Commandant’s Professional Reading List

- Why Read *Corps Values*? -

*Surely, if there is nothing worth dying for in our America, then there is truly nothing worth living for here, either. If I did not believe that before going to Marine Corps boot camp, I was most certainly a believer after I graduated.*

- Zell Miller, *Corps Values*, pg 108.

In *Corps Values*, Georgia Governor Zell Miller outlines the twelve values that are instilled into the hearts of every recruit at Marine Corps boot camp. These values are neatness, punctuality, brotherhood, persistence, pride, respect, shame, responsibility, achievement, courage, discipline, and loyalty. These values make up the heart and soul of what it means to be a Marine, on the most basic level. Zell Miller describes his transformation during his time at Marine Corps Recruit Training from a wayward young man to a purpose driven Marine. It is to this transformation that he attributes his subsequent success in life. This reading articulates those twelve specific values that make Marines successful, and ultimately make anyone who adheres to these values a better human being. Marines, and even young recruits, that read this book will understand the philosophy and purpose behind the chaos and intense pressure they endure during boot camp. More importantly, it outlines why Marines are unique in this approach, and it is these values which make the Marine Corps successful. More importantly, the author argues that these Corps Values are so important that they are the foundation of our democratic society and our republican form of government.

This reading is relevant to every Marine regardless of rank. The purpose of the reading is to teach the reader what it takes to be a successful person and have a superior quality of life. The twelve values described in *Corps Values* are universal attributes and principles that go to the heart of an individual’s faith and belief system. Furthermore, the values outlined in this book are the cornerstone of what makes the Marine Corps successful. For the basic recruit and young Marine, these values teach how one is expected to live and conduct him or herself. As an officer, abiding by these principles is essential to being an effective leader and for setting the example from which to hold others accountable. Marines holding themselves and each other accountable to these twelve principles are the bedrock from which the Marine Corps is built.

The twelve precepts that Zell Miller describes in this reading have more significance today than they did when the book was originally written. The world is changing rapidly; many of the old values we used to take for granted now seem to be changing. In particular, technology has changed how society interacts. The next generation of recruits coming into boot camp will have had a completely different life experience than the Marines that came before them. As society changes, the makeup of what it means to be a Marine and an American will change. Holding on to these unchangeable values ensures that one can change with the times but also retain those qualities that ensure that what makes the Marine Corps and America great.