

If you study leadership and have taken notice, you will have observed that many top business executives have previously served as military leaders. If you never served in the military, you may be wondering how military leadership translates to business leadership. What is it about military leaders that makes them so effective? Here’s the secret:

The most effective military personnel know and understand how to apply the military principles of strategy to other areas of their lives. They practice the critical thinking tools that worked for them in the military and apply them to everyday situations. And you, too, can learn to do the same thing! Here are the twelve military principles of strategy and how you can apply them in your life:

*1. The Principle of the Objective.* Decide exactly what it is you want, write it down, make a plan, and then work on your plan every single day. Be sure to develop and maintain absolute clarity regarding your goals and objectives, and make sure everyone involved knows what your plans are.

*2. The Principle of the Offensive.* Become an intensely action-oriented person. Throw your whole heart into what you are doing. Become a moving target. All great battles are won on the offensive by taking aggressive forward action.

*3. The Principle of Mass.* Focus single-mindedly on one thing, the most important thing, and stay with it until you complete it. Bring all your powers to bear on achieving your most important single goal or accomplishing the most important single objective in your work or personal life. Always focus on the one or two things that you can do that can make all the difference. Don’t waste your precious energies on lower value activities. As German writer and statesman Johann Wolfgang von Goethe said, “The things that matter most must never be at the mercy of things that matter least.”

*4. The Principle of Maneuver.* Be

## How to apply the military principles of strategy in life

fast on your feet. Try something new. Try it again and then try something else. Look for ways to do things differently, to come at your problems and opportunities from a different angle than the average person. Be willing to consider the possibility that you could be wrong in your most cherished assumptions or your most habitual behaviors.

*5. The Principle of Intelligence.* Learn all you can about your business and your industry, especially the plans and actions of your competitors. Get the facts. You can never have too much information or too many ideas. Become very good at what you do. Read, listen to audio programs, and take seminars and courses that can enhance your knowledge. Ask questions, listen carefully, and make notes. One good idea is all you need to change your life.

*6. The Principle of Concerted Action.* Learn to work well with other people. Leverage the talents and skills of others to help you achieve your goals. Associate with positive people who are going somewhere with their lives. Always look for ways to help others achieve their goals, and they then may help you achieve yours.

*7. The Principle of Unity of Command.* Be a leader. Take charge. Seize the initiative. Make a decision, then another, and then another. Learn from your decisions, accept feedback, and self-correct. Remember that you are where you are and what you are because of yourself. You are in charge of your own life and your own future. Take command!

*8. The Principle of Simplicity.* Always look for ways to simplify your life and your work. Cut out all useless activities. Reduce complexity at every opportunity. Make decisions today to delegate, eliminate, consolidate, outsource, and discontinue activities that no longer contribute significant value to the achievement of your most important goals and objectives.

*9. The Principle of Security.* Guard

against losses and reversals. Insure against any emergency. Put aside cash reserves. Protect your main markets. Take excellent care of your most important customers. Treasure your most valuable people. Think ahead about what could possibly go wrong, and then make provisions to ensure that those things don’t happen. Take nothing for granted.

*10. The Principle of Economy.* Minimize your costs. Continually seek ways to achieve your objectives with a minimum expenditure of time and money. Make a decision to become financially independent in the course of your working lifetime, and organize your financial activities so that you achieve your goal on schedule. Save regularly and invest carefully.

*11. The Principle of Surprise.* Do the unexpected. Always be looking for newer, faster, easier, cheaper ways to accomplish the same objective. The only constant in life today is change, and the rate of change is accelerating. Your ability to be creative and innovative, to find different ways to serve your customers better and faster, is the key to your breaking through all the barriers to success in your industry.

*12. The Principle of Exploitation.* Follow up and follow through. Make a commitment today to fulfill your full potential as a person. Decide right now that you are going to become everything you are capable of becoming. When you get an opportunity, throw your whole heart into taking full advantage of it, and never give up.

So begin applying these military principles of strategy to your life today! Start by mastering a few and then gradually implement all twelve. In no time you will find yourself on the winning side of things more often than not. You will be able to enter almost any scenario, get oriented, move, and succeed.

~ The End ~