

## Book Review

### Leadership Strategy and Tactics FM-02

Jocko Willink

St Martin's Publishing Group. 2020.

**Jocko Willink** is a decorated career Navy SEAL and co-author of New York Times bestseller *Extreme Ownership* (2015), *Discipline Equals Freedom Field Manual* (2017), *The Dichotomy of Leadership: Balancing the Challenges of Extreme Ownership to Lead and Win* (2018), *The Code. The Evolution. The Protocols: Striving to Become an Eminently Qualified Human* (2020), and ***Leadership Strategy and Tactics FM 02 (2020)***.

Jocko Willink served as an enlisted SEAL in SEAL Teams 2 and 3 for eight years before attending Officer Candidate School and accepting a commission in the SEAL teams as a platoon commander. Jocko completed numerous deployments, including to the city of Ramadi during Operation Iraqi Freedom, where he served as the commander of SEAL Team 3's, Task Unit Bruiser.

Jocko hosts a weekly podcast, is co-founder of *Echelon Front*, a management consulting firm, Brazilian Jiu-jitsu instructor, and is a co-owner of Origin USA, a fitness related supplement, equipment, and apparel company.

Leadership is not being in charge. Jocko nails it when he makes it clear from his dedication in the books opening pages. He thanks his subordinates for teaching him to lead. He gives credit to those who taught him the value of life, the meaning of sacrifice, perseverance, devotion to duty, and loyalty and friendship. Jocko makes it clear from the beginning that leadership starts from the front.

Part One: Leadership Strategies.

Jocko lays the foundation of leadership strategies by addressing a number of topics categorized as leadership strategies. He addresses topics such as detachment, arrogance, humility, ego, truthfulness, trust, relationships, influence, respect, span of control, discipline, and pride.

In detachment, Jocko describes lessons learned from training drills on oil platform assault. By stepping back and viewing the bigger picture, a leader will avoid tunnel vision and be in a better position to make more efficient and effective decisions and avoid unnecessary delays. The skill of detachment, like many of the others to be discussed, is not only valuable to military special operation commandos but they can be applied to all aspects in life. They can be valuable to police officers responding to a multi-vehicle collision or a particularly gruesome crime scenes, they can be applied to emergency room nurses when triaging medical emergencies, they can be utilized by teachers while explaining a difficult lesson plan to students, parents teaching a teen to drive, to business managers in navigating complex problems, or by married couples experiencing a messy divorce. The ability to detach from the emotion, excitement, or confusion of the situation will allow for clearer vision and better decision-making processes. In times of confusion, people willingly respond to clear direction.

Jocko provided a valuable insight when he discusses how as a leader you do not want to be surrounded by people who agree with everything you say. He calls these people “yes men.” Don’t be intimidated by others viewpoints, ideas, or opinions. As a leader, you want to include everyone’s perspective and engage collective brain power so you don’t miss or overlook things in all stages from planning, preparation, and execution. I can attest to Jocko’s great advice from my own experiences and career in law enforcement. As a young officer, the best supervisors were always the one who during a tactical briefing or plan would always go around the room and include everyone by asking if he missed anything. As a veteran detective working anything from high profile and sensitive officer involved shooting investigations to complex counter terrorism intelligence investigations, there were always numerous seasoned detectives involved. With so many experienced eyes on the problems as they arose, very little to nothing got by us. During countless incidents, we relied on differing perspectives, ideas, and outside the box thinking to achieve the best possible outcomes.

## Part Two: Leadership Tactics

In Part Two, Jocko provides numerous scenarios in the “how to” or carrying out your plans to lead. He presents situations on how to be successful as a new leader, what to do when you are not chosen for a leadership position, transitioning from a peer to leadership positions, overcoming grudges, and dealing with toxic employees.

Jocko talks about not digging in and quotes General George S. Patton who told his troops not to dig in. He wanted them to advance, advance, and advance. You can’t advance when you are dug in. He applies this philosophy to digging in to ideas as a leader, meaning don’t overcommit to ideas or a position on an issue. Keep an open mind. Very rarely is anyone 100% sure about anything. When someone overcommits to an idea or position, they spend all their time defending that opinion with zero compromise. This leaves them unable to change their mind or advance their ideas. If it involves an action you know to be true, allow yourself room to maneuver since it is almost never a good idea to get yourself in a position you cannot get out of. The exception to this tactic would be if the subject involved illegal, immoral, or unethical conduct. Then you must always dig in. Jocko acknowledges that there may be other times you are faced with a rare situation where you must defend yourself. During those times, dig in, fortify, and defend your position. Jocko does a nice job of clearly distinguishing the differences between these situations and demonstrates that these leadership principles are well thought out.

Throughout the book, Jocko shares his personal experiences to illustrate various leadership lessons. Jocko’s real-world experiences give him a high level of street credibility and bring to life many of the principles otherwise presented as theories in many other leadership focused articles and publications. Reading this book, I was able to relate many of my own leadership styles, observations, and personal leadership successes and challenges with fresh perspectives and valuable self-reflective insights.

***Leadership Strategy and Tactics FM-02*** serves as a valuable read for future, new, and experienced leaders. It is entertaining and easy to read. ***Leadership Strategy and Tactics FM-02*** has earned a spot on my bookshelf among other classic leadership titles and as a go-to valuable reference resource.

Reviewed by Larry Alvarez, J.D., M.S., LAPD Detective Supervisor (Ret.)