

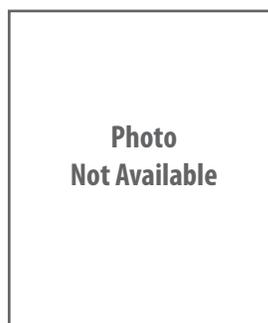
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AFJAGS Podcast: Episode 23

Emotional Intelligence & Personality Profiles with (Ret.) Lt Col Megan Allison & Lt Col Brandie Jeffries - Part 2



Lieutenant Colonel Megan Allison, USAF (Ret.)



Lieutenant Colonel Brandie Jeffries, USAF

HOST: MAJOR RICK HANRAHAN, USAF

GUEST: LIEUTENANT COLONEL MEGAN ALLISON, USAF (RET.) AND LIEUTENANT COLONEL BRANDIE JEFFRIES, USAF

This episode is part 2 of a two-part interview with two guest experts, (Ret.) Lt Col Megan Allison and Lt Col Brandie Jeffries. In this episode, we continue the discussion on personality profiles.

MAJ HANRAHAN:

Welcome to part two of our two-part interview on emotional intelligence and personality profiles. With our two guest experts. Lieutenant Colonel, Megan Allison U.S. Air Force retired and Lieutenant Colonel Brandie Jeffries U.S. Air Force. If you didn't hear part one, please consider listening to it, where we discuss the importance of emotional intelligence or EI. Ways to improve your EI and the 16 personalities profile assessment, where we began discussion on the four pairs of opposites within the test.

Here in part two, we continue discussion on the four pairs of opposites and our guests offer their tips and advice on how to take the test, interpret the test and implement its key results into your life to improve your emotional intelligence and ultimate leadership ability. Here are a few clips from part two of the interview.

[upbeat intro music]

SHOW EXCERPT, LT COL BRANDIE JEFFRIES:

There is power in cognitive diversity. You will come up with responses to problems that you would have never dreamed to have even been potential solutions.

SHOW EXCERPT, (RET.) LT COL MEGAN ALLISON:

The tough part about that is just because you understand emotions and there is empathy doesn't necessarily mean you can manage them and doesn't necessarily mean that you can manage a relationship.

ANNOUNCER:

Welcome to The Air Force Judge Advocate General's Reporter Podcast, where we interview leaders, innovators, and influencers on the law, leadership, and best practices of the day, and now to your host from The Air Force Judge Advocate General's School.

PODCAST INTERVIEW

MAJ HANRAHAN:

And ladies, you also mentioned, I was just curious, you mentioned how the sensing versus the intuition is 70/30 in the population. What's the approximate percentages for the extrovert versus introvert in the population at large. And also if you know, within the military?

LT COL BRANDIE JEFFRIES:

That one's about 50/50 within the American population. So you can make some assumptions based on the fact that we recruit from the general population. However, depending on your sample, you're gonna get different results. I think this year's ACSC class, for example, was heavy on the introverted side, which was sort of an anomaly just a bit, but typically, and Megan has done this as well, but when we go out and facilitate these talks with rare exception, when we divide the rooms out, do the percentages not line up.

THINKING (T) VS. FEELING (F)

(RET.) LT COL MEGAN ALLISON:

You go into the thinking versus feeling. Yeah, it's how we make decisions. And the best description I have for that is a thinking preference. A T preference will remove

themselves from a situation and to look at it objectively and make a decision. Whereas an S preference will step into the situation and make their decision based on that. So I am a T preference. Brandie is an F preference and [both guest speakers laugh].

LT COL BRANDIE JEFFRIES:

You know, there's tough love and then there's love right, Megan?

(RET.) LT COL MEGAN ALLISON:

Right.

LT COL BRANDIE JEFFRIES:

Every time I go to a military audience with this particular dichotomy, I rely on my career field to help explain it. And I tell people that if there were a career field in the Air Force that best represents this dichotomy, it would be manpower and personnel. Because manpower is very much on the [unintelligible] side. It's very systematic. You look at things like reorg. As to where personnel, now you've got a face to it. Now it's about the person that's involved and about, taking care of the person. And both of them are complete necessities. It's just, it's very different. One's more programmatic as to where one's a more empathetic, if you will. Like the F side of the house tends to be, lean a little heavier on the empathy side of things.

Another good way to describe the thinking versus feeling has to do with this idea of fairness. A T type is going to, typically, it's gonna be sort of this idea of equal crime, equal punishment as to where on the F side of the house, feeling preference types tend to give a little more, they tend to lean a little more towards this idea of individual consideration. And this even plays out sort of in your personal life too. I mean, my husband's a T, I'm an F, we have two teenage boys and sort of a real life example of this is when they get into trouble, they tend to get into trouble together. My husband's approach to this is they both did the same thing therefore, this is their, this is what they've earned for themselves. And it looks the same. Well, I kind of take a step back from that.

And I say, well, you know, what works for one doesn't really work for the other. And that's me applying sort of this idea of individual consideration. And, if I ground my younger son from going outside, it's like, I cut his legs off. If I ground my older son from going outside, it's like he won the lottery [laughs]. So, they respond to things in different ways. And that's sometimes where that F part of the dichotomy can come into play and be beneficial.

MAJ HANRAHAN:

Any idea on the breakdown between the thinking and feeling in the population?

LT COL BRANDIE JEFFRIES:

This is a pretty interesting one. And Megan correct me if I'm wrong. This is the only dichotomy where there's actually a gender split on this one as well. So while we're 50/50 as an American population thinking versus feeling, if you break down all the males versus females who assess on the MBTI, you end up with, on the male side, it's about a 70/30 split. So the males tend to be about 70 on the thinking as to where they're about 30 on the feeling. And then on the female side, it's the complete opposite you have about 70% who prefer feeling and then 30% who lean towards the thinking dichotomy.

(RET.) LT COL MEGAN ALLISON:

And I think that one will be interesting to watch as years go by, because I think there used to be kind of a, social norm.

LT COL BRANDIE JEFFRIES:

Yes.

(RET.) LT COL MEGAN ALLISON:

So I think maybe some women were kind of, hey, this is what I'm supposed to be a feeler. So I'm gonna answer questions this way. So it'll be interesting how that plays out. And Brandie mentioned the Air Command and Staff College class this past year, and they were an F preference.

LT COL BRANDIE JEFFRIES:

Yes.

(RET.) LT COL MEGAN ALLISON:

Which was interesting as well. 'Cause that's not normal in something you find in a military organization. So it'll be neat to see how this plays out.

MAJ HANRAHAN:

For folks that tend to have, I guess, more of a strength or more, where they're more geared towards the feeling side, does that usually equate to higher emotional intelligence, because there's more empathy there?

(RET.) LT COL MEGAN ALLISON:

I would say usually, but the tough part about that is just because you understand emotions and there is empathy, doesn't necessarily mean you can manage them, and doesn't necessarily mean that you can manage a relationship. So there's, since there are kind of four components of emotional intelligence, understanding emotions, isn't the only one. Does that make sense?

MAJ HANRAHAN:

Yes ma'am makes perfect sense. So kind of moving on to our fourth pair.

JUDGING (J) VS. PROSPECTING (P)

LT COL BRANDIE JEFFRIES:

Judging versus perceiving [prospecting]. Okay, so let's do this one Megan. She always assesses on the judging preference as to where I'm more on the perceiving preference. And I would say that in a workplace setting, this might be the dichotomy where there's the potential for the most strain, particularly in a team work type environment where this collaboration that needs to go on.

This preference, or this dichotomy basically represents our workflow or how we approach different tasks in life. And on the judging side, these are our folks that are very

methodical. If they have two weeks to complete a task, they really want it done in a week so that they get it off their list. I tell people that if you are a, if you strongly identify as a judging type, then you're likely the type of person who has a checklist on your desk. But if you complete something that's not on that checklist, you write it on your checklist just so you can check it off anyway, because it's all about

(RET.) LT COL MEGAN ALLISON:

You think I'd even do that? [both speakers laugh]

LT COL BRANDIE JEFFRIES:

It's all about, the joy of closure. On the perceiving side of things, it's a little more random. My best work comes in the 11th hour all the time. And because I am aware of that and because I am aware of my relationships and managing those relationships, I know that I can't operate that way.

So for example, if Megan and I are doing a project together, I'm going to, this is where I'm gonna exercise my emotional intelligence probably the most, to kind of go, okay, that's not comfortable for her for me to wait. And honestly she flexes in my direction too, to go, okay, I'm not gonna, we're not gonna have such a tight deadline because I know Brandie likes to think about this longer. But that really, I don't know Megan, what do you think in terms of EI in this particular preference?

(RET.) LT COL MEGAN ALLISON:

No, I think you're right. High emotional intelligence is gonna allow you to flex in whatever role, in order to, if you're, I'm an extrovert, but you have a relationship with an introverted preference, then, you know, maybe, hey we're having an argument. So I'm going to, I know that my introverted preference husband needs this time to process. And even though I wanna talk it out, maybe I will use my relationship management, emotional intelligence skill to hang back on this one.

But with the judging and perceiving our planners are perfect examples. I love to use this. I wish I could

show you guys that mine is by the half hour. And when the particular brand planner we use moved the half hour line, I was upset. [everyone laughs]. Like I literally structured by half hour, I like what I'm doing, it's all written up. Brandie's has like morning, afternoon and evening. [everyone laughs].

LT COL BRANDIE JEFFRIES:

It doesn't even have that. It's just a block. And mine, and mine looks a lot more like an art project than a planner. I mean, there's doodles in the columns. And what's funny about this, is if you looked at our, both of our planners were close, you would think that they were identical. I mean, it's the same brand, the same, almost the same pattern. I mean, we have very similar tastes in things. And when you open them, you're like, wow, that's, that is just a picture of what's going on in their brains. [everyone laughs].

MAJ HANRAHAN:

Fascinating insights there, thank you for sharing. And Lieutenant Colonel Jeffries. You mentioned something about, that your best thoughts come at the 11th hour. And I think many of our listeners can probably relate to that. And some people might call that, procrastination. I read a study within the last year that was pretty interesting, that they talked that about procrastination and said that it's not really laziness. It's actually an emotional response.

LT COL BRANDIE JEFFRIES:

Yes, and I would challenge those who call it procrastination to view it, really is incubation, not procrastination. I would say that it's procrastinating if the person rarely delivers, but if you've got someone who delivers a product, that's exactly what you were looking for, even though it's the day before it's due or even the day it's due, doesn't matter. I mean, really where do we draw the line with that? Now I will tell you I've been in the military now 22 years. And living in my P preference side does not, it doesn't work in a military environment. So, it's like muscle memory. I've learned over time that I can flex and it's much easier for me to

be very methodical and to stick to tasks, sort of tracking things. But if left to my own devices, say if I am taking a class that I've signed up for, just outside of the military and I have a paper due at midnight, it's probably not gonna be written until nine o'clock that evening before it's due. Just because that's when I think the best when the pressure's on.

MAJ HANRAHAN:

And yes, ma'am. And I think obviously even in our formal education system, right, with the students, the formal education system seems to not promote that. It seems to be, we want to see an outline, like if you're writing a paper, for example, there's steps that we wanna see, but folks that are on the perceiving end don't necessarily think like that. Is that kinda where you're going with that ma'am?

(RET.) LT COL MEGAN ALLISON:

Yeah, I use that example that you just said when I talk about the J and the P, because you're right, that our education system does say, "Hey, turn in your topic." And then the next week you're gonna turn in your outline. And then the next week, your first draft and the J's are just like, this is awesome, I got it. Whereas in those three weeks, the P has changed their topic four times.

LT COL BRANDIE JEFFRIES:

Yes, we have, for sure [everyone laughs].

(RET.) LT COL MEGAN ALLISON:

Oh, and I also like when you're, like, "Hmm, I'm not sure if I'm a J or a P." You are a P, you know it's true.

LT COL BRANDIE JEFFRIES:

[Laughs]. Yes, it's true. It's true. We have this kind of neat splitting activity that we work with our groups when we're talking about this. And we have them go ahead and identify which side of the fence they think they land on. And we put all the J's together and all the P's together. And basically the task we give them is, it's someone in your group's birthday, decide how you're

gonna celebrate it. And it's fascinating, if you, and you give them five minutes, right?

So, and you look at the J group, they've all got their sheets of paper. They are making, what's the theme gonna be? Who's gonna send the invite? If you give them long enough, they will have everyone in that group or they'll assign the duty and responsibility and a suspense date on it. I mean, it's fascinating how organized and orderly they are. If you go over to a group of people who are all perceiving side of the house, they're still just chatting about whatever for the first three minutes. And then at the end, they go, hey why don't we just go downtown for dinner at seven o'clock. Okay, that sounds good.

(RET.) LT COL MEGAN ALLISON:

There's usually not even a time.

LT COL BRANDIE JEFFRIES:

[Both laughing]. And then it sort of evolves into what are you going to do after that? I don't know, kind of wherever the night takes us. If people wanna go out for something else after, then, that's what we'll do if they don't, that's fine too. And at the end of the day, both groups are gonna have an awesome time even if we had this activity together. It's just the approach to how they plan and take care of things that are task oriented.

MAJ HANRAHAN:

And maybe to kind of summarize this kind of working through these four pairs. I mean, this all kind of end of the day is just a way to help you know yourself, right? Know how you think and also know, have a better appreciation of how others think. Is that a fair statement?

(RET.) LT COL MEGAN ALLISON:

That's right.

LT COL BRANDIE JEFFRIES:

No, that's right, it is. And I, I'll tell you, once you sort of know these things about yourself, and then you kind

of know them about the people around you. I cannot foot stomp this enough. There is power and cognitive diversity. And what I mean by this is, with the way we tend to look at diversity is based on a whole set of factors that are super important. I'm not making light of those at all. But what I am saying is that in a decision making process, none of those things matter if everyone approaches the world the same way.

So when you're talking about things like innovation or having to come up with new and unusual ideas to solve common problems, or, how are we gonna change this so that we can make X, Y, or Z better? The power of having a group of people work together that all view the world very differently, while you will have some conflict initially, while you work those things out, you will come up with responses to problems that you would have never dreamed to have even been potential solutions.

MAJ HANRAHAN:

Kind of like one plus one equals three.

LT COL BRANDIE JEFFRIES:

Or 20, if you're P preference. [laughs].

MAJ HANRAHAN:

Yes, ma'am so, moving on from that, and I think there's a lot of value there for our listeners. Let's say now our listeners are going, "Huh?" This is something they wanna learn more about. And again, I mentioned earlier that you can go take a free test at [16personalities.com](https://www.16personalities.com). Okay, no federal endorsement here. But as of last check, when I looked on the site this week, there looked to be close to a quarter of a billion tests that were already taken. If our listeners are interested in going to take this test and it doesn't take that long, I forget exactly how long it is. It's maybe 15 minutes or so, I believe. How would you recommend to our listeners to approach the questions?

(RET.) LT COL MEGAN ALLISON:

So, you would want to approach questions and when you take any person personality assessment, you need

to ensure you've kind of cleared your state of mind. Take off whatever hat you're wearing. Take off your military officer hat, take off your mother hat and just take the test, being completely candid and honest and answer with what is most natural, 'cause you have learned to flex in all of those dichotomies, but there's one, that's your natural preference.

LT COL BRANDIE JEFFRIES:

I cannot foot stomp that enough, so she's exactly right. If I were asked to take this assessment as a lieutenant colonel in the United States Air Force, I would assess out of this as an ESTJ [Extraverted, Observant, Thinking, and Judging], because that is the environment we work in. That's sort of the natural military breed, if you will.

But if I'm honest with myself and really answer the questions from, removing all of my different hats that I wear, I assess out as an ENFP [Extraverted, Intuitive, Feeling, and Prospecting]. And what's interesting about that is that if you read the description of an ENFP, you would say, wow, how did this individual end up in the military? Like how? And how has she stayed? But it's because, you do learn to flex in these dichotomies.

So definitely take it. And why this is important is not necessarily from the day-to-day when we have to flex perspectives and just normal ops, but where this gets really important is when you get stressed out or under pressure. Your body defaults to your natural state. So my stress response is very different from Megan's stress response.

I think that there's a much deeper conversation that can actually be had here about resiliency and knowing kind of when people are in trouble, because what might be normal behavior for someone might not, it's definitely not normal behavior for me. And if people know that about me, when I am stressed or I am in trouble, they know when to throw a life raft, if you will.

MAJ HANRAHAN:

So in other words, by understanding yourself better by taking a test to build that foundational awareness, not only can improve your emotional intelligence, but also your resiliency.

LT COL BRANDIE JEFFRIES:

I would argue so.

MAJ HANRAHAN:

I will say in full candid that I went and took this test, my wife took this test. We both found it very insightful, and it does spit out a pretty long results. It has paragraphs on various topics and categories, which included, I think romantic relationships, friendships, parenthood, career paths and workplace habits. Assuming if our listeners were to take this test and they get the results, how should they interpret or view the results?

(RET.) LT COL MEGAN ALLISON:

So, it gives you a lot of information when you do look at the 16 personalities assessment. And it's always fun to sit down and read the description and go, wow, that sounds just like me, both in the workplace and at home, but also you'd wanna use it as a point of departure for your conversations. So as Brandie mentioned before, you've never know how she lasted, 20 years in the military with her particular personality type. I know for me—

LT COL BRANDIE JEFFRIES:

It's truly been a shocker [laughs].

(RET.) LT COL MEGAN ALLISON:

But you've actually been extremely successful. For me in my home life, my daughter is Brandie's personality type. So the other day when I was trying to motivate her on bringing up her B to an A, because I can't understand not having an A, sitting here telling her all the things that would motivate me. And I was like, you know what, none of this is reaching her. I need to stop. Now I need to call Brandie. I need to find out what would motivate her. And then I need to present that to my daughter. So, it really does give you a way to both in the workplace and at home, how to work on your relationships.

LT COL BRANDIE JEFFRIES:

It's true, yeah, the only other thing I would add is when people get their assessment results, I would recommend comparing it against the other 15 personality types. And I would say to look for the ways that you're different from other people, just so you're aware that—we have a colleague that says it best. He says, not everyone is just a slightly flawed version of ourselves. So it's a way that you can actually look at yourself against everyone else to go, okay, now I get it, or now I get it. And then to apply it, just like Megan said, then to apply it into these other situations. I mean, I'm honored that she would call me and ask me how to approach her daughter, but that's a relationship that we've built based on understanding that what makes the two of us tick is very different.

MAJ HANRAHAN:

Great points, ma'am, thank you. Are there any resources from either of you that you'd like to share or recommend to our listeners where they can learn more about today's topic?

(RET.) LT COL MEGAN ALLISON:

I would recommend if anyone's interested in emotional intelligence to read the book by Dan Goleman, and it stated it came out in 1995, but "Emotional Intelligence" by Daniel Goleman. And then he went on to write in the future "Primal Leadership," which I think also can be used particularly in that leadership role.

LT COL BRANDIE JEFFRIES:

And if I could just add maybe one additional resource, it's something that we haven't talked about today, but it's very similar to a typology type result. It's just a little less confusing in that you don't have 16, that you're talking about, you're only talking about five, but it's a book written by, that's put out by Giant called "Five Voices." The "Five Voices" is another way that you can kind of look at your own internal strengths and compare them against the other four voices, if you will. It's just another way of helping people see or to practice introspection and then to see that the world around them is different from them.

MAJ HANRAHAN:

Well, thank you for the recommendations. We will definitely get those in our show notes for our listeners and to kind of conclude here. Are there any final words from both of you that you'd like to leave with our guests on today's topic, on emotional intelligence and or personality profiles?

(RET.) LT COL MEGAN ALLISON:

I would say you have to know yourself to lead yourself and then lead yourself before you lead others. So once you have an awareness, you can start leading yourself. And once you have an awareness of your team, you can lead your team to do great things.

LT COL BRANDIE JEFFRIES:

And I will jump on there and just sort of foot stomp this idea of cognitive diversity. I want people to know the power that's in assembling groups of people who think about things differently. Teams who learn to leverage one another's strengths will be the teams who develop by far the most creative and also scalable ideas from implementation, not only in our work environments, but also at home as well.

MAJ HANRAHAN:

Well, ladies, thank you so much for your valuable insights today. I'm sure just by listening to this interview, that has increased our listeners' emotional intelligence. So with that, thank you so much for being on the show today.

LT COL BRANDIE JEFFRIES:

Thank you for having us.

(RET.) LT COL MEGAN ALLISON:

Thank you.

TAKEAWAYS

MAJ HANRAHAN:

Well, that concludes our interview with Lieutenant Colonel Megan Allison and Lieutenant Colonel Brandie Jeffries.

My three key takeaways include **number one, emotional intelligence is critical to effective leadership**. Emotional intelligence or EI is not a new concept. Rather as Lieutenant Colonel Allison stated EI has been thoroughly researched and empirically demonstrated over 60 years and gained popularity in 1995, when Daniel Goleman wrote the book "Emotional Intelligence." EI can be defined as your ability to recognize and understand emotions and then using the skill to lead and manage yourself and others in a positive way. EI was also solidified as a defining characteristic of better job performance.

As Lieutenant Colonel Allison mentioned, studies showed that people with lower IQs were generally outperforming those with higher IQs. This anomaly was later discovered to be the result of EI. The main missing link to what initially appeared to be contradictory results. In other words, EI was found to be the main factor that sets apart star performers from average ones. Further, unlike IQ and personality, which are more or less determined at a younger age, EI can be improved upon over time. For example, a good place to start is with a personality test to better understand yourself and the factors that make up EI.

This leads us to **point two. There are four main factors that lead to higher emotional intelligence**. As Lieutenant Colonel Allison explained the four main factors that make up EI include one, self-awareness, two, self-management three, social awareness and four relationship management.

Folks with high **self-awareness** or in other words, they're aware of what they're feeling. They pause, they control their thinking. They learn and know when there has been any emotional hijacking. They tend to be more honest, authentic, genuine. They tend to show higher levels of empathy and practicing forgiveness. And they also recognize how important emotions are. In other words, emotions happen, whether good or bad.

In relation to **self-management**, this deals with the practical aspect of managing one's own emotions. In other words, I'm aware that I'm mad, but I'm not going to react in a negative way. This is obviously easier said than done. But by knowing yourself better, you are better suited to handle issues that test your emotions. You learn to know what "triggers" certain emotions and can work to either avoid or handle those situations differently. Additionally, you might wanna consider finding an accountability partner. This has been mentioned in other episodes in terms of mentorship, but an accountability partner from an EI context can provide that well-needed feedback, if and when you vector off course.

Factor number three is **social awareness**. This deals with your knowledge of others' personalities and emotions. In other words, you're aware that others are displaying some type of emotion, such as being mad, disturbed, anxious, etc. Once you gain a better grasp of your own emotions, you're in a much better position to become aware of other's emotions. And folks with high social awareness often generally care about others, ask questions, monitor behavior, and act as a resource or confidant to others.

And the fourth factor is, **relationship management**. This deals with the application of your social awareness of others. In other words, you would be aware that we're both mad, anxious, disturbed, etc., but we're not going to let that negatively impact the relationship. When you better understand how different personalities may interact together, you're likely in a better position to

elevate the cognitive diversity of your team—sort out differences before they become bigger issues and lead in a more effective and genuine way.

Which leads us to the last point in **number three, taking a personality profile assessment is a great first step toward improving your emotional intelligence**. As Lieutenant Colonel Allison stated, you have to know yourself to lead yourself, and lead yourself before you lead others. While this is a non-federal endorsement, the 16 personalities profile assessment might be a good place to start, which is located at [16personalities.com](https://www.16personalities.com).

If you decide to take this test, it will provide a five letter indicator. The first four letters are very closely related to the **MBTI's** personality assessment. Keep in mind that there are no bad personality types. They all have strengths and weaknesses. And this personality profile assessment will give you a better understanding on how you make decisions, act, work, and more or less approach life. The 16 personalities also offer four pairs of opposites, which we talked about extensively through the interview. But as a recap, those four pair of opposites include extrovert versus introvert, intuitive versus observant, feeling versus thinking, and judging versus prospecting. It also shows a fifth letter on whether your personality type is more assertive versus turbulent.

Last as Lieutenant Colonel Jeffries said, there's power in cognitive diversity, especially among teams. Teams that learn how to leverage their divergent strengths will much more likely find that innovative solution that remains outside of other teams grasp. Cognitive diversity also provides the intellectual framework for creative and scalable solutions. Now this doesn't mean there won't be friction. Rather there will be friction, which is a natural part of the creative process. But through friction will come greater results, so long as you don't let the friction impede that progress. So, take the insights from this interview and look to act upon them. You're sure to improve your EI and leadership ability along the way.

Thank you for listening to another episode from The Air Force [Judge Advocate General's School](#). If you like this episode, please consider letting us know on Apple Podcasts by subscribing and leaving a review. We'll see you on the next episode.

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GLOSSARY

- **ACSC:** Air Command and Staff College
- **EI:** emotional intelligence
- **IQ:** intelligence quotient
- **MBTI:** Myers–Briggs Type Indicator