



**AIRMANSHIP**  
**200**

# DECISION MAKING

Rev. Date: 13 Nov 2019

## CORE

**CULTURE OF PROFESSIONALISM**

**The Ability to Overcome Challenges of All Kinds**

**Objective:** Be able to internalize the importance and impacts of making decisions. Members should be able to correlate how proper decisions positively impact the mission and those around them. (Warheads on foreheads).

**Facilitator Aides**  
[Etchberger Article](#)

**Lesson Outline**

**Ideal Lesson Time: 60 MINUTES**


**Introduction**

**MP1: Presentations**

**MP2: Case Study**

**MP3: Effect on the Mission**

**Conclusion**



**Boot Stomp**

Making sound decisions requires knowledge and emotional intelligence.

Desire – Knowledge = Bad Decision  
 Knowledge – Desire = Good Decision  
 Knowledge + Desire = Great Decision

**ATTENTION STEP:** Bring an Airman to the front of the room in front of the class. With you and the Airman in the front of the class, ask the participants “if I were to slap Airman XXXXXXXX across the face with my hand, what could Airman XXXXXXXX’s response look like?”

**NOTE: DO NOT slap the Airman!**

List the responses on the board. After engaging with the participants for a few minutes about the possible responses, ask “Are any of these responses automatic?”

There answers should get them to a negative response. You would then display this quote:

“Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.”

Viktor E. Frankl

**LOQ:** What do you think this quote means?

**FUQ:** What does it mean to you?

**MOTIVATION:** This attention step is designed to help the participants realize that they are in control of their reactions. They have the power to choose and therefore can control their reaction. While the overall outcome may be decided by outside influences, their reaction, attitude and motivation is their choice and theirs alone.

**OVERVIEW:** *Today we are going to talk about the power each one of you has over their choices and how making the right choice will help the Air Force accomplish its mission*

**Transition:** With our better understanding of the impacts of decision-making we can now look at how we come to make the decisions we make.

**MP2: PRESENTATIONS**

**LOQ:** What are some characteristics we use in making decisions?

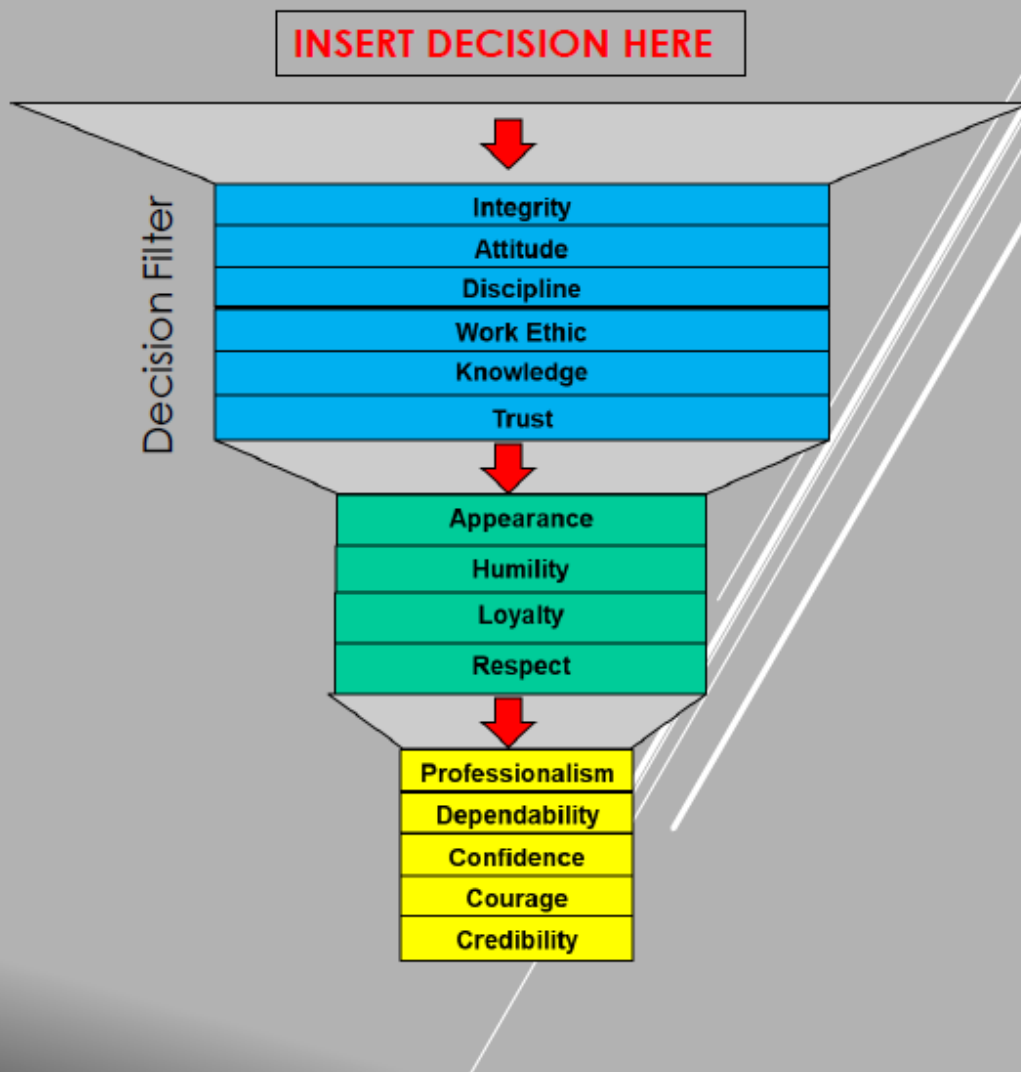
**DISCUSSION:** Let me introduce you to the ‘Decision Filter’! When making decisions, most, if not all of these characteristics (aka filters) help us in making our choices.

**Anticipated  
Replies and  
Side Notes**

Anticipated  
Responses:  
Experience  
Values  
Training

# ACHIEVING CHARACTER EXCELLENCE (ACE)

*The best you, starts with your character.*



**LOQ:** Are there any you agree with?

**FUQ:** Are there any you disagree with?

**FUQ:** What would you add?

Specifically, how does knowledge play a role in the choices we make?

- We use things we know and experiences to shape how we make the decision.

Can experiences cause us to make bad decisions? If so, why?

### **MP2: CASE STUDY**

**CASE STUDY:** CMSgt Etchberger Medal of Honor back story/story

During the Vietnam War, Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Richard Etchberger, a 35-year-old combat support veteran with the 1043rd Radar Evaluation Squadron, was part of a covert CIA and Air Force team sent to a small radar station on top of a remote mountain in Laos. The site, called Lima Site 85, was dedicated to directing U.S. air support in North Vietnam during the early years of the war. The mission wasn't easy to join. Etchberger and the other airmen involved needed to be released from the Air Force and hired by Lockheed to avoid giving the perception that Laos was involved with the U.S. government in the war. The program became known as Heavy Green. When the mission was over, the airmen would be welcomed back into the Air Force. From a mountainous jungle perch only 12 miles from North Vietnam, 40 airmen controlled hundreds of air strikes into enemy territory during the 1968 Rolling Thunder campaign.

The North Vietnamese knew the value of the site, so they made many attempts to take it out. None were successful until March 10, 1968, when they began to attack the site with heavy artillery. By nightfall, Etchberger and his off-duty team realized their sleeping quarters were vulnerable to the shelling, so they hid with their guns and survival radios on a ledge partially protected by a rocky overhang for the rest of the night.

Early the next morning, enemy commandos scaled the cliff the compound was on, killing 11 of the 19 Americans working at the site. While Etchberger's team was initially spared, it didn't take long for the enemy to find them and start attacking, killing two airmen and seriously injuring two others.

**Anticipated  
Replies and  
Side Notes**

Since Etchberger was a radar technician, he didn't have any formal combat training. But that didn't stop him from picking up arms and defending their position. For hours, Etchberger single-handedly held off the enemy with an M-16 rifle, all while calling for air rescue and directing air strikes that were practically right on top of him.

Once rescuers arrived, Etchberger risked his own life several times, running through heavy fire to put three of his wounded comrades into rescue slings hanging from the hovering rescue helicopter. But when he finally climbed into the sling himself and was lifted to the chopper, he was shot by enemy ground fire. He didn't survive the flight. Essentially, he gave his own life to save the lives of his remaining crew and keep the enemy out.

For his actions, Etchberger was secretly awarded the Air Force Cross, since details of the mission were classified until the mid-1980s. Etchberger's wife, Catherine, who accepted the honor on his behalf, was told the real story of what happened to her husband but was sworn to secrecy – a secret she kept for the rest of her life, not even telling her children.

On Sept. 21, 2010, CMSgt Etchberger's three sons received the Medal of Honor in their father's name.

**LOQ:** What were some decisions that Chief Etchberger had to make?

**FUQ:** Who else in the story had to make decisions?

**FUQ:** What core values were represented in this case study? Please share where you saw that Core Value.

**Transition:** Now that we have seen how complex decisions can be and their impacts, it is now time to relate these decisions with the participants in the room.

**MP3: DECISIONS AND THEIR EFFECT ON THE MISSION AND OTHERS:**

**LOQ:** Someone share with us an example of when you have had to make a difficult decision?

**NOTE: Have a couple of examples ready if no appropriate example is given. Or if no answer is given.**

**FUQ:** Hindsight being 20/20, would you have made the same decision or done something different? Why?

**Anticipated  
Replies and  
Side Notes**

Anticipated Responses: To go to Laos as contractor, To continue saving his Amn, To fight, Whether to surrender

**FUQ:** With CMSgt Etchberger's example and the others that have been shared, what could have been the impact of not making the right choices?

**MP4: Conclusion**

**STATE:** Going back to the beginning of this discussion, we make decisions based on several characteristics. Those choices will have impacts on not just ourselves, but to the mission and those around us.

How does mastery over our power to choose to give us growth and freedom?

**SUMMARY:** In closing, you can see that our own values, when in balance with the AF Core Values, are instrumental in making good, right and just decisions.

**Anticipated  
Replies and Side  
Notes**

**ASSESSMENT QUESTION:** Do the participants have a deeper understanding of the how their decisions (personal and professional) effect the Air Force mission?