

Former Army Captain Lavar Matthews Delivers Revolutionary Leadership Framework at TEDxWilmington 2025

Military Officer Turned Leadership Expert Reveals How "Inclusion Will Save You What Ego Will Cost You" in Transformative Talk on Servant Leadership

WILMINGTON, DE, UNITED STATES, July 11, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Lavar Matthews, a Columbia Graduate (graduation speaker in 2023) in Human Capital Leadership, and former United States Army Captain, who transformed military leadership paradigms through inclusive servant leadership, delivered a powerful presentation at

TEDxWilmington 2025 on Saturday, April 26, at Theatre N in Wilmington, Delaware. Matthews shared his compelling journey from an ambitious 28-year-old second lieutenant struggling with traditional command structures to becoming a champion of inclusive leadership that empowers teams to lead alongside their leaders.

Matthews' talk, centered on the principle that "the sign of a great leader isn't about how many followers you have but it's about how you empower those around you to lead alongside you," challenged conventional leadership wisdom across industries. His message arrives at a critical time when organizations worldwide are grappling with issues of engagement, retention, and the need for more sustainable leadership models.

The former military officer's transformation began during a pivotal meeting with General Potts when Matthews was just 26 years old. When asked what it takes to become a general in the Army, Potts' answer – "servant leadership" – set Matthews on a path that would revolutionize how he approached leading his 60-soldier platoon. However, his initial interpretation of servant leadership nearly led to burnout and organizational fragility.

"I thought servant leadership meant doing everything for my team," Matthews reflects. "I was



Lavar Matthews

micromanaging every detail, planning every training exercise, making every decision. My senior leaders praised our results, but I was exhausted, and more critically, I had created an organization that couldn't function without me."

This realization led Matthews to a fundamental shift from directive leadership to inclusive leadership, transforming not just his platoon's performance but its entire culture. The results were dramatic: improved morale, sustainable success, and most importantly, the development of independent leaders throughout the ranks.

Matthews' core message – "Inclusion will save you what ego will cost you" – challenges leaders across all sectors to examine their own practices. His military experience provides unique insights applicable to corporate boardrooms, nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, and entrepreneurial ventures.

"Innovation doesn't discriminate," Matthews emphasizes. "It doesn't care what you look like or where you come from. As leaders, why should we care where great ideas originate? When we lead with inclusion, we don't just change teams – we change what's possible."

Key takeaways from Matthews' leadership philosophy include:

- The Vulnerability of True Leadership: Acknowledging that leaders don't need to have all the answers.
- The Power of Early Stakeholder Engagement: How soliciting feedback early and often eliminates the need to "sell" buy-in.
- The Innovation-Inclusion Connection: Why inclusive environments naturally foster innovation
- The Sustainability Test: A great leader's organization thrives in their absence, not collapses.

Matthews' appearance at TEDxWilmington 2025 was one of 24 carefully curated talks at what organizers described as "one of the larger events that any TEDx internationally will do this year." The event, which ran from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., brought together thought leaders from more than five states and countries to share transformative ideas with the Wilmington community and beyond.

For organizations seeking to build more resilient, innovative, and engaged teams, Matthews offers a blueprint tested in one of the world's most demanding leadership environments. His message resonates particularly with companies navigating generational shifts in the workforce, remote team management challenges, and the ongoing evolution of workplace culture.

"The military taught me that leadership isn't about control – it's about trust," Matthews states. "When you create space for your team's perspectives, experiences, and ideas, you don't diminish your leadership; you multiply it exponentially."

Corporate event planners, conference organizers, and leadership development professionals

interested in bringing Matthews' transformative message to their organizations can learn more about his speaking availability and programs.

About TEDxWilmington

TEDxWilmington is an independently organized TED event that brings together innovators, thought leaders, and change-makers to share ideas worth spreading. The 2025 event at Theatre N promises to be one of the most significant TEDx events globally, featuring 24 speakers who will address critical issues facing our communities and the world. To learn more about TEDxWilmington, visit <https://tedxwilmington.net/>.

About Lavar Matthews

Lavar Matthews is a leadership expert, former United States Army Captain, and advocate for inclusive servant leadership. His unique approach to leadership development draws from his military experience leading diverse teams in high-stakes environments. Matthews specializes in helping organizations build sustainable leadership cultures that empower every team member to contribute their best ideas and lead from their position.

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