

Thomas A. Kolditz

Retired Brigadier General, Author, and Executive Director of the Doerr Institute for New Leaders

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Topics

- Business Growth Strategies & Trends
- Leadership
- Military & Veterans
- Navigating Change & Uncertainty
- Peak Performance

About Thomas A. Kolditz

Thomas Kolditz is a leadership speaker and expert, retired Brigadier General, author, and Executive Director of the Doerr Institute for New Leaders at Rice University. Kolditz has served 34 years in the military and is the author of *In Extremis Leadership: Leading as if Your Life Depended on It*, which was based on more than 175 interviews taken on the ground in Iraq during combat operations. He has been named a top leadership Thought Leader by the Leader to Leader Institute, and has appeared as an expert on more than a dozen national and international news agencies, including ABC World News, 20-20, Al Jazeera, MSNBC, CBS, Calgary Today, and Morning Ireland.



Tom Kolditz is the founding Executive Director of the Doerr Institute for New Leaders at Rice University. He designed and directed the core Leader Development Program at the Yale School of Management, served as the chairman of the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership at West Point, and was the founding director of the West Point Leadership Center. A highly experienced leader, Brigadier General (retired) Kolditz has more than 26 years in P&L level supervisory positions, serving on four continents in his 34 years of military service. He is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association and is a member of the Academy of Management. He serves as a senior advisor to the Future of Executive Development Forum. His most recent book, titled *In Extremis Leadership: Leading as if Your Life Depended on It*, was based on more than 175 interviews taken on the ground in Iraq during combat operations. He has been named as a leadership Thought Leader by the Leader to Leader Institute and as a Top Leader Development Professional by Leadership Excellence. He holds a BA from Vanderbilt University, three master's degrees, and a Ph.D. in social psychology from the University of Missouri. In 2009, he was named to the Council of Senior Advisors, Future of Executive Development Forum.

A skydiving instructor since 1980, General Kolditz served as the senior instructor for the West Point Sport Parachute Team. He weaves his personal experiences and abilities as a soldier, skydiver, and scholar into the first-hand study, analysis, and practice of leadership in dangerous circumstances—in *extremis* leadership—and how such leadership can inform the practice of leading in more ordinary settings.

More About Speaker, Thomas Kolditz...

General Kolditz has presented leadership content to more than 150 governmental, corporate, and social sector audiences worldwide. As a professor, he has led academic seminars or given lectures to students from: Babson, Wellesley, and Olin Colleges, the University of Missouri, Columbia University, Duke University, Yale University, the Military Psychology Center of the Israel Defense Forces, Peking University, the Beijing International MBA program, Harvard's Center for Public Leadership, seven national and international service academies and more than ten major metropolitan law enforcement, firefighting, and public service academies and assemblies.

Tom Kolditz has appeared on ABC World News, ABC 20-20, Al Jazeera, MSNBC, CBS, NPR, *Calgary Today*, *Morning Ireland*, and conducted interviews with the *New York Times*, the Associated Press, *Time*, *Discovery*, the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, the *Washington Post*, *La Razon*, and more than a dozen national and international news agencies.

General Kolditz holds numerous degrees, including a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and Sociology from Vanderbilt University, as well as Masters and Ph.D. degrees in Social Psychology, a Master of Military Arts and Science, and a Masters in Strategic Studies.

Select Keynotes

- **In Extremis Leadership: Leading As If Your Life Depended On It**

Operating environments for both government and business are characterized by volatility, complexity, and uncertainty—perfect conditions for crises to emerge. Brigadier Gen. Tom Kolditz, author of *In Extremis Leadership: Leading as if Your Life Depended on It*, shows how extreme life-and-death situations can offer profound lessons for leaders in any setting. Tom's research reveals that the leadership skills and principles evident in dangerous settings also apply to leading in business and everyday life, making this program applicable to both personal and professional success.

- **Dodging Bullets: How to Prepare Your Organization for the Next Crisis**

Few people want to be put into a position of being crisis managers. So how can leaders prepare organizations to avoid crises before they occur? In this engaging talk, Brigadier Gen. Tom Kolditz will take the audience through specific processes and techniques to help leadership anticipate and prevent crises and have a more effective, more empowered workforce every day.

- **Hope is Not a Method: 40 Years of Leadership Takeaways**

Too often, leaders hope for success without using specific techniques for leading effectively. After leading dozens of organizations on 4 continents, and teaching leaders and leadership for 25 years, Tom distills eight proven techniques he uses regularly to get the job done as a leader. This presentation is extremely pragmatic and will allow for immediate application in peoples' professional and personal lives.

- **Measure What Matters: Innovate With OKRS (Objectives and Key Results)**

If you can't measure it, how do you know it's working? With four successful start-ups, and as the founding executive director of the Ann & John Doerr Institute for New Leaders, Tom shares specific techniques for sparking innovation, tracking outcomes, and achieving real results. Management by OKRs has been extraordinarily successful in stand-alone start-ups, but it also energizes innovation and initiative in established organizations. Tom can lay out the "how."

- **Failure: Why You Can Survive Big Mistakes**

Fear of failure holds companies back. General Kolditz shows anxious employees, particularly young people, that failures, even big ones, do not necessarily end one's career IF handled properly. He reviews a number of colorful mini-case studies of significant failures, then stuns the audience with the reveal that the failures were all his. He unpacks how fear affects leadership, and discusses how firing vs. retaining personnel really works. His direct professional experience at managing failure, yet becoming highly successful, is both informative and inspirational to all for whom fear that a single failure is a career ender.

- **Defining Leadership Across Cultures**

This session focuses on the nature of leadership, its definition, and how leadership differs between cultures. Participants will engage in an exercise where they reflect on, and create, their personal leadership philosophy.