

# Perspectives

This portion of *Concepts for Air Force Leadership* is entitled Perspectives because it provides an expansive, high-level overview—or perspective—of the entire book. It is multidimensional, addressing all of the concepts discussed in the first three dimensions.

The objective of this portion is to consider leadership impressions within a broad conceptual context to enhance our understanding of the multidimensional aspects of leadership.

Leadership is the art of getting others to do something the leader is convinced should be done. Leaders make a difference and produce decisive results. Leaders have an unwavering integrity and a strong desire to stretch themselves and their people to the limits of individual and organizational capability.

Successful leadership is the pursuit of excellence within a values-based Air Force. Leadership can be learned by practice and study, just as the pilot learns to fly or the athlete learns to play baseball.

We develop these attributes with professional military education, professional continuing education, self-study, and on-the-job experience. This is the central theme of this portion of *Concepts for Air Force Leadership*. It is left to the reader to supply the details as they pertain to specific leadership situations. The reader should relate the concepts discussed in the first three dimensions to available or emerging leadership theory in order to achieve a more in-depth and practical treatment of this complex, and sometimes misunderstood, yet important subject.

Specifically, this portion contains several articles on leadership impressions. Additional articles provide a broad overview of leadership in relation to “Duty, Honor, Country” with a perspective on related subjects. Finally, leaders discuss their views of leadership. In effect, all the articles attempt to reveal leadership as subjective and influenced by human variables.

This portion of the book emphasizes that leadership is more than managerial ability. It requires a capacity to influence followers to achieve a common goal and is accompanied by providing purpose, direction, and motivation. Leadership reaches deep emotions through presence, force of personality, integrity, service, and example. Leaders know their people, themselves, and their professions.

Good leaders are good simplifiers, who cut through argument, debate, and self-doubt to provide solutions and the vision their subordinates and others can understand and support. Effective leaders have infectious optimism and the ability to convince followers they are winning when odds are against them. Above all, leadership implies a willingness for self-sacrifice to reach high, realistic group goals.

All readings in this portion reinforce the articles in the first three dimensions. They underscore the value of good leadership to meet the current and future needs of the Air Force.

