

The U.S. Army taught him how to lead, follow and grow in the military – and beyond

My experience in the U.S. Army opened a world of new possibilities for me; it is a gift that keeps on giving. As a teenager, I was shy, undisciplined, and lacked direction. My world was limited to my neighborhood in New Jersey. I joined the Army because I knew there was more to life. My father was an Army combat vet during Vietnam. He rarely spoke of his time there, but when I decided to join, I could tell he was proud.

The Army exposed me to people with diverse backgrounds and experiences. It gave me the direction and discipline I was craving; it built my self-confidence; moreover, it helped me determine my life blueprint. I acquired new skills through working with technology; I sharpened my personal code of conduct, and I learned how to lead and be led.

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I served during Desert Storm and saw firsthand the importance of outstanding teamwork. During that time, I learned how critical accountability and positive role modeling are to creating a successful culture. Along the way, I found leaders who gave me room to grow as an individual. They trusted and encouraged me to stretch myself and go beyond what I thought possible. I wasn't always successful, but I always learned. I've tried to emulate this "servant leader" style by encouraging others to try, fail, learn, and repeat.

Finally, the Army helped me develop a more strategic mindset. To be successful in my technology role, I had to look at disparate elements of my team and bring them thoughtfully together to make my unit function properly. I have been able to successfully leverage that skill throughout my professional career. These and many more lessons have been instilled in me by the Army, shaping me into the business professional I am today.



Education:

Executive MBA, Rutgers University;
BS, Accounting, North Carolina A&T
State University

Company Name:

New York Life

Industry:

Financial Services

Company CEO:

Craig DeSanto

Company Headquarters Location:

New York, NY

Number of Employees: 11,700

Words you live by:

"If it is not right, do not do it, if it is not true, do not say it." – Marcus Aurelius

Who is your personal hero?

Colin Powell

What book(s) are you reading?

The Daily Stoic by Ryan Holiday and Stephen Hanselman, *The Wager: A tale of Shipwreck, Mutiny and Murder* by David Grann

What was your first job?

Paper route

Favorite charity:

ASPCA

Interests/Hobbies:

Staying active, reading, and riding my motorcycle