your subordinates?
12. How did you "take notes" during the activity for later discussions?
13. Did you realize during the activity that it had not met your expectations?
14. At the conclusion of the activity, how did you thank everyone for his or her involvement?
15. Did you have a preplanned "debrief" of the activity, or was it only after you realized things didn't go as planned?

To successfully complete an activity, or lead change, or to challenge people to accomplish a difficult or complex task, you can't make people deliver the result you envision. You have to lead them.

Extreme Ownership is a mind-set and attitude. When leaders practice Extreme Ownership and develop a culture of Extreme Ownership within their teams, the rest will begin to fall in place.

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