



LEADERSHIP AND RISK
LESSONS FROM THE ARMED FORCES

IS LEADERSHIP ONLY/ MOSTLY
FOUND ON THE BATTLEFIELD?

A story from our neighborhood!

A person in a black uniform stands in a valley, holding a large Indian flag. The background features misty mountains and a valley floor. A purple banner with white text is overlaid on the image.

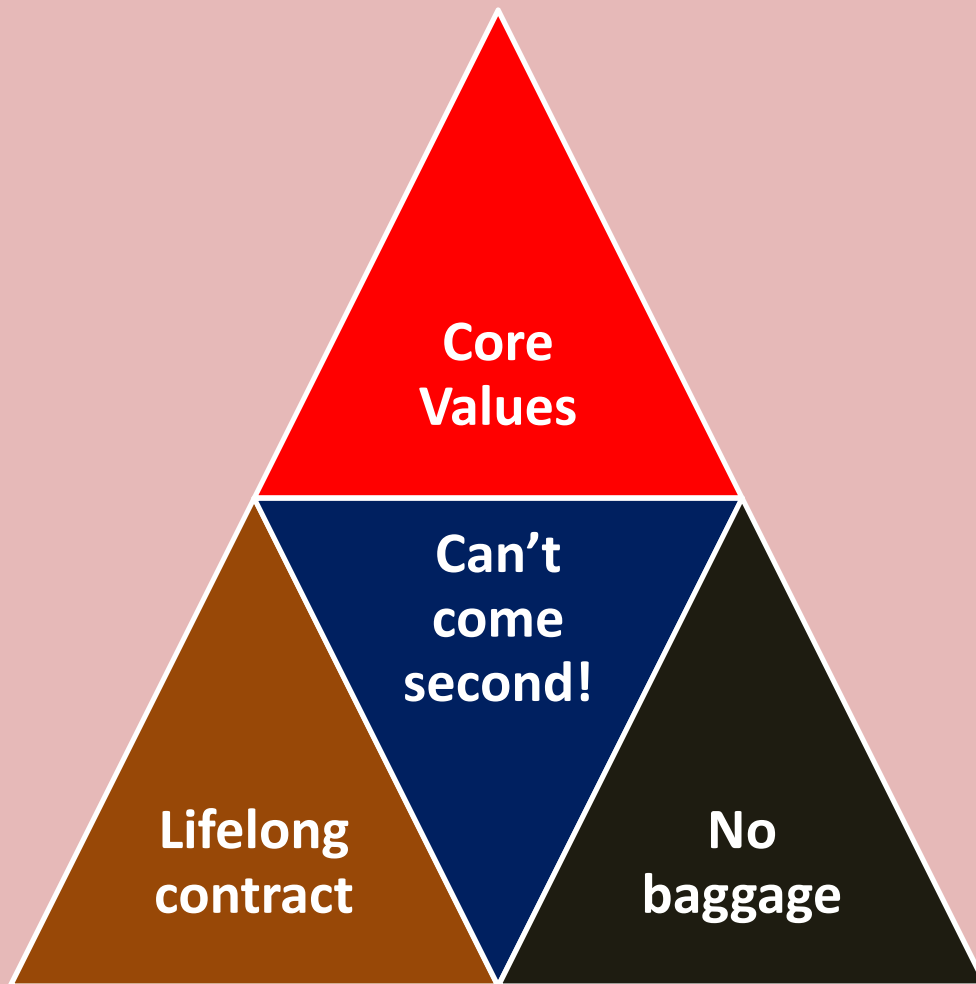
Does the Indian Army tick?

In Enemy Territory: A Soldier's Story

By TIME Staff | Monday, July 20, 1998
<http://entertainment.time.com/1998/07/20/199807201998.html>

“The skirmishes with the Indians started in May. In the early days we mowed down many of them. Those Indians were crazy. They came like ants. First you see four, and you kill them. Then there are 10, then 50, then 100 and then 400. Our fingers got tired of shooting at them. We felt sorry for them. Sometimes they came in such large numbers we were afraid of using up all our ammunition. There is no instant resupply, so you have to be very careful. We were always worried that we would use up all our ammunition on one attacking Indian party and would have none left when a new group came.”

What makes it different?



Character

**'Unlearning'
Diversity**

A photograph of two mountaineers standing on a rocky mountain peak. They are holding the Indian national flag, which is spread out across the top of the frame. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. The foreground shows the rugged, rocky terrain of the mountain.

How We Perceive Risk

NEGATIVES

UNCERTAINTY

RISK

DANGER

LOSS

Living at risk is jumping off a cliff and building your wings on the way down.

~ Ray Bradbury

If we listened to our intellect, we'd never have a love affair. We'd never have a friendship. We'd never go into business because we'd be too cynical. Well, that's nonsense. You've got to jump off cliffs all the time and build your wings on the way down.

~ Annie Dillard

Risk Is Inevitable

Recognition of risk as a 'desirable' element of all plans

The implication of risk – corporate world and Army

Sub tactical mistakes can have strategic implications

Tolerance for ambiguity

Not taking risk is also risky! Status quo is not an option

Macro Picture

**Aggressive Anticipation of
Risk**

**A culture that acts as a
bulwark**

**Each man thinks he is a
leader**



How We Handle Risk

Organizational Culture

Appetite for Risk

**Facing the ultimate risk –
death!**

The importance of Unit

Naam, Namak, Nishan

Regimentation

Contingency Planning

**Calculated vs Reckless
Risk**

Reading the Signs

A Climate for Getting Great Feedback

Reach out and seek

Dismantle formal barriers

Reward candor. The Vietnam Example.

Treat complaints as friends

Watch out for that Ego!

**Under active fire, leadership advice
to a Commanding Officer.....**

....from his barber!

On 4th of June 1997, militants
blew up a Jonga of my battalion



One officer and two soldiers died; an equal number were seriously wounded.



The crater was 8-foot deep.



In midst of firing in the aftermath, I received an advice that is an example of how deep-seated in the Indian Army are the core values of leadership – of never flinching in face of risk.

Leadership

Take greater risks than
those you lead

Tolerate Ambiguity

Tolerance for errors

Full Responsibility

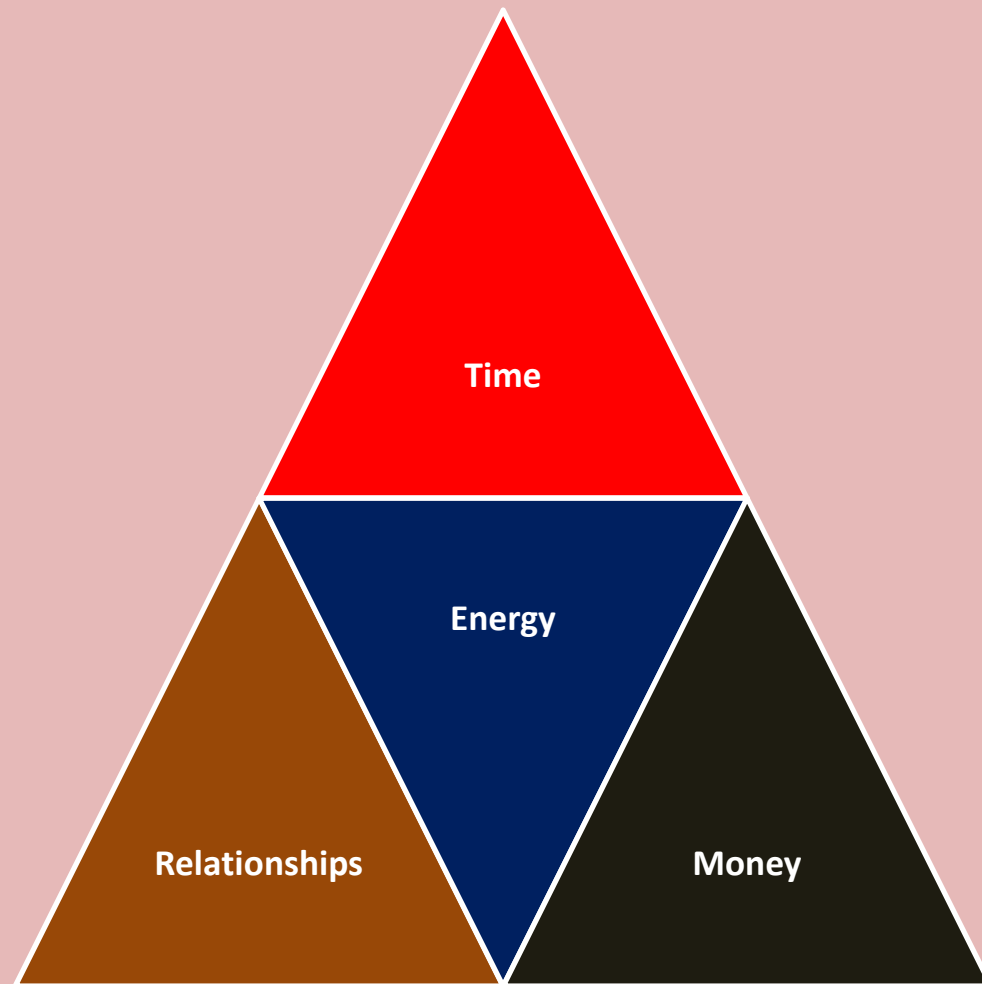
Automatic succession

A bias for people

The Value of Reserves

**Have
Reserves**

**Recreate
Reserves**



Ethics, Core values and Unwritten Laws

Core values

Tactical postulates

Reputation and Example

Long Term vs Short Term

Investment in Training



**Risk comes from not knowing what
you are doing.**

~ Warren Buffet

**The biggest risk is not taking any risk at
all...in a world that is changing really
quickly the only strategy that is guaranteed
to fail is not taking any risk at all.**

~ Mark Zuckerberg



Thank You!