

CHASING INFLUENCE

TEAMWORK: IN THE TRENCHES

"Be miserable or motivate yourself. Whatever has to be done, it's always your choice." -Wayne Dyer

Let's start by finding a comfortable spot to let your imagination take you to a foxhole. It's an experience hundreds of thousands of Armed Forces members experienced in World War I and World War II. Although we hope never to experience war, this exercise can help us understand what it takes to survive in life-and-death situations. Imagine that you are a soldier in the Armed Forces, stationed in a combat zone. Your job is to defend your position on the front line. You have spent hours digging a hole about five feet deep and eight or nine feet in diameter. This hole, also known as a foxhole, is your shield against enemy fire and shrapnel. You share this hole with another soldier, and your lives depend on the soundness of the foxhole you have created. In a war zone, you must be prepared for anything. What would you do if you were attacked? How would you react under pressure? What about the person sharing the fox hole with you, or those in nearby foxholes? Would they have your back in a life-and-death situation? Fear or pain can cause people to make choices that haunt them for the rest of their lives. Some may cower, while others may drop their weapons and flee to safety, leaving you to fight alone. Others may even throw up a white flag of surrender, leaving your fate to chance or the mercy of the enemy. However, some keep a cool head and fight bravely, shrewdly, and with a contagious positive spirit. These soldiers act in spite of fear, drawing strength from their team. To fight as a unit, soldiers spend a great deal of time training together, sharing hardship and victories. Similarly, in much safer environments, our teams can bond and learn selfless ness. Being part of a team means putting others before yourself, and they do the same for you. Everybody draws strength from each other. The best teams and teammates share these ethics. Legendary basketball coach Don Meyer created this Foxhole Test to measure the strength of a team's culture and the trustworthiness of its teammates. Imagine you are in a foxhole, and pick the teammates you want with you in the back, left, and right positions. The person at the back is the most valuable and should be your most trusted, courageous, and tough teammate. The person to your left protects your blindside and should be your second most trusted teammate, while the person to your right should be someone you trust and would help save your life. This test cuts through all the superficialities of friendships and cliques, revealing what truly matters in a team: trust, courage, and teamwork. By reflecting on the Foxhole Test, you can evaluate your values and character as a teammate and strive to be the kind of person others would want in their foxhole. The Foxhole Test reminds us that nobody is perfect, and we all have moments of weak ness. The true measure of a strong teammate is how they handle these moments. Do they blame others, or do they take responsibility and learn from their mistakes? The Foxhole Test is a personal measure of character that can be applied equally to every one, regardless of gender, race, culture, or background. It is a way to check if your mind and instincts agree and evaluate your values and character as a teammate. By reflecting on the lessons of the Foxhole Test, we can strive to be the kind of teammate who acts with courage, integrity, and trust. We can learn from our mistakes and work to repair the damage rather than blaming others. In this way, we can build strong teams and faster a culture of trust, respect, and success. 4

"When you're sharing a foxhole with another (person), you don't worry about what color (they are), just whether or not (they) will protect your back."

Connecting this quote to the story

This quote emphasizes that when you're in a foxhole with someone, the color, gender, and background of your fellow soldier do not matter. What matters is whether or not they will protect your back and

support you when you need it the most. By emphasizing the importance of trust and teamwork, this quote highlights the lessons of the Foxhole Test and the importance of working together as a team to overcome adversity.

Reflection Questions

1. The opening quote for this lesson is about mindset. What obstacles get in the way of choosing a mindset built on optimism and motivation?

2. Have you ever been in a high-stress situation with a teammate, and how did you handle it?

3. What were the characteristics of the teammates you chose to join you in the foxhole—and why?

4. Take a moment to reflect. What characteristics do you believe others would use to describe you—and why? How many foxholes do you think you'd be invited into?

5. War can be an awful comparison to real life. It can also be illustrative. How does this foxhole metaphor apply to life on a team and our personal lives with the friends we choose?