



Lessons from the Admiral: Naval Wisdom and Sea Stories for Leaders

Mark C. Fava

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Gathering lessons from military experiences to help others advance in their careers too, Lessons from the Admiral is an entertaining memoir–cum–leadership guide.

Made up of equal parts remembrance, advice, and reflection, Mark C. Fava's memoir *Lessons from the Admiral* covers his navy tasks, pulling life and career lessons from them.

Fava, who was given the military nickname "Loop," reflects on his work as an admiral's aide, a job which he credits for his overall career success. In this role, he traveled to places including Greenland (a "beautiful place, but very cold" where "small, skinny arctic foxes freely roamed") and Brunswick, Maine ("the best place in the navy to buy as many lobsters as you wanted"). And beyond Fava in his story are personalities including his admiral boss; the admiral's wife, Janey; and humorous and serious fellow officers, such as Irish, who is remembered down to his "balding head, coffee-stained teeth, and bushy eyebrows." Each brought with them a valuable life lesson, and their recalled exchanges are emotional, entertaining, and spliced with a detailed catalog of the tasks Fava had to complete in his role.

Fava became determined to take the advice that he gathered in his military position to help other people, both military personnel and civilians, advance in their careers too. Extrapolated from his playful, lighthearted sea stories, these lessons include guidance for navigating difficult tasks and creating nurturing, respectful relationships with people of authority. Timeliness, creativity, attention to detail, and asking for assistance are among the values the book espouses:

I also learned that good bosses demonstrate grace, empathy, and compassion. They will allow you to make mistakes and will have that hard discussion with you when it is necessary. Great bosses will allow failure and allow you to learn from failure. Exceptional bosses will take care of those who fail and allow them an opportunity to recover.

While the book oscillates between Fava's memories of traveling stateside in his role (at times, multiple states are covered in a single chapter) and of being at sea, each chapter ends in a stationary location to break down what the preceding memories taught him, followed by guidance regarding how those lessons can be applied outside of the military as well. While such splits in narrative work for most chapters, there are times that Fava's detailed memories become quite niche. Indeed, the book is at its most compelling when it speaks to military personnel specifically. And the "What I Learned" sections are rudimentary in contrast to Fava's naval stories, which are better marked by his echoing passion for sharing his leadership experiences.

An exciting military memoir with self-help elements, *Lessons from the Admiral* brings to life a navy man's experiences, pulling from them lessons that can be applied to all careers.

EMMA STANTON (October 22, 2024)

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