

Coaching Insights with MAJGEN Roger Powell (Rtd)

Transcript

Appearing

In order of appearance:

1. MAJGEN Roger Powell (Rtd)
2. MAJ David Stephens

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Transcript details

- MAJGEN Roger Powell (Rtd) Hi, I'm Roger Powell. And, I've been involved in, the program here at the Academy since its inception. I was invited by a previous commandant to join the team, and, it's been a really, really wonderful experience. And one where, I think, I've learned as much as I've been able to give. My background, is Army.
- MAJGEN Roger Powell (Rtd) I certainly had a wonderful career in the Army. I served as the Director of Military Education and Training here, and CO of the Corps of Officer Cadets, a long time ago. But, since then, I've always been a great advocate for the academy, and, over the years, since I was out of uniform, we've been part of a company which had been involved in mentoring and leadership, both in the private and public sector.
- MAJGEN Roger Powell (Rtd) And it's a labour of love. It's a thoroughly rewarding journey and one that I'm very, very, very proud of and I enjoy immensely.
- MAJ David Stephens So Roger, we've deliberately called the coaching program the Leadership Coaching Program. And we really want our coaches to think in terms of, you know, character, leadership and ethics, and sort of those key parts of what we're trying to encourage our young officers to develop. It's sits within the Character, Leadership and Ethics team, which you've been a part of.
- MAJ David Stephens What are your reflections on how our coaches can bring those different elements into conversations that they're having with these young men and women?
- MAJGEN Roger Powell (Rtd) Thank you. Dave. I think the fact that we've now got three endorsed pieces of doctrine: Character, Leadership and Ethics, that have been populated now for a number of months. One case a little longer than that. Getting across that doctrine, for anyone who is embarking on a leadership coaching journey with our training officers, is absolutely essential.



- MAJGEN Roger Powell (Rtd) I think most of us understand the importance that doctrine plays. It's alive and it's not permanent and constantly will be revised, but it gives you a basis, a template, about thinking about how those three concepts or character, the road base, and leadership and ethics, the behavioural nature of the way that people act in certain circumstances.
- MAJGEN Roger Powell (Rtd) And, and where their character plays out, which is sort of like a riverbed, of a river that it's being washed over and changes but changes only in small degrees over the journey of a young person here at the Academy. But having an understanding of what's written in those three documents and being able to use the basis for having deep insight into it is really, really important.
- MAJGEN Roger Powell (Rtd) So I'd encourage anyone who is about to embark on a coaching experience to really have a deep understanding of those three pieces of work. It's a really important aspect of their competence to do the job.
- MAJ David Stephens Great. You've been involved in the coaching program, both the coaching and the mentoring program, since its inception here at ADFA, but focusing on the sort of the coaching program and its evolution, where we've come from and even talking about where we're heading. What are you some of your reflections and your thoughts on that space?
- MAJGEN Roger Powell (Rtd) Thanks, Dave.
- MAJGEN Roger Powell (Rtd) I'm a great believer that the challenge for the staff at ADFA, given all of their responsibilities around governance and the transactional side of leadership, that any support that could be given to the staff, with a coaching program, which was our sort of thoughts when we first introduced it, could be helpful.
- MAJGEN Roger Powell (Rtd) And the idea was that the staff and those that were external to the staff, could work in harmony to build a much more transformational leadership journey for our training offices. And when we first started, it was probably very, very much less than best practice in terms of, the length of time and, how many sessions were involved.
- MAJGEN Roger Powell (Rtd) And it was a pilot and, and there was certainly some equivocation about whether there was real value. You can understand the staff feeling a little concerned about their particular training officers being subjected to an external coach. So we started slowly over a period of time and with some external evaluation. I think we've reached a point now where the journey is much more mature and still a way to go.
- MAJGEN Roger Powell (Rtd) But to my mind, the return on the investment certainly showing some very, very significant green shoots, if not, ready to blossom. And I think the real benefit in having the command staff college participants involved is that they get an exposure to an opportunity to exercise their skills as coaches, because we all are coaches at times in any chain of command.
- MAJGEN Roger Powell (Rtd) In this case, we were adopting some of the more commercial approach or the way that coaches are used in all forms of endeavour. So from sporting coaches to



leadership coaches in a corporate world, there's evidence all over the place and the value that you derive from it. So having young people who have the opportunity to talk to someone who's got some basic skills in coaching, from my point of view, I think with our juniors is more mature now.

MAJGEN Roger Powell (Rtd) What does success look like at the end of the day? I'd like to see, particularly, our year twos and our year threes, all have the opportunity for coaching. And that requires obviously enough people who are capable of doing it. And commandant and staff feeling comfortable that there's real value in it. But to my mind, are we seeing some great examples of what benefits are derived and that is very pleasing.

MAJ David Stephens Yeah. Thanks, Roger. And yeah, it's an interesting reflection on where we're at now. The focus is on that second year cohort, although we do have, you know, by exceptions, some first year and third years involved in the program, and we've also recently offered coaching skills for staff, run a one day workshop, which is helped to, build hopefully staff understanding of what coaching is all about.

MAJ David Stephens And, and also give them some skills to be able to use in their leadership style. So I think that's been quite valuable in bringing staff along on that journey as well. Hopefully. Where do you see the future of this sort of going, noting how, you know, certainly Air Force and Navy have really embraced coaching philosophically and have incorporated it into their culture and army starting to sort of get a more active in making more inquiries into this area. Where would you like to see sort of, you know, this going at ADFA in particular.

MAJGEN Roger Powell (Rtd) Yeah, it's a good question. I think we've got to be cautious about reaching too far, too quickly. Part of the challenge is that the staff turnover is such that there's always a huge amount of learning when you arrive in a joint establishment like ADFA, and you and I've been through it in the past, and we know what it's like when you first arrive, you feel like you got a fire in your mouth, and it takes you a year to come to grips with the program.

MAJGEN Roger Powell (Rtd) And there are four separate cultures, including the academic culture which makes the challenge of mastering your role, no matter what it is, not as easy as you might first think it's going to be when you arrive. So from that point of view and giving that insight as a foundation, I think having a team of coaches, who are walked in the shoes of people who are now enrolled and can offer an experience to the training officers alongside the staff and working collaboratively with the staff, to my mind, seems like you know a win win win, in all directions.

MAJGEN Roger Powell (Rtd) So I think it would be great to see everyone, particularly from Year Two and perhaps for some of the Year Ones where they are struggling and there's a difference between making it to Year Two or dropping out. If you've got that extra benefit, particularly when you got DO's looking after 45 plus young people there, it's a pretty challenging and daunting event to sort of spend really quality time for every one of his or her TOs, so having a coach seems to me to make a lot of sense.

MAJGEN Roger Powell (Rtd) So at maturity, it would be great to offer it to just about everybody, who is a training officer at the academy.



MAJ David Stephens Thanks for your reflections.

MAJGEN Roger Powell (Rtd) Thank you for.

