

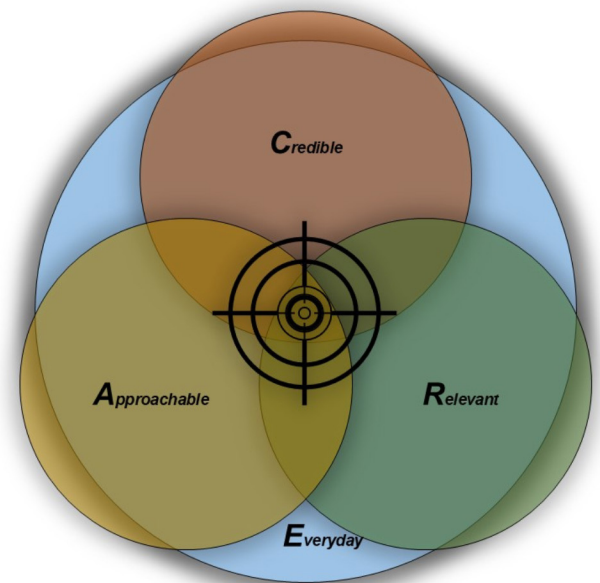
Mentorship Part 4

Dr. Stephen Napoli, CW5 (Ret), Director, Leadership Institute, Troy University

This quarter, we continue with the series of mentorship articles developed from an old warrant officer's (now a retired, old warrant officer's) perspective and experience. You will find that there is an overlap between mentorship and leadership through the series. As a reminder, the CARE Model was born from my poor answer to a good question about success that was shared in previous articles. The model is represented by being Credible, Approachable, & Relevant Everyday (CARE). Of course, it is much easier to spell it out than to put it into practice, because even warrant officers are human.

We have laid the foundation of mentorship in previous articles in Strength in Knowledge. We previously explored being credible and approachable. When mentors or leaders fail in those two areas, relevance is lost. Relevance is also lost when leaders refuse to embrace the responsibility of mentorship. Making those around us better at anything is foundational to mentorship. ADP 6-22 highlights numerous doctrinal concepts that can be connected directly to the value of relevance. For example, pages 5-8 clearly articulate that "leaders who commit to coaching, counseling, and mentoring subordinates build relationships that foster trust. These relationships built on trust enable leaders to empower subordinates, encourage initiative, reinforce accountability, and allow for open communication. Further, these relationships establish predictability and cohesion with the team." That is a lot of responsibility captured in three sentences... with a lot of return on the investment.

Reach back to the previous discussions on credibility and approachability in the model. It is rather simple to present the connections between the "C" and "A" in the CARE Model to the "R." Do not even stress out about being relevant if you are not credible or approachable. You have already lost relevance in the eyes of those you mean to lead, coach, or mentor. People who know their profession and are willing to continue learning are seen as credible. When approachability is added, they are sought out by others to help improve their lives, careers, or both. Leaders and mentors are given more opportunities to remain relevant when they make themselves appealing. It requires a marriage between opportunity and action for relevance to emerge. "Opportunities that challenge the individual and encourage learning enhance development" (FM 6-22: Leader Development, 2022, p. 2-3). Credibility and approachability tee up opportunities for relevance. Think about it—if you have even sought out a mentorship relationship, did you reach out to someone who was not first credible and approachable? I'm going to go out on a limb here and assume that ideal mentors have something to offer (credibility), are positively responsive (approachability), and are willing to share experiences and education (relevance).



The CARE Model by CW5 Stephen Napoli.

Another way to illustrate the relationship is to view credibility as a demonstration of what is known or learned. Bridges without benefits on both ends are dead ends. Approachability is the bridge linking credibility to relevance. And relevance is the willingness to share what is known or learned for the benefit of others. In my way of thinking and applying the model to many aspects of life, credibility is the brain (or knowledge) of mentorship, approachability is the attitude of mentorship, and relevance is the

heart of mentorship.

Next time, the discussion will focus on the most difficult part of the model to uphold—“everyday.” Until then, continue to self-develop the means to lead and mentor so that our replacements are well-equipped to continue the fight after we are gone.

References

ADP 6-22: Army Leadership and the Profession. (2019). Headquarters, Department of the Army.

FM 6-22: Leader Development. (2022). Headquarters, Department of the Army.

Editor’s Note: Dr. Stephen Napoli is a former Deputy Commandant of the Warrant Officer Career College. He currently serves Troy University and its students as the Executive Director of the Institute for Leadership Development. Previously, he served for 32 years in the U.S. Army as an AH-64 aviator, instructor pilot, and educator. He has served, and continues to serve, in several leadership, mentorship, and educational positions. Dr. Napoli holds a bachelor’s degree in Mathematics, a master’s degree in Aeronautical Science, and a doctorate in Strategic Leadership.

