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## “Personal Cost”



# Lessons from Yusufiyah: Table of Contents

For all members of the Army Profession

<http://cape.army.mil>

## “Personal Cost”

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## 1. Checklist

- Recruit additional strong/respected leaders from your unit to be facilitators with your unit. (Recruit as many as the situation mandates)
- Watch the video and read the transcript prior to your facilitation.
- Review the additional resources.
- Review the “How to run your workshop” guidelines prior to facilitating.
- Think about a personal experience that relates to the scenario.
- Resource Prep:
  - Make copies of the video transcripts and facilitation questions as needed for each of your facilitators.
  - If you plan on showing video clips, test to make sure they work on the system in your designated training area.
  - Make sure you have a whiteboard with dry-erase markers.

## 2. Who's Who



Justin Watt was a Soldier with 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon, Bravo Company. He was also the “Whistle Blower” for the War Crimes that several Soldiers in his Platoon committed.

### 3. “Personal Cost” Video Transcript: Justin Watt discusses the personal cost he faced when stepping forward to “blow the whistle” on war crimes in his Platoon.



*Justin Watt served in combat overseas as an Infantry private. Several members of his platoon committed heinous war crimes involving the rape and murder of*

*innocent civilians and tried to keep them secret. When Watt learned what they had done, he reported the crime to his superiors. The criminals received sentences from 70 years to life and the situation received news coverage around the world.*

“So many civilians are so quick to just pat me on the back and be like, ‘Oh, you’re a hero.’ And it’s like, ‘Of course you did the right thing.’ ‘That’s exactly what you should have done.’ ‘Kudos.’ Walk away. End of conversation. It’s so much more complicated than that. It’s a complicated decision for a lot of reasons.

I love being in the infantry. I love putting on that uniform, just the same as everyone else and going into work and feeling like what I did mattered every single day. I feel like I’m *that* guy. I didn’t know it until I joined the Army, but *I am that* guy. To not be able to be that guy anymore based on what I had to go through—I mean—I lost my career, my opportunity to do anything.

One of the key moments for me in terms of ... being done with the Army is that I was up at Spielman’s trial and I was in Starbucks in my class A’s. We were on recess and no one knew who I was. I was with some of the guys that I still talk to; we all just went to go get coffee. There were these guys with beards and civilian

PT shorts on. Obviously, they were attached to Special Forces and they’re like, ‘Hey, are you guys here for the trial?’ I was like, ‘Roger that. Who are you with?’ They’re like, ‘We’re the fifth group,’ or whatever. I was like, ‘Roger that.’ They were like, ‘Man, that guy shouldn’t have said anything. That guy should have kept his mouth shut.’

They didn’t know it was me they were talking to.

You can’t have that and...there not be betrayal, for these guys that have legitimately saved your life. It’s hard because you’re like, ‘Don’t judge me,’ but at the same time, you understand. It’s not my fault on one hand, and then it is my fault on the other. All this bad stuff happened over here. You ruined this family’s life over here. You gave Al-Qaida a PR-campaign over there.

It’s like okay, what is the cosmic sense? Was (it) me sleeping at night? Was the cosmic sense of black-and-white, right-or-wrong enough to justify this? There are days I wrestle with that. I can say 100%-guarantee for a fact that I’d go back and do the same thing every time, but that doesn’t mean that I don’t sit here and every day consider the opposite.

I mean, I’m happy I did something. I think it’s always easier to deal with action than inaction. I don’t sleep perfectly every single night, for sure. But I don’t think about that day. I don’t think about that choice. I don’t think about that murdered family and say, ‘I wish I would have been able to do something.’ That’s the truth.

### 3. “Personal Cost” Video Transcript: Justin Watt discusses the personal cost he faced when stepping forward to “blow the whistle” on war crimes in his Platoon. (continued)

It taught me a lot about myself and it taught me a lot about friendships. It taught me a lot about how quickly the closest of friendships can go away when it's inconvenient, when it's not the popular thing. To have guys that I served with and bled with literally, turn their backs on me; I never did anything to them, and guys that weren't even involved.

'When we get back we're going to go to Vegas; we're going to go to Ibiza; we're going to go to Europe and do this and this and this. Man, it's going to be awesome! We're going to know each other for the rest of our lives. Our kids are going to know each other.' That all goes away real quick when you make an unpopular decision.

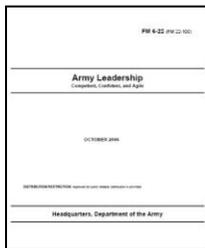
You have to be willing to accept any type of consequence. Do it because it's right for *you*. Do

it because it's something *you* believe in. You can't do it because 'so-and-so' is going to stand behind me or because my chain-of-command is going to stand behind me or because anyone is going to stand behind me. You have to be comfortable saying, 'No matter how this goes in my circumstance.' My career could have been lost. I could have been killed, anything like that. But it has to be worth it. I think it was. I really wanted to get a tattoo before I deployed. (See ASTRA INCLINA NON NECESSITANT as tattooed on Watt's arm in the video.)

The meaning I take out of it, like what it means literally is obviously, 'the stars incline, not decide.' What I take out of it now is, you can't always control the situation that you're in, but you can always control what you do in that situation."

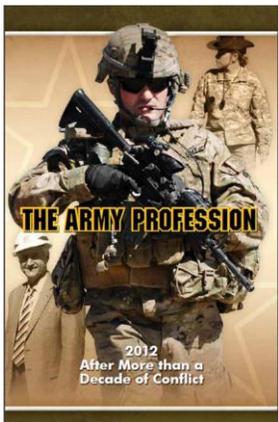
## 4. Additional Resources

The following resources are available:



### **FM 6-22, Army Leadership**

4-33. Serving with integrity encompasses more than one component. However, these components are dependent on whether the leader inherently understands right versus wrong. Assuming the leader can make the distinction, a leader should always be able to separate right from wrong in every situation. Just as important, that leader should do what is right, even at personal cost.



### **The Army Profession of Arms Pamphlet** **"Honorable Service"**

Without an effective and ethical Army Profession the Nation is vulnerable to aggression. Thus the Army Profession exists not for itself, but for the noble and honorable purpose of preserving peace, supporting and defending the Constitution and protecting the American people and way of life. The Army is called to perform that duty virtuously, with integrity and respect for human dignity as the American people expect, in accordance with the Army's Values. Army Professionals are therefore fully committed to more than a job—they are called to the deep moral obligations of the Army's duty. Under that deep commitment they willingly maintain the Army as subordinate to Civilian authorities and they subordinate their own interests to those of the mission, being ready, if need be, to sacrifice in the defense of the Republic.

### **Media Coverage:**

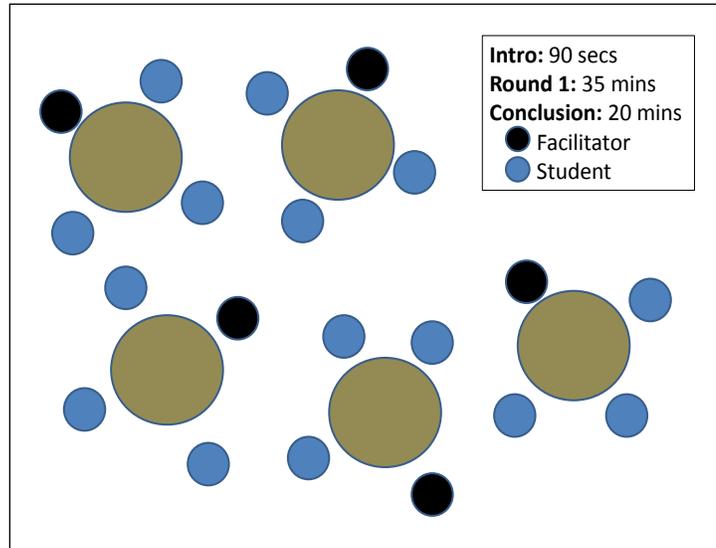
- "Soldier describes anguish in revealing murder allegations."
  - [http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2006-09-12-soldier-anguish\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2006-09-12-soldier-anguish_x.htm)
- "Soldier who testified on killings says he feared for his life."
  - <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/08/world/middleeast/08iraq.html?ref=stevendalegreen&pagewanted=print>
- Whistleblower denied clemency in killings case, *Army Times*
  - <http://www.armytimes.com/news/2012/04/ap-whistleblower-adam-winfield-denied-clemency-in-afghanistan-killings-case-041812/>
- Anderson Cooper blogged "Safe at home, for now." An editors note reads, "We receive hundreds, sometimes thousands, of comments on this blog each day." Read the blog and some of the blog comments. Why did this blog create so much traffic? Why ethical situations in military yield so much conversation?
  - <http://www.cnn.com/CNN/Programs/anderson.cooper.360/blog/2006/09/safe-at-home-for-now.html>

## 5. How to run your workshop

The basic concept provided below is a way to facilitate this module. Modify as necessary to fit the needs and demographics of the group. We find that having a variety of ranks/leadership positions in each group increases perspective and maximizes takeaway.

**PREP:** Have a whiteboard and markers available. Bring copies of the video transcripts. Have a Facilitator Guide available for each facilitator. Get there early and set up the room in huddles large enough to support a variety of leadership at each table. Put chairs around one table (keep people close), rather than pulling several tables together.

**BASIC CONCEPT:** Meet for 55 minutes to discuss the module. The group breaks down into huddles large enough to support a variety of leadership at each table. For example, you want to have SLs, PSGs, PLs, and CDRs in the same huddle so you can maximize the overall effectiveness and increase the number of vantage points. Have one facilitator at each table to guide (NOT LEAD) the discussion. The workshop begins with facilitators asking the participants what their response was to the module. The facilitators' main role is to be a catalyst for conversation and learning about the topic at hand. This module includes two rounds of discussion, and ends with personal stories and vignettes that relate to the module.



### KEYS TO SUCCESS:

- Let participants do most of the talking.
- The facilitators' key role is to ask questions that spark thought and conversation.
- Ensure you engage each level of leadership and everyone within your group. Do not let any one person dominate the conversation.
- Have questions prepped for each round to drive the conversation. (See "Detailed Plan" on page 6)
- You are a catalyst for conversation. Make sure that you continue to ask questions that make your group dig deeper.

## 6. Detailed plan for your workshop

### INTRODUCTION (90 seconds)

*Introduce the Workshop in a way that communicates the purpose of the event.*

*“Today we’re going to look at the Army Profession and discuss Personal Cost, Honorable Service, and Selfless Service”*

### ROUND 1 - (35 minutes): Discuss Personal Cost

#### [Watch “Personal Cost”]

1. Watt describes how many people respond to his actions. “Of course you did the right thing,” they say. But Watt hesitates. Why does Watt struggle in fully believing he did the “right” thing?
2. Watt has a strong sense of pride in his identity as a Soldier. He references his love for the work and how it defined his identity. If a Soldier’s identity is solely based on *who* he/she is as a Soldier, what happens when he/she is no longer in that role?
3. Watt says, “To not be able to be that guy anymore based on what I had to go through, I mean, I lost my career—my opportunity to do anything.” What does this statement communicate about how Watt views his service in the Army?
4. A) Why is the basis for your identity so important? B) What are the personal costs of losing foundational elements of your identity?
5. How could your perspective on a decision define your understanding of personal cost?  
*(Friendship was important to Watt, which is why it became a cost to him.)*
6. A) How does Watt’s decision reflect his values and morals and the importance he places on standards? B) How does his decision reflect the values of the Army? C) How well-aligned are Watt’s values with those of the Army?
7. Watt says, “...is the cosmic sense of black-and-white, right-and-wrong, enough to justify this? There are days I wrestle with that.” He struggles with the rightness of his decision versus the consequences. What decision(s) have you made that you struggle with?
8. When reporting a fellow Soldier for violating a regulation or a standard, what are the personal costs for each of the Soldiers?

## 6. Detailed plan for your workshop (continued)

9. A) How does rank or position factor into whistle-blowing decisions? B) How do friendships factor in? C) What should be considered?

10. A) What are the personal costs of being labeled a whistle-blower? B) What would it mean to you if you were called a whistle-blower?

11. Watt lists a few of the personal costs of making his decision. He says he struggles with doubt, sleeplessness, restlessness, loss of friends and betrayal. He also notes that he could have lost his career and could have been killed if no one was willing to stand up for him. How could these costs impact his decision-making?

12. Is there a personal cost or impact that is too much for Watt—something that would have kept him from making the decision he made?

13. For you, what is of such great value or personal cost that it would keep you from compromise, no matter the cost?

14. Ultimately, Watt evaluates his desire, “to be loyal to the criminals,” against his conviction to bring justice to the suffering Iraqi people. He then makes a decision. A) How does this sacrifice exemplify character? B) Selfless-service? C) Duty? D) In your experience, how common is it to have situations where the Army values of Loyalty and Duty are ‘in conflict’?

15. Watt risked his own personal security knowing other soldiers would threaten to hurt him because of his decision. By turning the criminals in, what was he saying about how much he weighed his own security compared to principled action?

16. Does Watt consider himself a, “good Soldier?” Why or why not? Do you consider him a, “good Soldier?”

17. Watt describes what the cost would have been had he not done anything. He says, “I’m happy I did something. It’s always easier to deal with action than inaction.” A) What were some of his other options? B) What were the outcomes and personal costs for each?

18. Describe the pressure that came with Watt’s decision. A) How did he handle it? B) What did Watt learn?

20. In retrospect, Watt says the decision, “taught me a lot about myself.” What do your choices say about your character?

## 6. Detailed plan for your workshop (continued)

21. Watt says, “You can’t always control the situation you’re in, but you can always control what you do in that situation.” A) How was Watt mentally prepared to handle this decision? B) Unprepared?

22. A) How can Soldiers be prepared mentally and emotionally for the choices they will encounter? B) How does fatigue in combat impact decisions? C) How can leaders keep their Soldiers alert and able to make sound, ethical decisions?

27. Is there always a cost to a moral decision? How so?

### **ROUND 2-Conclusion (20 minutes): Personal Vignettes and takeaways.**

*Facilitator asks students to share any personal vignettes and takeaways from the module.*

**It is important for the group to relate to this story on a personal level. Conclude the module emphasizing Honorable Service. Leaders should walk away with a better understanding of the Personal Cost that is sometimes associated with Honorable Service, and how Selfless Service is often a big component of Honorable Service.**

**Upon concluding, the following questions are useful for determining learning and promoting reflection:**

<b>Learning</b>	Q - What did you learn from listening to the reactions and reflections of other leaders?  Q - What are the future implications of this decision and or experience?
<b>Reflection</b>	Q - How do you feel/what do you think about what you learned?  Q - What will you do with your new information?  Q – How can you integrate new learning into your Command team philosophy, command structure and climate?