

The Second Core Value: Service Before Self

An Airman's professional duties always take precedence over personal desires.

Service before self tells us that professional duties take precedence over personal desires. At the very least, it includes the following behaviors:

Rule following

To serve is to do one's duty, and our duties are most commonly expressed through rules. While it may be the case that professionals are expected to exercise judgment in the performance of their duties, good professionals understand that rules have a reason for being - and the default position must be to follow those rules unless there is a clear, operational reason for refusing to do so.

Respect for others

Service before self tells us also that a good leader places the troops ahead of his/her personal comfort. We must always act in the certain knowledge that all persons possess a fundamental worth as human beings.

Discipline and self-control

Professionals cannot indulge themselves in self-pity, discouragement, anger, frustration or defeatism. They have a fundamental moral obligation to the persons they lead to strike a tone of confidence and forward-looking optimism. More specifically, they are expected to exercise control in the following areas:

Anger

Military professionals and especially commanders at all echelons are expected to refrain from displays of anger that would bring discredit upon themselves and/or the Air Force.

Appetites

Those who allow their appetites to drive them to make sexual overtures to subordinates are unfit for military service. Likewise, the excessive consumption of alcohol casts doubt on an individual's fitness.

Religious toleration

Military professionals must remember that religious choice is a matter of individual conscience.

Professionals - and especially commanders - must not take it upon themselves to change or coercively influence the religious views of subordinates.