

# Air Force Core Values and Corresponding Virtues

## Integrity First

Integrity is simply doing the right thing, all the time, whether everyone is watching or no one is watching. It is the compass that keeps us on the right path when we are confronted with ethical challenges and personal temptations, and it is the foundation upon which trust is built. An individual realizes integrity when thoughts and actions align with what he or she knows to be right. The virtues that demonstrate one truly values integrity include:

**HONESTY:** Honesty is the hallmark of integrity. As public servants, we are trusted agents. Honesty requires us to evaluate our performance against standards, and to conscientiously and accurately report findings. It drives us to advance our skills and credentials through our own effort. The service member's word must be unquestionable. This is the only way to preserve the trust we hold so dear with each other and with the population we serve.

**COURAGE:** Courage is not the absence of fear, but doing the right thing despite the fear. Courage empowers us to take necessary personal or professional risks, make decisions that may be unpopular, and admit to our mistakes; having the courage to take these actions is crucial for the mission, the Air Force, and the Nation.

**ACCOUNTABILITY:** Accountability is responsibility with an audience. That audience may be the American people, our units, our supervisors, our fellow Airmen, our families, our loved ones, and even ourselves. Accountable individuals maintain transparency, seek honest and constructive feedback, and take ownership of the outcomes of their actions and decisions. They are responsible to themselves and others and refrain from actions which discredit themselves or our service.<sup>1</sup>

## Service Before Self

Service Before Self tells us that professional duties take precedence over personal desires. The call to serve is a call to live according to a higher standard. It is not just a job; it is a commitment that takes energy, dedication, and sacrifice. We do not "work" in the Air Force; we serve in the Air Force. A heart and mindset for service allows us to embrace expectations and requirements not levied on the American public or other professions. The virtues that demonstrate one truly values service include:

**DUTY:** Duty is the obligation to perform what is required for the mission. While our responsibilities are determined by the law, the Department of Defense, and Air Force instructions, directives, and guidance, our sense of duty is a personal one and bound by the oath of service we took as individuals. Duty sometimes calls for sacrifice in ways no other profession has or will. Airmen who truly embody Service

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<sup>1</sup> This excerpt is from *America's Air Force: A Profession of Arms*, dated July 2015, p. 6. Retrieved on February 2, 2020 from [https://www.airman.af.mil/Portals/17/001%20Home%20Page/005\\_The\\_Little\\_Blue\\_Book/Profession%20of%20Arms\\_Final\\_For%20Screen.pdf?ver=2015-08-21-135633-620](https://www.airman.af.mil/Portals/17/001%20Home%20Page/005_The_Little_Blue_Book/Profession%20of%20Arms_Final_For%20Screen.pdf?ver=2015-08-21-135633-620)

Before Self consistently choose to make necessary sacrifices to accomplish the mission, and in doing so, we honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

**LOYALTY:** Loyalty is an internal commitment to the success and preservation of something bigger than ourselves. Our loyalty is to the Nation first, the values and commitments of our Air Force second, and finally to the men and women with whom we serve. Loyalty to our leaders requires us to trust, follow, and execute their decisions, even when we disagree. We offer alternative solutions and innovative ideas most effectively through the chain of command. Ultimately, loyalty is demonstrated by helping each other act with honor.

**RESPECT:** Respect is treating others with dignity and valuing them as individuals. We must always act knowing that all Airmen possess fundamental worth as human beings. We must treat others with the utmost dignity and respect, understanding that our diversity is a great source of strength.<sup>2</sup>

## **Excellence in All that We Do**

Excellence In All We Do does not mean that we demand perfection in everything from everyone. Instead, this value directs us to continuously advance our craft and increase our knowledge as Airmen. We must have a passion for continuous improvement and innovation that propels America's Air Force in quantum leaps towards accomplishment and performance.

**MISSION:** Mission focus encompasses operations, product and resources excellence. The complex undertaking of the Air Force mission requires us to harness the *ingenuity, expertise*, and elbow grease of all Airmen. We approach it with the mindset of *stewardship, initiative, improvement*, pride, and a continued *commitment to anticipate and embrace change*. Our work areas, our processes, and our interpersonal interactions must be undeniably professional and positive. Our people are the platform for delivering innovative ideas, strategies, and technologies to the fight.

**DISCIPLINE:** Discipline is an individual commitment to uphold the highest of personal and professional standards. Airmen commit to a life of discipline and *self-control*. We demonstrate it in attitude, work ethic, and effort directed at continuous improvement, whether it be pursuing professional military education or nurturing ourselves physically, intellectually, emotionally, or spiritually. Each Airman represents the entire Air Force. Our appearance, actions, and words shape the culture of the Air Force and the reputation of the entire military profession.

**TEAMWORK:** Teamwork is essential to triumph at every level. Airmen recognize the interdependency of every member's contributions towards the mission and strive for organizational excellence. We not only give our personal best, but also challenge and motivate each other. We carry our own weight, and whenever necessary, help our wingmen carry theirs. We serve in the greatest Air Force in the world, and we embrace the idea that our part of the Air Force meets that world-class standard.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 8.