

THE PROGRAM

LETTERS ON LEADERSHIP

To access our full archive of *The Program Letters on Leadership*, please visit [Letters on Leadership - TheProgram.org](http://LettersonLeadership-TheProgram.org).

- LETTER ON LEADERSHIP #87 -



Marine Corps Scout Snipers routinely engage targets at distances greater than one thousand meters. Hitting a target nearly a mile away is undoubtedly a remarkable feat. As you can imagine, it's far from a simple point-and-shoot affair. A host of factors come into play when engaging with any target at such extreme distances. It's not just about lying behind the rifle and squeezing the trigger. It's far more intricate than that.

As a United States Marine, I had the privilege of attending and graduating from some of the toughest schools our Department of Defense provides service members: a select list includes Basic Reconnaissance Course, Freefall, Marine Combatant Diver Course, and Ranger School. I am also a graduate of Marine Scout Sniper School. It was there that I learned something invaluable to my success as a Marine, but it has also positively impacted me as a husband, father, and business leader – the 1,000-meter rule.

Not only do the capabilities of your weapon matter significantly when engaging a target at distances close to a mile away from you, but adjustments for wind speed and direction, elevation, terrain, and other atmospheric and weather conditions must be considered. Breathing, body position, natural point of aim, and trigger control all loom large in the equation as well. Like being a great leader, shooting something at 1,000 meters is not just about one thing. It is about a lot of things occurring simultaneously. It is stressful.

Leaders (and teammates) all feel stress, but how often is that stress justified? How often do we find ourselves worrying about (i.e., stressing about) things that are not our problem, out of our control, or, more often, don't even materialize?

The answer? We either don't control 85% of what we worry about and stress over, or they never materialize. That's a staggering amount. Therefore, we must ask ourselves a question. Which is easier to shoot - a 100-meter target or a 1,000-meter target? The closer target poses the most immediate threat. As we navigate the unpredictable terrain of life, we often expend an inordinate amount of physical, mental, and emotional energy on issues that either do not truly concern us, we have no control over, and/or never even materialize. The stress this creates and the negative thoughts that accompany it loop endlessly in our minds and affect our physical, mental, and emotional well-being. We must therefore break free from this cycle.

How do we do so? How do we focus on the 100-meter targets rather than the 1000-meter targets? Concentrate on immediate threats; those things that we know affect us, we have control over, and are truly important. Write down all the things that are stressing you out and answer the following three questions with each one of them. Does the thing that I am stressing about affect me or someone I love? Do I have any control over it? If so, is it truly important enough for me to sacrifice my time and effort? Prioritize the problems that genuinely matter and possess a high probability of affecting us and which we can, in fact, influence the outcome.

Human minds generate up to 60,000 thoughts a day. A staggering 80% of those thoughts are negative. Even more startling, 95% of them are stuck on a never-ending loop. Instead, we must extricate ourselves from the quagmire of our negative thoughts and focus on tackling problems in order of their potential impact. In doing so, we equip ourselves with the physical energy, mental clarity, and emotional strength to focus on and confront life's immediate challenges head-on while remaining aware of longer-term targets that may or may not ever impact us.

One final point on shooting targets, be they near or far. Once we have decided that we must engage them, shoot! Prioritization is key to mastering both the art of the sniper and the art of leadership.

Attack!

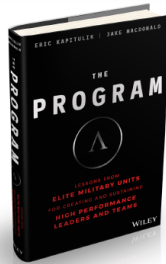
Jamey Slife

Principal and Senior Leadership Instructor

"Letters on Leadership" are published periodically by The Program, a leadership development and team-building company that works with the nation's leading corporations as well as professional and collegiate athletic teams.

For information on developing better leaders and more cohesive teams at your organization, visit <http://www.theprogram.org>.

THE PROGRAM BOOK



THE PROGRAM, CEO, Eric Kapitulik, and Lead Instructor, Jake MacDonald, share great wisdom and insight on building world class teams in the co-authored book, The Program, Lessons from Elite Military Units for Creating and Sustaining High Performance Leaders and Teams.

#THEPROGRAMPODCAST



Dive deeper into your knowledge of leadership by following #THEPROGRAMPODCAST. Listen to great insights from corporate leaders, coaches, authors and our Program teammates by subscribing and listening to our podcast. Follow by clicking the buttons below.

**PURCHASE
BOOK HERE**



**APPLE
PODCASTS**



Listen on
Spotify

SERVICES PROVIDED



GREAT TEAMMATES. GREAT LEADERS. WORLD-CLASS TEAMS.



The Program, LLC, 48 Quinebaug Road, North Grosvenordale, CT 06255, USA, (781) 281-0751

[Unsubscribe](#) [Manage preferences](#)