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7 stories

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ACCOMPLISHMENT #1

SITUATION: While working for the U.S. Army, we had our computer software updated worldwide, but while serving in Alaska, we were the only unit without access to this update because we were still using floppy disks and had to complete the update manually. This was my second year in the Army, and I was already a supervisor but had no knowledge of how to do this. However, we were instructed by our top boss in Washington, D.C., that we had to complete this mission and be fully operational within one month.

ACTION: I worked side by side with my chief (supervisor), who was retiring in less than a month, and he said it would be up to me to complete this mission. I instructed my team of five, all of whom were older than me, to follow my actions but proceed slowly because we didn't want any missteps, and we would prioritize quality over quantity, leaving me to worry about the timeline. The primary action I took was to take my work home every night and compile as much information as I could to instruct my team on this unfamiliar task, enabling them to complete it without my micromanaging throughout the day. At the end of the day, I would allow my team to go home while I reviewed their work, which allowed me to do the same process in reverse from my overnight work.

RESULT: Through behind-the-scenes leadership, I was able to correct any mistakes made by the team and provide them with feedback on how to improve. My team ultimately met the timeline smoothly, and I received an award from our boss. I requested that my award be deferred to my team members, and they were all congratulated by him in person and received their awards months later.

SKILLS/STRENGTHS INVOLVED: The skills and strengths required were leadership, patience, stress management, communication, individual recognition, and self-reflection. As I moved on from this mission early in my career, I think I have continued to develop these strengths and skills, but I ultimately learned that, as a leader, I should always be the first one in and the last one out and ensure that every person on my team is cared for but also understands that the mission must be completed.

ACCOMPLISHMENT #2

SITUATION: This is one of my more personal situations, and I have learned a lot from it. I was unexpectedly retiring from the military. I had just signed my contract a year earlier in Europe to re-enlist for an additional six years, bringing my total years of service to 12. I was hoping to complete 20 years of serving my country when one of my airborne jumps ended tragically with a torn hip. I was informed that, with my previous injuries and this new one, the Army would require me to medically retire within six months. I didn't think this was possible and was not ready to move on, but through the medical appointments for my injuries and the administrative appointments to retire, the time passed quickly. I arrived home with a plan to undergo one hip surgery and start school afterward, but, as we are

aware of what happened in 2020, I had to do all this during COVID. What was supposed to be one hip surgery turned into four over three years, with 6–9 months of recovery for each surgery.

ACTION: I told myself that everything happens for a reason, and while leaving the military, my superiors warned that the real world is dangerous and that there is nothing waiting for veterans outside. I took this with a grain of salt and reminded myself that I must pursue what I love, and everything would work itself out. During the surgeries, I kept telling myself to follow what I had learned from my readings about recovery and health and to listen to the doctors, believing I would have a speedy recovery. I didn't know it would take three years, but through this patience, I learned that while barricades may be encountered, it takes time, but you can walk around them, and the road ahead will be steady.

RESULT: Through my retirement and surgeries, I obtained a Bachelor's in Health Science and have fully recovered, and I am now in the best shape of my life. I now have two fully grafted hips that may not always feel brand new, but I can move and weightlift better than ever.

SKILLS/STRENGTHS INVOLVED: The skills and strengths involved in this accomplishment included time management, adaptability, overcoming physical and mental adversity, planning and organization, resilience, perseverance, and problem-solving.

ACCOMPLISHMENT #3

SITUATION: Another military accomplishment was during our pre-deployment training in Death Valley after leaving Alaska. We went from a temperature of -45°F to 100°F and had to

endure this for 45 days. This may sound like the situation, but it was just the context. The actual situation was that we were the first unit in the Army to train as if we were going to war with a world superpower. In previous pre-deployment trainings, we underwent assessments related to Afghanistan or Iraq, but the Army had never put a unit through this kind of test. We operated logistics for the U.S. Army during these 45 days. To simulate real-world scenarios, we wore equipment similar to laser tag gear, and if it went off, we would have to lie down. During the first three days, we lost over 90% of our unit, and the simulation had to restart, forcing us to evolve and learn from our mistakes. By the last week, we sustained minimal casualties and held our ground in the desert.

ACTION: The action taken to achieve this drastic change from 90% to minimal casualties was initiated by myself and my lieutenant. Based on our past training, which resembled those needed for our recent wars, we realized we needed to stop approaching this like any other mission. We had to take a new approach to this problem. My lieutenant took this information to his boss, and a few days later, we received a memo stating that we were starting fresh, and we would learn as we went and use our intuition to succeed in this mission.

RESULT: After days of harsh heat and challenging conditions, we followed the leadership of our superiors and applied all our knowledge and abilities to complete the mission. We knew that, with this short timeframe, we couldn't fully win this mission, but by holding our position and minimizing casualties, it would be considered a victory in our superiors' eyes. With a simulation task never undertaken before in this era of the Army, we could proudly

say we completed it with only a few test runs. I believe this built the system that is now in place for future training and simulations.

SKILLS/STRENGTHS INVOLVED: The skills and strengths for this accomplishment were strategic planning, leadership, proficiency, analytical thinking, crisis management, adaptability, attention to detail, risk assessment, and problem-solving.

ACCOMPLISHMENT #4

SITUATION: Everyone in my friend and family circle knows that I am deeply passionate about health, wellness, and nutrition, and when they need advice in certain areas, they do not hesitate to ask me for guidance. My best man's mother, who was diagnosed with prediabetes in 2023, was horrified by the news. She called me one day and asked what this was and what the implications could be, given her family history of certain diseases. While I show empathy for all people, I am also very direct when it comes to their health and wellness. She has a family history of heart attacks and dementia, and I told her that many of the reasons these diseases and conditions occur are because of metabolic dysfunction, and we needed to address her condition before it was too late, which motivated her to improve her lifestyle.

ACTION: I asked her to take a week to write down all the food and drinks she consumed and record all the physical activity she engaged in throughout the day. Then, I took her data and assessed it to the best of my abilities. Next, I provided some recommendations based on her consumption and suggested activities she could do to build her strength and improve her blood pressure. I started with small changes to avoid overwhelming her with extreme

diets, and I explained how drinking calories could lead to significant weight gain and how inactivity could contribute to many of her issues. I told her it wasn't something that could be fixed overnight, but it could be addressed overnight and resolved over time.

RESULT: In one month, just by being mindful of her liquid calories and aiming for 10,000 steps a day, she lost 20 pounds. She now follows the 80/20 rule with food and only occasionally consumes a soda. She is happy with her diet and her health and doesn't feel restricted in any way, while still maintaining a healthy relationship with all those beloved Midwest food items. Her son occasionally asks me questions about something they came across on social media and wants to know if it's true or not. Most of the time, I take the time to research, but often, I tell them I'm not sure, but I will provide an answer once I investigate further. I am proud to help my friends and family who are not as knowledgeable about certain topics and need help navigating the vast amount of information on the internet to become more literate in health, wellness, and nutrition.

SKILLS/STRENGTHS INVOLVED: The strengths and skills involved in this accomplishment were research skills, nutritional and fitness knowledge, communication, education and teaching skills, monitoring and tracking health metrics, patience, flexibility, ethical decision-making, and, most importantly, empathy. While I strive to maintain a healthy lifestyle, I know not everyone has my resources and abilities, but through empathy and listening, I can learn how to overcome these barriers and help people progress in their lifestyles.

ACCOMPLISHMENT #5

SITUATION: Everyone learns in different ways and uses various techniques to acquire knowledge, and I have tried most methods to become more efficient, but unfortunately, the only way I learn is by writing down what I am trying to learn repeatedly. While working as a supervisor in the military, I had the opportunity to be promoted to Sergeant, but I had to endure a month-long course and appear before a board to recite a three-paragraph creed, among other creeds, and confidently answer questions about the unit, the Army, and general questions about life and my philosophies. While working nearly 15 hours a day, not including physical training, I had little time to prepare for this board, but I was young, so my sleep suffered, and I studied deep into the night.

ACTION: When I was done with work, I put all personal matters aside and studied and wrote the creeds on notebook paper, and I think, when everything was done, I used over five notebooks. I knew I had to embed the creeds and knowledge in my brain to be able to recite them and confidently answer any questions they might ask. I spent hours with my hands cramping and my eyes barely open to overcome my difficulty learning like my peers and strive to achieve my new rank.

RESULT: When it came to the board, I scored 100% by being myself and answering all the questions to the best of my knowledge while incorporating my personality to elicit a few laughs and gain their respect. I knew I had earned this score and rank, but that isn't what mattered; what mattered was how I performed under stress, and I think I did an excellent job. I believe that, through these types of scenarios, I gained the ability to study more efficiently, driven by the fear of repeating my previous study sessions, and to speak confidently and remain true to myself, no matter what life presents.

SKILLS/STRENGTHS INVOLVED: The skills and strengths involved in my promotion were memorization techniques, time management, attention to detail, study preparation and skills, organization, public speaking, discipline, ingenuity, perseverance, focus, confidence, self-motivation, and stress management.

ACCOMPLISHMENT #6

SITUATION: My father was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes while I was serving in Alaska for three years. When I received the news, I called him and asked what guidance he was receiving and how he was handling this new disease. He had been battling Crohn's disease and weight issues, but he unfortunately developed type 2 diabetes. I had to work with him across a three-hour, 3,500-mile difference and try to assist him with this disease and help him manage his weight and condition.

ACTION: With the knowledge I had at the time, I tried to help my father as much as possible while respecting the doctors treating him. While working with him, I told him it would be a long journey, and he would have to be patient with his weight and the disease. I instructed him to follow a diet that would reduce his calorie intake to ensure he would lose a pound a week and maintain minimal muscle mass. I also took time after my workdays and on weekends to review his lab results and weekly food journals to provide him with proper guidance to support his weight loss and disease management. I had to align with what his doctors prescribed and ensure I didn't contradict any doctor's orders, while also ensuring he achieved health and wellness.

RESULT: As a result of working with my father, I assisted him with his weight and his diabetes. I told him we would aim to reduce his overall fat percentage rather than his weight because I wanted to ensure he gained adequate muscle mass, given his advanced age. Before I moved to Europe, I helped my father bring his type 2 diabetes under control, and he decreased his pants size by six sizes. By the end of this intervention, he gained 15 lbs., and without a proper scan, I couldn't tell him with certainty that it was muscle, but based on the metrics I provided, he gained muscle in most of his extremities and gained greater ability to live an active life.

SKILLS/STRENGTHS INVOLVED: The strengths and skills involved were challenging because they involved family and required navigating the emotions of family while focusing on the bigger picture. They included patience, nutritional and physical fitness knowledge, monitoring and tracking health metrics, meal preparation, empathy, motivation and encouragement, discipline, and realism.

ACCOMPLISHMENT #7

SITUATION: This situation builds on the previous accomplishment and is still ongoing today. After I left Alaska, I moved to Europe, where I was training in various parts of the world and dealing with injuries and retirement. I left my father in the care of his dietitian and his team of doctors. Unfortunately, his disease progressed to a point of no return, and he had to undergo a double transplant of his kidney and liver. I believe his care team was working with "medicine 2.0", focusing on treating his conditions and diseases rather than adopting "medicine 3.0" to reverse the disease and actively work with him to prevent other

conditions from emerging. After nearly a year in the hospital and during recovery, he was back home, and my sister and I worked with his care team to determine what his future care would entail.

ACTION: I am knowledgeable about nutrition, but I lacked knowledge about transplant patients in my father's condition. However, I did my due diligence to research and find appropriate diets that would not interfere with his medications or conditions and tried to help him return to his health from years prior. I used my sister as a liaison because she had all his lab results and documents related to his health, and together, we tried to support him as much as possible. I am working to incorporate my healthcare beliefs into his care and help my father achieve optimal health and wellness.

RESULT: Through years of his recovery and ongoing battle with his diseases, my father is managing both, and while he may not be where I want him to be, he is happier and able to work a part-time job again. I know my perspective and lifestyle are not for everyone, but I believe that if I align my views with another person's, we can find a middle ground where they can still achieve health and wellness.

SKILLS/STRENGTHS INVOLVED: The strengths and skills involved were challenging because they involved family and required navigating the emotions of family while focusing on the bigger picture. They included patience, nutritional and physical fitness knowledge, monitoring and tracking health metrics, meal preparation, empathy, motivation and encouragement, discipline, and realism.