

Book Review of “Leadership Secrets of the Rogue Warrior:  
A Commando’s Guide to Success”

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Richard Marcinko is a retired Navy commander who rose through the ranks to create and command SEAL Team Six, the nation's most elite and classified counter terrorist unit. Marcinko has authored a biography, the "Rogue Warrior" fiction series, as well as two leadership books. The book by Richard Marcinko, "Leadership Secrets of the Rogue Warrior: A Commando's Guide to Success" was chosen for this review because it explains the necessary skills and goals that managers need to use in order to be effective leaders. This book is an interesting, easy read. Throughout each chapter the book offers examples from Marcinko's past military experience and from different businesses to illustrate the leadership skills.

In the book Marcinko lists "The Rogue Warrior's Leadership Code". The topics included within are used to explain Marcinko's leadership style and beliefs. In order to understand Marcinko's book "The Rogue Warrior's Leadership Code" is included here:

- I will test my theories on myself first. I will be my own guinea pig.
- I will be totally committed to what I believe, and I will risk all that I have for these beliefs.
- I will back my subordinates all the way when they take reasonable risks to help me achieve my goals.
- I will not punish my people for making mistakes. I'll only punish them for not learning from their mistakes.
- I will not be afraid to take action, because I know that almost any action is better than inaction. And I know that sometimes not acting is the boldest action of all.
- I will always make it crystal clear where I stand and what I believe.

- I will always be easy to find: I will be at the centre of the battle.

(Marcinko, 6)

It is obvious from the beginning of the book that Marcinko acts to motivate his subordinates. Motivation has been described as, “[t]he processes that account for an individual’s intensity, direction and persistence of effort toward obtaining a goal.” (Robbins, 138) This leadership style is illustrated by Marcinko’s ability to lead from the front, motivating employees to perform at their best.

The material presented in Marcinko’s book is based on his military training and background. The book also uses examples from different businesses to demonstrate that the leadership style is not confined to the military. I completed reading “Leadership Secrets of the Rogue Warrior” approximately two years ago. I have introduced the leadership style and methods that Marcinko talks about in the way I lead, as the Security Site Supervisor at Chinook Centre. I run a team of 25 Security Officers and have two Shift Supervisors beneath me. I instil the same tactics in the Supervisors and Officers that Marcinko preaches. As supervisors we lead by example and teach the Officers under us that they must step up and take a leadership role, and not be afraid to fail, as failing is the best way to learn. One example in “Leadership Secrets of the Rogue Warrior” talks about Lee Iacocca leading from the front and saving the Chrysler Corporation from bankruptcy. Iacocca cut his executives’ salaries by ten percent. Iacocca showed up at a union meeting delivered a speech telling them that he had thousands of jobs for seventeen dollars and hour, but none at the rate of twenty dollars that they were currently getting.

He gave them the choice to take it or leave it. He would be declaring bankruptcy in the morning if they did not take it. They took it, not because they were desperate for jobs, but because Iacocca had announced that he had already cut his salary to one dollar per year. (Marcinko, 24-29) A quote that I post in my office, teach to my staff and live by is, “There is only one kind of failure I cannot tolerate: the failure to risk failure.” (Marcinko June 1997, 134)

“Leadership Secrets of the Rogue Warrior” Chapter Three is titled, “The Third Commandment: “Thou shalt do nothing I will not do first, and thus will you be created Warriors in My deadly image.” (Marcinko, 45) Marcinko discusses a lesson from Domino’s Pizza Incorporated during the year 1987 when several regions in the business were starting to flounder. A gent by the name of Kevin Williams took over the failing regions. Williams found that the corporate stores were not doing well and that it appeared that most of the problems were that the managers were not motivated, because they did not own the stores. Williams identified the weaknesses in each of the “problem” stores and worked hard to correct the problems. “If a store needed more help baking pizzas, Williams stood at the ovens himself until the manager could find someone to fill that hole... If the floor needed sweeping, Williams swept it. He sent out a powerful message: No job is unimportant, every job has to be done right, and everyone is responsible for everything.” (Marcinko, 53-55) This is a very important lesson and one that I was lucky enough to have been taught early in life. During my first job, at the age of 16, I worked as a stock clerk at a mid-sized store. One busy Saturday afternoon I was approached by a mother who explained to me that her daughter had been eating ice cream and had thrown up on the floor. The daughter’s friend, who was also there, had seen her

friend get sick and had then vomited herself. I attended the area where I found a great deal of vomit on the floor, surrounding tables and on the store's product. Needless to say, I felt like getting sick myself. I approached my boss and asked him what to do, as I did not think I could clean the mess up. My boss told me to go back to stocking the shelves and he would clean the mess. I watched as my boss got a mop and bucket, and cleaned up the mess while on his hands and knees in a shirt and tie. After he was done I went to him to apologize. He told me not to apologize, as he would never ask me to do something that he would not do himself. This lesson has stayed with me throughout my life. As a supervisor I am always looking for ways to lead by example and to show my staff that although all jobs are not exciting to perform, you must recognize their importance to the company and perform the task to the best of your abilities.

Another lesson that is very valuable in my place of work is the lesson presented in Chapter Eight titled, "The Eighth Commandment: "Thou shalt never assume." (Marcinko, 105) talks about a time when he lead a SEAL team into battle in Vietnam. He explains how they had been attacking day after day in the same fashion, as was directed by his superiors. The Viet Cong had figured out the pattern of the attack. One day Marcinko lead his team into battle and they were ambushed. The team took numerous casualties and were forced to retreat. Marcinko knew that the Viet Cong would assume the battle was over. "I was right. As we screamed down on them again, they looked up in utter shock: the element of surprise – I love it!" (Marcinko, 112-114) This is a very valuable lesson in my workplace. Although the security at any major shopping centre's main function should be customer service, there must be an extensive plan and training regiment behind every department. Many times I have heard the

phrase, “You are only mall security guards...” The bottom line is, if you believe that you have already failed. The Chinook Centre Security Department did not become such a strong and proficient team by thinking this. We must always plan for the worst. You can never assume that any day will be “just another day”, or that, “Something like that will never happen here.” The key to being an effective security department is the ability to train, train and then train some more. If I were to make assumptions I would have been out of a job a long time ago.

The focus of Chapter Two is treating everyone as equals, but also recognizing that everyone is different and must be dealt with in different ways. The quote at the beginning of the chapter by Alberta Einstein says, “Before God, we’re all equally wise, and equally foolish.” (Marcinko, 33) In this chapter Marcinko talks about a time when he and his team travelled to Egypt to assist in the training of the Egyptian Army Rangers. The Captain in charge of the Egyptian unit felt he was superior to his men and therefore did not need to listen to what Marcinko had to teach. After a few days of training they began running practical drills. The Captain screwed up, injuring Marcinko. When the drill was over Marcinko disciplined the Captain. The Captain was not use to being treated this way, but if any of the subordinates had made the same mistake they would have received the same treatment. (Marcinko, 37-41) I have been lucky enough to have had the opportunity to attended a few courses and seminars on human personality types. I recognize that there are many personality types and the way in which you motivate and lead individuals must be different. At the same time everyone must be treated equal if you hope to lead a cohesive unit that will work together to achieve the desired end goal.

From the few examples above it is easy to see how the Marcinko book, “Leadership Secrets of the Rogue Warrior” is very applicable to my place of work. These are only some of the tips offered by Marcinko that I believe are not only relevant to my place of work but are, or could be, applied in all businesses. I have a copy of this book on my personal bookshelf and purchased a copy to keep in the Security Office at Chinook Centre. I have made it mandatory reading for my supervisors and strongly encourage all my staff to read it too. First, so they know where I’m coming from as a leader. Second, so they will become strong leaders themselves and hopefully pass these techniques on to others throughout their lives.

## **Bibliography**

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