

Leadership in Cinema



Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program

12 ANGRY MEN

Submitted by: Pam McDonald E-mail: pmcdonal@blm.gov

Phone: 208-387-5318

Studio: United Artists/MGM Released: 1957

Genre: Drama Audience Rating: Not Rated

Runtime: 95 minutes

Materials

VCR or DVD, television or projection system, Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles handouts (single-sided), notepad, writing utensil

Objective

Students will identify Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles illustrated within *12 Angry Men* and discuss leadership lessons learned with group members or mentors.

Basic Plot

The jury of twelve 'angry men,' entrusted with the power to send an uneducated, teenaged Puerto Rican, tenement-dwelling boy to the electric chair for killing his father with a switchblade knife, are literally locked into a small, claustrophobic rectangular room on a stifling hot summer day until they come up with a unanimous decision - either guilty or not guilty. The compelling, provocative film examines the twelve men's deep-seated personal prejudices, perceptual biases and weaknesses, indifference, anger, personalities, unreliable judgments, cultural differences, ignorance and fears, that threaten to taint their decision-making abilities, cause them to ignore the real issues in the case, and potentially lead them to a miscarriage of justice.

(<http://www.filmsite.org/twelve.html>)

Cast Of Main Characters

Martin Balsam.....	Juror 1 (Foreman; coach)
John Fiedler.....	Juror 2 (Bank clerk; inexperienced juror)
Lee J. Cobb	Juror 3 (Angry gentleman with photo of son)
E. G. Marshall.....	Juror 4 (Stock Broker)
Jack Klugman	Juror 5 (Grew up in the slums)
Edward Binns	Juror 6 (Painter)
Jack Warden.....	Juror 7 (Sports fan)
Henry Fonda.....	Juror 8 (Architect; Man who doesn't know)
Joseph Sweeney	Juror 9 (Nice older gentleman)
Ed Begley	Juror 10 (Prejudiced older gentleman with cold)
George Voskovec	Juror 11 (Foreign watchmaker)
Robert Webber	Juror 12 (Advertising Executive; doodler)

Facilitation Options

12 Angry Men illustrates an abundance of leadership values and principles—especially an emphasis on teamwork, the decision-making process, and Socratic leadership. Students should have few problems identifying those that correspond to the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles. The objective is not to identify every leadership principle but to promote thought and discussion. Students should be less concerned with how many principles they view within the film and more concerned with how the principles they do recognize can be used to develop themselves as a leader.

Obtain copies of the Crew Cohesion Assessment Tool, developed by Mission-Centered Solutions, from the Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program website) for use with Guided Discussion, #1. If you have not used this tool, this might be an excellent opportunity to do so.

The film can be viewed in its entirety or by clip selection, depending on facilitator intent and time schedules. Another method is to have the employee(s) view the film on his/her own and then hold the discussion session.

Full-Film Facilitation Suggestion

When opting for the full-film method, the facilitator should determine a good breaking point near the middle of the film.

1. Review the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles with students.
2. Advise students to document instances within the film that illustrate/violate the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles on the handout provided.
3. Break students into small discussion groups.
4. Show students *12 Angry Men*.
5. Break. (Suggestion: When the jury takes their break.)
6. Begin the guided discussion.
7. Provide a short synopsis with some “ticklers” to pay attention before beginning the rest of the film.
8. Resume the film.
9. Have students discuss their findings and how they will apply leadership lessons learned to their role in wildland fire suppression. Facilitate discussion in groups that have difficulty.
10. Wrap up the session and encourage students to apply leadership lessons learned in their personal and work lives.

Clip Facilitation Suggestion

1. Review the Wildland Fire Leadership Value or Principle targeted for discussion. (May be given or ask students to identify the value or principle being illustrated after viewing the clip.)
2. Show the clip.
3. Facilitate discussion regarding the selected clip and corresponding value and/or principle.
4. Break students into small discussion groups.
5. Have students discuss their findings and how they will apply leadership lessons learned to their role in wildland fire suppression. Facilitate discussion in groups that may have difficulty.
6. Wrap up the session and encourage students to apply leadership lessons learned in their personal and work lives.

Mentor Suggestion

Use either method presented above. The mentor should be available to the student to discuss lessons learned from the film as well as incorporating them to the student’s leadership self-development plan.

Facilitator Reference

Encouraging individuals to keep a leadership journal is an excellent way to document leadership values and principles that are practiced.

Suggest other wildland fire leadership toolbox items that will contribute to the overall leadership development of the student.

Other References

- Clemens, John K. and Wolff, Melora. *Movies to Manage By*. Chapter 6 – “Socratic Leadership—*12 Angry Men*,” pp. 117-137. 1999. Kouzes, James and Posner, Barry. *The Leadership Challenge*. Third Edition. 2002.
- Patnode, Major Norman H (USAF). *Program Management and Leadership. The Socratic Method – Leveraging Questions to Increase Performance*. November-December 2002.
- Hyperlinks have been included to facilitate the use of the Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program website. Encourage students of leadership to visit the website.

12 ANGRY MEN

The following clips illustrate the Wildland Leadership Values and Principles. These are only guidelines and may be interpreted differently by other views; they are presented as a guide for facilitation.

Duty

- The judge gives the jury final instructions. (Issue clear instructions and clearly state expectations.)
- Juror #4 explains that is customary to take a preliminary vote. (Adhere to professional operating procedures.)
- Juror #8 does not intend to change anyone’s verdict; he just wants to talk. (Clearly state expectations.)
- A time limit is set on how long the jury will deliberate before declaring themselves a hung jury. (Develop a plan to accomplish objectives.)
- The Foreman of the jury had a responsibility to lead the group; he gives up. (Be proficient in your job, both technically and as a leader.)

Respect

- Juror #8 asks the right questions to invoke responses and action from Juror #3. (Observe human behavior as well as fire behavior.)
- Juror #6 defends Juror #9 when Juror #3 attacks the older gentleman. (Put the safety of your subordinates above all other objectives.)
- Each juror gives his reasoning for verdict. (Give the reason for assignments and tasks.)

Facilitator Reference

- The Foreman gets Juror #8 the exhibits he wants even though he pretty much gives up his leadership role. (Take care of your subordinate's needs.)
- Juror #8 agrees to give his reasoning although the goal of the group was to change his verdict. (Make yourself available to answer questions at appropriate times.)

Integrity

- Juror #8 declares a non-guilty verdict. (Choose the difficult right over the easy wrong.)
- Juror #8 doesn't know if the defendant is guilty or innocent; just wants to talk. (Ask questions of peers and superiors.)
- The foreman loses his composure as a leader. (Don't show discouragement when facing setbacks.)
- Jurors change their verdicts after listening to others. (Actively listen to feedback from superiors.)
- Jurors #3 and 10 realize personal issues have clouded their judgment. (Accept full responsibility for and correct poor team performance)

12 ANGRY MEN

Guided Discussion – Possible Answers

1. Using the Mission-Centered Solutions Crew Cohesion Assessment that your facilitator has provided, identify scenes in the movie that relate to the behaviors listed on the assessment.
 - Answers will vary, but may include:
 - Judge debriefs the jury and provides final instructions—commander's intent. (Learning and Communication)
 - Conflict occurs many times between jury members—some are addressed. (Conflict)
 - Jury members begin to feel the environment change and trust is built. (Trust)
 - Juror #8 discusses the need to uphold the U.S. Constitution—historic implications. (Teamwork)
 - The jury is able to transition between high-stress and low-stress conditions. (Effectiveness)
 - The jury comes to consensus. (Leadership)
2. Identify at least three positive behaviors or actions that you saw in the movie that can make your team more effective?
 - Answers will vary, but may include:

Facilitator Reference

- Not rushing to conclusions. Taking time to discuss a situation or topic.
 - Talk openly and honestly.
 - Promote team member equality.
 - Learn more about one another—address diversity.
3. Which of the characters in the movie appear to be leaders? How effective are they?
- Answers will vary. Students should identify two prominent leaders—Jurors #1 and #8. Many instances exist when individuals assume a leadership role.
4. One of the promotional posters for the movie stated “Life is in their hands – Death is on their minds. It explodes like 12 sticks of dynamite!” What does this statement imply about the situation and how does this relate to life on the fireline?
- Viewers notice a very explosive environment—hot and humid day, lock down, diversity and age differences—even before deliberations begin. A control for leadership is waged at the beginning when members attack and overrule the foreman’s idea of a secret ballot. Once the vote is taken, an all-out war is waged against the one dissenter. These same situations are found in the wildland fire community. Firefighters are faced with explosive situations daily. Being able to handle decision-making under stress is critical to completing the mission in a safe and efficient manner.
5. How does the decision-making environment of the movie parallel that of the wildland fire service? What lessons will you take from the movie to make your team stronger?
- Answers will vary, but may include:
 - Wildland firefighters must make decisions that can ultimately affect the lives of others. Rushes to judgment/action can result in the loss of life. Individuals may not let their concerns be known for various reasons—not tough enough, administrative concerns, politics. Wildland firefighters owe a duty to one another to talk about questions and concerns they have.
6. Juror #3 has sat on many juries and has a negative view of lawyers. He seemed to have determined guilt even prior to hearing the case. How does complacency affect decision-making and team effectiveness within the wildland fire community? Discuss instances of complacency that you have experienced. How did you handle those situations?
- Answers will vary, but may include:
 - A rush to judgment.
 - Increased safety risks.
 - Breakdown in crew cohesion.
7. Juror #10 questions the Foreman’s ability to lead stating the Foreman is a “kid.” This in turn leads to the Foreman questioning his leadership skills. Discuss instances when you witnessed a supervisor disregarding suggestions because he/she felt a subordinate

Facilitator Reference

lacked the knowledge/experience to make such a suggestion. Was the supervisor's concern warranted? How did you handle the situation?

- Answers will vary.
8. Juror #7 changes his vote from guilty to not guilty in order to bring about consensus even though he believes the defendant is guilty. What Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles does the character compromise?
- Answers will vary, but may include:
 - All three values are compromised in some manner. He has a duty to the defendant to obtain a fair trial and to address reasonable doubt issues. The other jurors deserve respect from him. He should be putting the needs of the defendant and the other jurors in front of his own needs to see the baseball game. He lacks the integrity to accept the responsibility of being a juror and upholding the structure of the U.S. Constitution and the legal process.
 - Numerous principles with the values are also compromised.
9. Individual jurors allowed personal feelings (age, ethnicity, class, prior relationships, etc.) to play a major role in determining their verdict of the defendant. How would you handle a crew/team member who allowed his/her personal feelings to compromise the group's mission?
- Answers will vary.

DUTY

Be proficient in your job, both technically & as a leader.

- Take charge when in charge.
- Adhere to professional standard operating procedures.
- Develop a plan to accomplish given objectives.

Make sound & timely decisions.

- Maintain situation awareness in order to anticipate needed actions.
- Develop contingencies & consider consequences.
- Improvise within the commander's intent to handle a rapidly changing environment.

Ensure that tasks are understood, supervised, accomplished.

- Issue clear instructions.
- Observe & assess actions in progress without micro-managing.
- Use positive feedback to modify duties, tasks & assignments when appropriate.

Develop your subordinates for the future.

- Clearly state expectations.
- Delegate tasks that you are not required to do personally.
- Consider individual skill levels & developmental needs when assigning tasks.

Know your subordinates and look out for their well-being.

- Put the safety of your subordinates above all other objectives.
- Take care of your subordinate's needs.
- Resolve conflicts between individuals on the team.

Keep your subordinates informed.

- Provide accurate & timely briefings.
- Give the reason (intent) for assignments & tasks.
- Make yourself available to answer questions at appropriate times.

Build the team.

- Conduct frequent debriefings with the team to identify lessons learned.
- Recognize accomplishments & reward them appropriately.
- Apply disciplinary measures equally.

Employ your subordinates in accordance with their capabilities.

- Observe human behavior as well as fire behavior.
- Provide early warning to subordinates of tasks they will be responsible for.
- Consider team experience, fatigue & physical limitations when accepting assignments.

Know yourself and seek improvement.

- Know the strengths/weaknesses in your character & skill level.
- Ask questions of peers & supervisors.
- Actively listen to feedback from subordinates.

Seek responsibility and accept responsibility for your actions.

- Accept full responsibility for & correct poor team performance.
- Credit subordinates for good performance.
- Keep your superiors informed of your actions.

Set the example.

- Share the hazards & hardships with your subordinates.
- Don't show discouragement when facing setbacks.
- Choose the difficult right over the easy wrong.

RESPECT

INTEGRITY

12 ANGRY MEN

1. Document film clips illustrating the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles.
2. Discuss leadership lessons learned from the film with group members or mentor.

Duty

- Be proficient in your job, both technically and as a leader.
- Make sound and timely decisions.
- Ensure that tasks are understood, supervised and accomplished.
- Develop your subordinates for the future.

What scenes from the movie relate to “Duty”?

Respect

- Know your subordinates and look out for their well being.
- Keep your subordinates informed.
- Build the team.
- Employ your subordinates in accordance with their capabilities.

What scenes from the movie relate to “Respect”?

Integrity

- Know yourself and seek improvement.
- Seek responsibility and accept responsibility for your actions.
- Set the example.

What scenes from the movie relate to “Integrity”?

12 ANGRY MEN

Guided Discussion

1. Using the Mission-Centered Solutions Crew Cohesion Assessment that your facilitator has provided, identify scenes in the movie that relate to the behaviors listed on the assessment.
2. Identify at least three positive behaviors or actions that you saw in the movie that can make your team more effective?
3. Which of the characters in the movie appear to be leaders? How effective are they?
4. One of the promotional posters for the movie stated “Life is in their hands – Death is on their minds. It explodes like 12 sticks of dynamite!” What does this statement imply about the situation and how does this relate to life on the fireline?
5. How does the decision-making environment of the movie parallel that of the wildland fire service? What lessons will you take from the movie to make your team stronger?
6. Juror #3 has sat on many cases and has a negative view of lawyers. He seemed to have determined guilt even prior to hearing the case. How does complacency affect decision-making and team effectiveness within the wildland fire community? Discuss instances of complacency that you have experienced. How did you handle those situations?
7. Juror #10 questions the Foreman’s ability to lead stating the Foreman is a “kid.” This in turn leads to the Foreman questioning his leadership skills. Discuss instances when you witnessed a supervisor disregarding suggestions from a subordinate because the supervisor felt the subordinate lacked the knowledge/experience to make such a suggestion. Was the supervisor’s concern warranted? How did you handle the situation?
8. Juror #7 changes his vote from guilty to not guilty in order to bring about consensus even though he believes the defendant is guilty. What Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles does the character compromise?
9. Individual jurors allowed personal feelings (age, ethnicity, class, prior relationships, etc.) to play a major role in determining their verdict of the defendant. How would you handle a crew/team member who allowed his/her personal feelings to compromise the group’s mission?