

2025 TFCA John Alston Closing Keynote 7Cz Audio

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Leadership, fire service, mentorship, crisis management, John Maxwell, emotional intelligence, Commitments, competence, confidence, command presence, communication, courtesy, consistency, courage, professionalism, teamwork, training, culture, strategic planning, SWOT analysis.

SPEAKERS

John Alston, Chief Joel Baker

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John Alston, a seasoned fire officer with over 40 years of experience, discussed leadership qualities in the fire service. He emphasized the importance of commitment, competence, confidence, command presence, communication, courtesy, and courage. Alston shared personal anecdotes and mentions, including his mentors and experiences in Jersey City and FDNY. He highlighted the need for adaptive leadership, effective communication, and maintaining professionalism. Alston also introduced the concept of the "Seven C's" and encouraged continuous learning and self-improvement. He concluded with a call to action for leaders to reflect on their commitment and impact in the fire service.

Keynote Outline

Introduction of John Alston and Meeting Context

- Chief Joel Baker introduces John Alston, highlighting his 40 years of experience in fire and emergency management.
- John Alston is noted for his roles as Vice Chief of the New Haven Fire Department and retired Jersey City Fire Department officer.
- Alston's contributions include training and mentoring first responders and business leaders.
- Alston's involvement on national boards and executive development is mentioned, including his work with the John Maxwell Group.

John Alston's Opening Remarks and Game Introduction

- John Alston thanks the audience for the invitation and mentions his familiarity with the conference.
- He references recent conferences he attended, including FDIC in Indianapolis.
- Alston introduces a game called Kahoot, a multiple-choice quiz, to engage the audience.

- He humorously mentions prizes and his mentors, including Dr. Denis Onieal, Dr. Carl Holmes and Chief Bobby Halton.

Leadership Game and Mentorship Discussion

- Alston explains the Kahoot game, encouraging participants to use QR codes or phone numbers to join.
- He discusses the importance of mentorship, mentioning his mentors and their impact on his career.
- Alston shares personal anecdotes about his career, including his early days in Jersey City and his mentors' influence.
- He emphasizes the importance of mentorship in the fire service and the characteristics of effective leaders.

Characteristics of Effective Leaders

- Alston outlines seven characteristics of effective leaders, noting that some people may exhibit one or more of these traits.
- He shares a story about his friend Joe Menendez, highlighting the importance of mentorship and camaraderie.
- Alston discusses the evolution of the fire service and the need for new approaches to leadership.
- He mentions his experiences in various assignments, including TEEX Disaster City and his work with FDNY.

Fire Service Culture and Traditions

- Alston talks about the unique culture of the fire service and the importance of maintaining certain traditions.
- He discusses the need to update some traditions, such as hazing, and the importance of adapting to new generations of firefighters.
- Alston mentions the significance of ceremonies and the role of music in the fire service. – Amazing Grace
- He emphasizes the importance of relationships and teamwork in the fire service.

Paradigms and Mindsets in Leadership

- Alston explains the concept of a paradigm, describing it as a set of rules or a way of seeing things.
- He discusses the difference between a closed mindset (scarcity mindset) and an open mindset (abundant mindset).

- Alston shares his personal journey of learning to say "yes" when God says "no" and the importance of patience and preparation.
- He emphasizes the need for leaders to adapt their mindsets to new challenges and opportunities.

The Seven C's of Leadership

- Alston introduces his program called The Seven C's, which includes commitment, competence, confidence, command presence, communication, courtesy, and courage.
- He explains each C in detail, using examples and anecdotes to illustrate their importance.
- Alston discusses the role of commitment in leadership, emphasizing the importance of being committed to people, community, and oneself.
- He highlights the significance of competence and the need for continuous learning and development.

Confidence and Command Presence

- Alston talks about the importance of confidence and how it can be developed through preparation and practice.
- He explains the concept of command presence and how it is demonstrated through knowledge and authority.
- Alston shares a story about an incident where he had to address a problem that was beyond the authority of a captain.
- He emphasizes the need for leaders to coach and support their team members, rather than micromanaging.

Communication and Relationship Building

- Alston discusses the importance of effective communication in leadership, including the use of longstanding attributes of great speakers and communicators from the Greek philosophy of "ethos, pathos, logos, and Kairos."
- He shares tips for improving communication, such as being respectful, using the right channels, and seeking feedback.
- Alston emphasizes the need for leaders to build relationships with their team members and the public.
- He mentions the importance of regular communication and the role of trust in effective leadership.

Courtesy and Professionalism

- Alston talks about the importance of courtesy and professionalism in the fire service.

- He shares his mother's advice on maintaining good relationships and helping others without expecting anything in return.
- Alston discusses the need for leaders to be professional and courteous, even in difficult situations.
- He emphasizes the importance of treating people with respect and maintaining high standards of behavior.

Consistency and Courage

- Alston introduces the concept of consistency, noting that rituals and routines are important for maintaining order and stability.
- He shares a story about the importance of consistency in leadership and the impact it can have on team performance.
- Alston discusses the final C, courage, and the need for leaders to be brave and take risks.
- He emphasizes the importance of courage in overcoming challenges and achieving success in the fire service.

Closing Remarks and Call to Action

- Alston thanks the audience for their attention and participation in the presentation.
- He encourages the audience to scan a QR code to provide feedback and receive additional resources.
- Alston shares his contact information and offers to help anyone who wants to connect with him.
- He concludes by emphasizing the importance of leadership and the need for continuous learning and development in the fire service.