

OBSERVATIONS FROM A SOLDIER

Gen. Colin Powell, who was the keynote speaker for the AHCA/NCAL convention in Washington, D.C., in 2014, is a retired four-star general of the United States Army. He was also chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 1989 to 1993 and the 65th United States Secretary of State, serving under President George W. Bush from 2001 to 2005.

For someone so successful, his opinions carry weight because of education and a wide variety of experiences in public service.

Recently, I read about some comments he made in a question-and-answer session when someone asked what he learned in the military.

The first thing he learned, he said, was that everyone was at the same level (thanks to the uniform haircut given all recruits). Other things he learned, he added, included:

- Stand at attention and salute, which instilled discipline and obedience.
- March in step and function as a part of a team while taking individual pride as a team member. If he did not stay in step with the others, there were undesirable consequences, and if he performed well, both he and his team were recognized.
- Basic training physically hardens recruits and makes them respect their own bodies, enabling them to perform better.



The first week of basic training is generally so hard and the drill sergeant so demanding that most recruits develop something akin to hatred for the sergeant, he noted. But the hatred fades quickly. By the second week of training, the typical recruit is doing everything he can to please his drill sergeant.

Gen. Powell's observations – and my own experience in the military – illustrate an amazing turnabout. For many recruits, the discipline is translated to respect and caring for them, which is a new experience for some. The truth is, discipline is loving – just ask any parent.

Discipline is essential to every individual and crucial for teams – including ours in Life Care and Century Park. No unit can ever become a potent fighting force in the Army or the other services without discipline, and no life can be truly successful without it.

(more)

The criteria for becoming a successful soldier or a successful private citizen are the same. If we learn to function as a team member, we will do so only after we've brought our personal life under control and learned how to "drill."

And therein lies the tale: We can do something about our future.

For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it (Hebrews 12:11 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter