



Focus for January & February: Autonomy

We are not directing the specific questions that need to be asked, instead we are providing the range into which the questions need to fall.

Do Soldiers have a hope or belief that they can set and accomplish personal, professional, and small unit goals by setting up and successfully pursuing realistic pathways? Why or why not?

Do Soldiers and Leaders believe they have sufficient agency in planning and executing training that they believe their unit needs? Why or why not?

Do Soldiers believe their Leaders help them visualize their desired future and understand and plan how to achieve that future? Why or why not?

Excerpt from **Protecting the Tribe: Confronting Suicide and Enhancing Readiness through Engaged Leadership**

By CH (LTC) Eric Leetch

Junger believes the reason why some Soldiers wish they could return to combat is not that they miss fighting. Instead, they miss an experience of tribal closeness that comes with it, something they find completely absent from 21st century American life.

Junger points to *self-determination theory* (SDT) to help explain what is wrong with our contemporary culture. SDT is about motivation, or what drives people to do what they do. Psychologists Edward Deci and Richard Ryan developed the theory and suggest that all people tend to be driven by a need to grow and gain fulfillment. According to SDT, people need to feel the following in order to live a fulfilled life:

Competence: The need to gain mastery of tasks and learn different skills.

Connectedness: The need to experience a sense of belonging and attachment to others.

Autonomy: The need to feel in control of their own behaviors and goals.