



# Mentoring

School of Instruction  
Mary Spindler, President  
August 12, 2017

---

## THOUGHTS ON LEADERSHIP AND MENTORING

Today's school of instruction will focus on leadership and mentoring. Regardless of what position we serve in the VFW Auxiliary, whether an officer or simply a member, we can all be teachers and advisors, especially to our new members. We are a part of this great organization simply because we care about America's veterans, and that is our common bond; and we should all strive to lead by example.

Our National President, Dee Guillory, has stressed the importance of treating others with kindness and respect, and being "gentle" towards other members as we go about our business.

Here are a few things for you to think about as you work together for our veterans. Remember, we are all **volunteers** in the VFW Auxiliary. We need to concentrate on making our members feel that they are an important part of this organization, and let them know that we appreciate their efforts. Otherwise, we may lose them as members. Consider the following:

**1. A leader should always be strong, but not impolite.** Sometimes, it is not *WHAT* we say, but *HOW* we say it. Rudeness should never be a substitute for strength, so choose your words carefully.

Always take time to listen to both sides of any controversy; and think before you speak. It takes a little practice. However, if you do this, you will become a powerful, capable and respected member of the VFW Auxiliary.

**2. Being kind is not the same thing as being weak.** It is important to distinguish between weakness and kindness. Remember that being kind is a strength, while being weak is considered a flaw. To be strong, we must always tell the truth, even if others do not see it the same way. Above all, stay fair and balanced.

Remember when you took that oath of office – the part where we all pledge--on our sacred honor--to serve "faithfully, strictly and impartially?" Those words are in there for a reason!

**3. Be bold and believe in yourself, but do not be a bully.** A good leader is bold, and must be willing to tackle problems at the first sign of trouble. You cannot run away from problems, and there will always be disagreements as to how things should be done. Discussion is healthy; but sadly, there can be members who simply think or pretend to know everything. Usually, these people are seen by others as bullies. And nobody wants to be involved in an organization where others disrespect them or make them feel small.

Remember the words from our ritual that we repeat at every meeting: “Let all of our actions be for the greater glory of our cause.” Those are meaningful words and they are in there for a purpose.

**4. Don't be timid, but do be humble.** Humility is a virtue – yet it is often hard for us to be humble. We need to remind ourselves why we joined this organization, and the sacrifices that have been made for all of us by those who humbly served. So, please try to simply concentrate on perpetuating the ideals that have made this organization work for over 100 years. If you make a mistake, admit it, apologize, and move on. And, finally:

**5. Keep a sense of humor, but don't be offensive.** Yes, you must deal with whatever is happening, but it's a whole lot easier when you're not trying to be serious all the time! A sense of humor is an attitude and an approach to working with other people. Just be careful that your words are not insulting to others.