



I knew I could try

During a speech to the midshipmen of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, at Kings Point, N.Y., the former Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Peter Pace spoke to young men and women facing careers as military leaders.

"I didn't have a clue at all if I could be a good leader or a good Marine, but I knew I could try," Pace said April 20, 2005. "I have not regretted a day of service to this country, and you will not either."

From his position as the No. 2 officer in the Defense Department, Pace said he sees a phenomenon that he is still trying to figure out. "The more I have tried to give to those who look to me for leadership, the more they have given me," he said. "The more I have tried to be a decent leader for them and do the right thing, the more they have given back to me because they know I've been trying."

The words of General Pace really hit home for any leader. Leadership is demanding, and at the individual level, one does not always know how they will do. Some are more confident than others, however, there is always that looming question: "Can I do it?" The General put it perfectly, "...I knew I could try". As a leader, a critical input is the willingness to really try. It is not always comfortable, leading from the front, with the intent to mobilize the energy of others toward the common and understood objective. Keep in mind, the more you try, the more those you are trying to lead give back. This special dynamic forms chemistry of mutual support; it is very powerful.