

**REAR ADMIRAL A.B. CRUZ III, USN (RET.)  
LIFE LESSONS LEARNED**

- **Serve not yourself, but something greater than yourself**
- **Pursue your passions & always put your heart and soul into them**
- **Seek out challenges, for that's where opportunity lies**
- **Understand your strengths, but also recognize & acknowledge your weaknesses**
- **Exploit those strengths of yours and shore up those weaknesses**
- **Use every opportunity to demonstrate your leadership abilities**
- **Be assertive, but polite, and remain always humble**
- **Don't burn any bridges; you never know when you might have to cross them again**
- **The best professional relationships are those that are established and nurtured at a positive personal level**
- **If you're aiming for a particular job or position. You have to be able to "see" or envision yourself in that position...but, more importantly, you have to "be seen" or envisioned in that position by those that matter**
- **Maintain your sense of humor. If you don't have one, find one. It'll help keep you and those around you sane**

- **Take care of yourself FIRST, but better care of those you love (you have to be sound physically, emotionally & spiritually in order to better serve your family and others)**
- **Aim high, BUT keep your feet firmly on the ground. Rather than dreaming or watching where you're heading, be mindful of the person you are becoming**
- **Never compromise your own core values...character, integrity, honesty, ethics, faith and family...because ultimately, that's your real legacy as a person...not some lofty job title**
- **As you make your professional climb...and certainly when you finally get to where you always wanted to be...make sure you take care of those who are following in your wake who aspire to be you one day. Help create similar opportunities for them.**
- **The more senior you get, the less it's about you, and the more it's about those under your care who are depending on you & your leadership to guide them on their professional advancement & career fulfillment. No better way to cement your legacy than to develop & nurture our future leaders**
- **The honorable course is charted when one makes the more difficult right decision as opposed to the easier wrong decision...at every turn**
- **The presence you create is the presence you command**