



PRE-DRILL CAMP 2026 · LEADERSHIP SEMINARS · DAY 1

Command Respect

"Respect Is Earned Through Conduct, Not Title"

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The Hampton University Marching Force

HAMPTON'S HEARTBEAT

Icebreaker

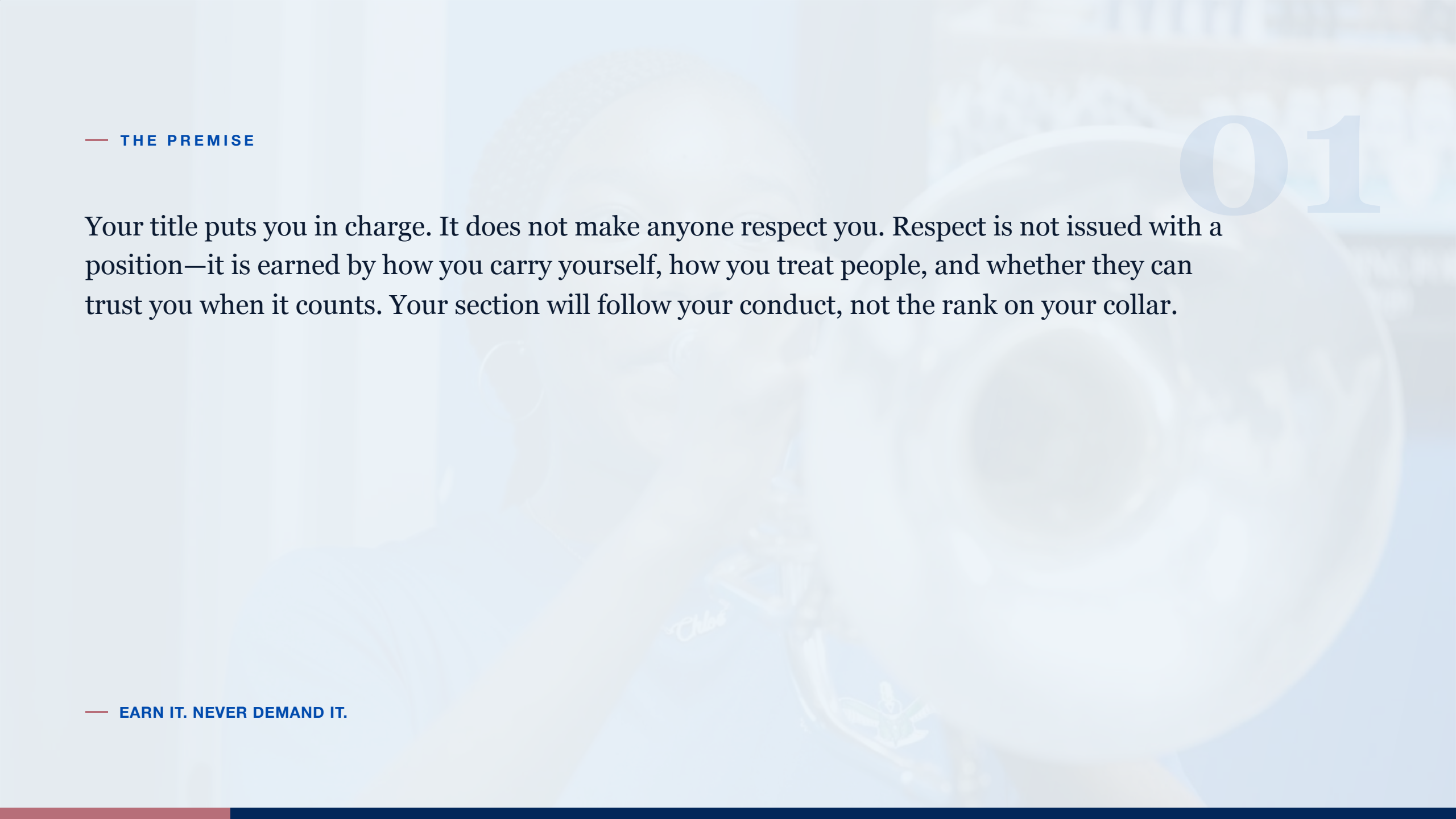
The general this seminar is built on—in his own words, on where respect really comes from.



Colin Powell on Leadership and Trust

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WATCH · 2:43



— THE PREMISE

Your title puts you in charge. It does not make anyone respect you. Respect is not issued with a position—it is earned by how you carry yourself, how you treat people, and whether they can trust you when it counts. Your section will follow your conduct, not the rank on your collar.

— EARN IT. NEVER DEMAND IT.

Command Respect. Don't Demand It.

The loudest leader in the room is rarely the most respected.

- ◆ **Demanding** respect—through your title, your volume, or fear—buys you compliance, and only while you are watching.
- ◆ **Commanding** respect—through competence, character, and consistency—earns you people who follow when you are not.
- ◆ Rank can make people obey. Only conduct makes them believe.
- ◆ The goal is not to be feared, or even liked. It is to be **trusted**.

The tell: a demanded respect disappears the moment you turn your back. An earned respect follows you into the dark.

A Word From a General

Few earned more respect than Colin Powell—here is how he explained it.

- ◆ **Colin Powell** rose from a rifle platoon to four-star general, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and Secretary of State.
- ◆ Asked to define effective leadership, his answer came down to one word: **trust**.
- ◆ *“Leadership ultimately comes down to creating conditions of trust within an organization.”* Good leaders are the ones followers **trust**.
- ◆ Trust and respect are the same currency—and you cannot order either one. You earn both.

Sources: Colin Powell, remarks to White House Fellows on leadership and trust; Powell, *My American Journey* (1995); Powell, *It Worked for Me: In Life and Leadership* (2012).

Follow You Out of Curiosity

Powell's favorite definition—from an old infantry sergeant.

- ◆ Early in his career at Fort Benning, a sergeant told a young Lieutenant Powell he would know he was a good leader when his people would follow him “**if only out of curiosity.**”
- ◆ Powell called it the best definition he ever heard. They follow into the unknown for one reason: they **trust** you.
- ◆ That trust is earned—they have seen you serve them, prepare them, and share their risks.
- ◆ Build it, and they will follow you through the hardest nights and the steepest climbs, on your word alone.

Sources: Colin Powell, remarks to White House Fellows on leadership and trust; Powell, *My American Journey* (1995).

How Respect Is Earned

Powell named the currency. Here is how you bank it.

1 Clear Mission

Give your people a clear purpose and direction. They trust a leader who knows where they are going.

2 Selfless Service

Serve them, not yourself. Powell's word for it: lead selflessly, never self-servingly.

3 Prepare Your People

Train them and give them what they need. Never hand out a job without the resources to do it.

4 Share the Risk

Take the risks with them. Respect follows the leader who carries the load, not the one who assigns it.

Sources: Colin Powell, remarks to White House Fellows on leadership and trust; Powell, *It Worked for Me: In Life and Leadership* (2012).

Never Let Them See You Shaken

The infantry lesson Powell never forgot.

- ◆ The old rule at the infantry school: no matter how cold, hungry, or terrified you are, the leader **never lets it show**.
- ◆ Because whatever you show, your people will feel—your fear becomes their fear, and your calm becomes their calm.
- ◆ Powell admitted he was often scared and exhausted, and still said, *“Let's go around this corner.”*
- ◆ Your composure under pressure is one of the fastest ways to earn a section's respect.

Sources: Colin Powell, remarks to White House Fellows on leadership and trust; Powell, *My American Journey* (1995).

Powell's Rules to Lead By

A few of the general's thirteen rules—made for earning respect.

- ◆ **“Remain calm. Be kind.”** Pressure is exactly when your people are watching how you treat them.
- ◆ **“Get mad, then get over it.”** Feel it, then lead past it—grudges cost you respect.
- ◆ **“Share credit.”** Take the blame, give the credit, every single time.
- ◆ **“Have a vision. Be demanding.”** High standards, held with care, are a form of respect.
- ◆ **“Perpetual optimism is a force multiplier.”** Your belief lifts the whole section.

Sources: Powell, *My American Journey* (1995); Powell, *It Worked for Me: In Life and Leadership* (2012).

Command vs. Demand

Two leaders, same rank. Only one is respected.

DEMAND *rank and volume*

- ◆ Leans on the title—“because I said so.”
- ◆ Runs on fear and pressure.
- ◆ Has to be present to be obeyed.
- ◆ Wins compliance, and loses it the moment they can.

COMMAND *conduct and trust*

- ◆ Leans on conduct—**competence, character, consistency.**
- ◆ Earns trust by serving and sharing the risk.
- ◆ Is followed even when absent.
- ◆ Wins belief, and keeps it for years.

What It Looks Like Here

Earn your section's respect the way Powell earned his.

- ◆ Be the standard before you set it—on time, in uniform, and prepared, every time.
- ◆ Know your craft cold. Competence earns respect faster than any speech.
- ◆ Serve first: carry the water, remove the obstacles, and take the hardest job yourself.
- ◆ Stay calm when it goes wrong. Your composure is contagious.
- ◆ Keep your word, and do the small things right. Trust is built in the details.

YOUR CHARGE

Earn the Room. Then Keep It.

You will not command respect by demanding it. Earn it the way the best leaders always have—serve your people, prepare them, share their risks, and never let them see you shaken. Do that, and they will follow you around any corner, into the darkest night, if only out of curiosity.

Serve First. Lead Always. — **Drive the Legacy.**

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