

WOMAN

aw

MAY 2014

FLORAL SCENTS
FOR SPRING

FAMILY
VACATION
FAVORITES

MOTHER'S DAY
MAKEOVER

laV
Reviewed!



*China
Smith*

BALLET AFRIQUE'S FEARLESS LEADER

Contents

MAY

58

on the scene

- 22 AROUND TOWN** Party Pics
- 26 5 THINGS** Five Music Events for Mother's Day Weekend
- 28 PHILANTHROPY** Susan G. Komen Austin's Perfectly Pink Party
- 30 COMMUNITY RESOURCES** Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center
- 34 SPOTLIGHT EVENT** Life Time Tri CapTex
- 36 HOROSCOPES** Happy Birthday, Taurus!

must list

- 38 MUST LOVE BABIES** AW Reader Submissions
- 40 MUST READ** And Baby Makes Three

home

- 44 ENTERTAINING** Life Through Rose-Colored Glasses
- 48 WHAT'S IN STORE** World Interiors

style

- 52 TRAVEL** Summer Travel Essentials
- 54 BEAUTY** Floral Scents for Spring
- 56 MAKEOVER** Mother's Day Makeover

gourmet

- 58 DINING** laV Reviewed

to your health

- 62 FITNESS** Family-Friendly Cycling
- 64 HEALTH** Prenatal Health and Postpartum Depression
- 66 NUTRITION** Healthy Treats

opposite sex

- 80 MEMO FROM JB** The Things I Learned While Unemployed
- 82 RELATIONSHIPS** Dating With Kids

savvy women

- 84 LEADERSHIP** Be All That YOU Can Be
- 88 FAMILY VALUES** A Day in the Life
- 90 YOU SHOULD KNOW** The Chick Ranch
- 92 VETERANS** Coming Home
- 96 LAST WORD** My Favorite Family Getaway

on the cover

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Nest Jasper necklace, \$375; Milly scoop-neck printed A-line dress, \$395, available at Neiman Marcus, 3400 Palm Way, 512.719.1200, neimanmarcus.com.

Be All That YOU Can Be

24/7 The First Person You Must Lead Is YOU takes leadership principles of the military and applies them to the civilian world.

By Megan Russell

To say that Becky Halstead has achieved a lot of success in life is an understatement. Through her many career advances, she has become someone that not only female soldiers can aspire to be, but someone any and every soldier aspires to be. Of her successes, she was the first woman who graduated from West Point to be promoted to general officer, the first female in U.S. history to command in combat at the strategic level and the first woman to be chief of ordnances and commanding general of the Army's Ordnance Center and Schools, which basically means if the Army was a university, Halstead was its president.

She joined the Army in 1976 on the suggestion of her mother, who had heard West Point was opening up to women and thought her daughter would get a lot out of the experience.

"I did not think I'd stay more than five years," Halstead says, recalling the warm encouragement from her parents during the years she grew up in her tiny no-stoplight hometown.

After more than 30 years of service, she was honorably discharged from the Army in 2008 due to chronic fibromyalgia.

"If I had not been ill, I would probably still be in uniform today," Halstead admits.

So what are Halstead's secrets to success and what made her stand out from not only other women in the Army, but other soldiers in general? It all began with a simple request.

"What set me apart was that I was in company command and I decided I wanted a second company command," she says.

A company command consists of 100 to 250 soldiers, which means Halstead was in charge of all those people. She wanted more and she got it by simply asking for it. Her boss was so amazed she had the courage to ask and the preparedness

to lay out all the reasons she should get a second command that her request was granted.

"He looked at me as a leader, not just a female leader," she says fondly of her superior.

This story brings up an often-overlooked part of being promoted to a leadership position.

"Working smart is important," Halstead says.

She didn't just get the second company command because she was prepared and asked for it, she also knew who to ask. At that particular time in the military, women weren't always welcome. Knowing who her allies were, those who supported her and were grateful for her presence, was an important part of Halstead's ascension in the ranks.

Her leadership book, *24/7 The First Person You Must Lead Is YOU*, was spawned from her experience in the civilian world after the Army.

"In the military, on a daily basis, we have an extra opportunity to be in a laboratory of leadership," says Halstead, who found that many of the principles she learned as a soldier could easily be transferred to the corporate world.

She started STEADFAST Leadership and

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quickly began booking speaking engagements. The successes of these engagements led to the demand of her leadership book. The stories in the book bring Halstead's leadership principles to life.

"My stories prove why and how the principles should be applied," she says, noting that the book not only addresses her triumphs as a leader, but also her failures. It's those failures that make



Halstead real, rather than the unattainable super woman her credentials would suggest. It's this touch of reality that connects author to reader, something she was very aware of while writing, making sure anyone could grasp her principles. "I am just a normal person and we are just having a conversation on leadership."

Halstead wanted to write a book that would connect with people preparing to be leaders in the corporate world, in addition to connecting with those who seek it in their daily lives.

"I really wanted it to transcend age and gender," she explains, mentioning that her book and speaking engagements have been used to inspire high school girls throughout the country.

24/7 The First Person You Must Lead Is YOU uses humor as well as honesty to explain Halstead's five leadership truths and subsequent 30 leadership principles. While she puts many different leadership theories to the test, the overarching concept of both the book and Halstead's life is that of discipline.

"If you can get that right, all the other principles start to unfold," she says.

For the average person, however, discipline is often the most difficult concept to put in to place.

"Assess your strengths and weaknesses critically to figure out what is keeping you from being disciplined," Halstead suggests.

The problem with discipline is that people don't take the time to stop and really look at themselves and figure out what it is they're doing or not



doing that's preventing them from moving forward and attaining their goals.

"What I enjoy about a disciplined life is that I get so much more out of my life because of what I put in to it," Halstead says.

If you want to succeed, be a good leader, move up in your career, be an A student, run a mile or whatever your goal may be, you have to have the discipline to follow through with all the steps that will help you reach that goal. Don't cut corners. When you're disciplined enough to put in all the time to work or practice or study, then you will reap the benefits.

Along with discipline, Halstead offers many other principles that will not only help you be an effective leader, but will also make you an outstanding human being.

On Emotions

"Emotions are essential for a leader, but warning lights must go off when having emotions switches to becoming emotional. Emotions allow you to be a passionate leader, but being an emotional leader often leads to becoming a defensive, argumentative leader. True leaders learn to balance the intellectual response with the emotions appropriate to the situation."

On Trust

"Yes, I was mentored, as well as tormented, by some of the Army's greatest. I learned from all of them—the good, the bad and the ugly. From the few who were toxic, I learned how to identify toxicity in those who worked for me, and there were a few of those along the way too. Rarely do we get to choose our bosses. Regardless of whether we like or trust them, we have an obligation to respect their position and be professional. I tried to look at those perplexing experiences as opportunities to lead up. When there is a lack of trust, there is a greater burden to buffer the people who work for you. You must default to trusting yourself. Lead yourself and lead your team through the challenging environment without undermining the one in charge."

On Leading Yourself

"As cadets at West Point, we were taught to never ask of our soldiers that which we weren't willing to do ourselves. If you want to achieve excellence personally and professionally, you must be disciplined and demand excellence of yourself first and foremost."

On Accountability

"Few leadership principles stand alone or apply to only one area of your life; most are used in concert with each other, like the instruments in an orchestra. To be the standard you want to see in others and to always hold yourself accountable requires discipline, desire, obedience and commitment. Your character will reflect in the standards you practice and uphold. When I was a junior officer, I would hear senior leaders say, 'As you climb up that flagpole, remember, the higher you go, the further up your skirt everyone can see.' ... This means to be careful what you do, because everyone is watching."

On Preparation

"It's so easy to look at others as the problem and forget to look at ourselves. Each of us, however, is either part of the problem or part of the solution. To be part of the solution means we need to be in a constant state of preparation. By doing so, we will be able to seize opportunities, shape success and provide much better responses to whatever comes our way."

On Chaos

"A calming attitude in a storm of activity eases the situation for all involved. It leads to a higher level of productivity by helping people to work through the challenge rather than letting them run in circles trying to figure out what to do. A calm response to chaos results in the best solutions being developed in a professional, responsive manner. But it doesn't just happen. It must start with you, as the leader, being the calm in the chaos."

On Diversity

"I think the best solutions come from the bottom up, from the people who actually do the work. Unfortunately, too many leaders think they are fully capable of coming up with all the answers, or they are driven by a need to control the entire process. The first step in creating a functionally diverse environment is purposefully bringing together individuals with varied backgrounds and perspectives. The second step is creating ways to positively leverage the differences. The next important aspect is inviting the right people to the table. To do so, you can't surround yourself with people who think the same way you do."