

Professional Reading Program

Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program



Brothers Forever by Tom Sileo & Colonel Tom Manion USMC (Ret.)

Why Read *Brothers Forever*?

“If not me... then who? It’s either me or that other guy who isn’t ready, so I’m the one that has to get the job done.” – Travis Manion

Brothers Forever isn’t a leadership book per se – it doesn’t share leadership lessons, there is no how-to or formula for success, and it certainly doesn’t tell you how to be a leader. It’s the story of two young leaders of character, and their families and friends. It’s the story of how they lived and died, and how their families honor their legacy, a story that demonstrates many of the same values – Duty, Respect, and Integrity – that are held in the wildland fire community. It’s about relationships between leaders and their friends, families, and coworkers, and contains many examples of leadership in action, both at home and on the front lines.

This is a story that can serve as an example to inspire us all to be better leaders in our own lives, at home and on the job. As you read through the book, think of the example shown by these two young leaders and their families, and how they can apply in your life. Not everyone will have experienced what these families did, but their examples can be applied in other ways, in other situations.

There are several podcasts and videos on the book available online. Find some of them at the links below, or by using an internet search engine.

- **Jocko Podcast Episode 72 with Col. Tom Manion (3 hours):**
<http://jockopodcast.com/2017/04/26/72-losing-a-son-to-war-true-honor-and-leadership-that-applies-to-real-life-w-col-tom-manion/>
- **Travis Manion Foundation: Character Does Matter - Inspiring the Next Generation (7 min):**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pQ3q7BJ8m-l>

For more leadership ideas and to dig deeper, check out the Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program (WFLDP) blog, Facebook page, Professional Reading Program, and more at the links below:

Blog: <http://wildlandfireleadership.blogspot.com/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WFLDP>

Professional Reading Program: <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp/toolbox/prp>

Main WFLDP page: <https://www.fireleadership.gov>

Brothers Forever Discussion Questions

How can you put into practice the “If not me, then who?” mindset in your personal life? How about in a team setting in your work environment?

Early in the book, Travis makes a decision to leave the Naval Academy, only to later regret and have to earn a second chance. Have you ever had to earn a second chance at something? As a leader, can there be value in giving second chances to those that are willing to earn them?

Throughout the book, the concept of “earning it” is strongly emphasized. How does this mindset apply in the wildland fire setting? How can you put it into practice in your own life? How can a leader “earn it” in a team setting?

In the book, Brendan talks about being strong, being accountable, and never complaining. How can you use these three ideas to be a better leader? How do you as a leader pass on these values to others around you?

How does having a legacy apply to you as a wildland fire leader? What legacy do you hope to leave?

This book also tells the story of how the families of these two leaders dealt with the aftermath of their deaths. While wildland fire is nowhere near as dangerous as the environment in which Travis and Brendan worked, we have our share of tragic events, and at some point in our careers we will likely experience the tragedy of losing a friend or loved one, or be close with someone who does. Have you had those hard “what if” conversations with those around you? Your family and loved ones? Your coworkers?