



MIKE ABRASHOFF

Former Commander, USS *Benfold* and Author, *It's Your Ship*
Helping Leaders & Organizations Become More Resilient, Innovative & Inspiring

"You can tell people what to do but you can't order excellence."
- Mike Abrashoff

SUMMARY

Mike Abrashoff was the most junior officer in the Pacific Fleet when he took command of the near-worst performing ship. Twelve months later, the USS *Benfold* was the best ship in the entire Navy – using the same crew. The story of that stunning transformation has lessons for every organization: leadership matters – and culture is everything. Mike's written three books – his first, *It's Your Ship*, has sold over 1 million copies. His Leadership Roadmap offers clear, battle-tested, and actionable steps. Mike shows people at every level of the organization how to engage and take incremental steps toward change that can make a dramatic difference at work. Mike is clear, "I didn't turn the ship around – my crew did that. What I did was to create an environment where they felt safe, empowered and supported. When you do that, anything is possible."

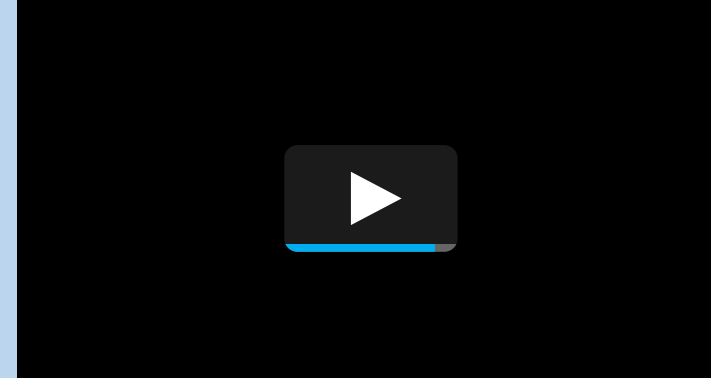
KEY SPEECH THEMES

LEADING SUCCESSFUL CHANGE



Becoming the Best Ship in the U.S. Navy

LEADING BY EXAMPLE



Our People Are Watching

LEADING VIRTUALLY



Creating a Culture of Yes

DON'T LET GOALS LIMIT PERFORMANCE



Organizational Transformation - Don't Impose Limits On Yourself

EXECUTION - RETHINK EVERY PROCESS



Business Transformation - Rethink Business Process

COACHING, MENTORING & TRAINING



Learning Leadership Skills at the Pentagon

ATTRACTING & RETAINING TALENT



Best Talent Retention Practices

FOCUSING ON WHAT MATTERS



How are We Showing Up at Work

INNOVATION IS A TEAM EFFORT



Great Ideas Can Come From Anyone

APPRECIATION GOES A LONG WAY



The Unglamorous Part of Life at Sea

CULTURE OF ACCOUNTABILITY



It's Your Ship

INCREASING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT



Engaging the Team Pays Off

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT



Process Drives Great Outcomes

THE POWER OF DIVERSITY



Leading a Diverse Workforce

SAFETY IS NO ACCIDENT



Staying Safe in Tough Times

ENGAGING CRITICS TO SOLVE PROBLEMS



Don't Mistake Complainers for Troublemakers

SPEECH DESCRIPTIONS

IT'S YOUR SHIP – ACHIEVING BREAKTHROUGH PERFORMANCE

When Mike Abrashoff took command of the USS *Benfold*, morale was low, turnover was high and the ship's performance ranked near the bottom of the Pacific Fleet. Just twelve months later *Benfold* was ranked #1 – using the very same crew. The lesson was clear – leadership matters and culture is everything. This inspiring talk is for every individual and organization looking for practical and usable ways to take organizational performance to new heights. In Mike's case, he realized that before the ship's performance could change, he had to change his leadership style. Mike worked to create a culture of trust and empower his crew to take charge and use ingenuity and initiative to improve every aspect of the way things were done. Top down leadership is dead, so when the crew would present a problem, Mike became famous for responding "What would YOU do? It's YOUR ship!" Mike's presentation leaves audiences with the tools and inspiration to accomplish big goals.

THE VIRTUAL LEADER'S ROADMAP

Mike Abrashoff had to change his leadership mindset when he took over the near-worst performing ship in the Navy. The situation was dire. If performance did not improve, sailors could have gotten injured...or worse. In response, Mike quickly adopted a new set of principles to guide a new way of leading. His focus was on building trust and authentic ways of engaging. It was about listening to and empowering his crew who then went on to make the USS *Benfold* the best ship in the entire U.S. Navy. These very same principles are the foundation of success for organizations that embrace working virtually. In the short term, many organizations have found virtual work arrangements actually increase effectiveness of employees. That effectiveness may not be sustainable if leaders and organizations don't master a new skill-set of how to lead people they can't see. It's about measuring results – not activity; and about finding ways to let people know their efforts are appreciated. Those who succeed in leading in the virtual environment will create a decisive competitive advantage.

NO LIMITS – DON'T LET GOALS BECOME LIMITATIONS

Sometimes in our professional lives we might *think* we are in a battle to beat an adversary or a competitor when in actuality we are really in competition with ourselves but just haven't figured it out yet. When battling the competition, you want to come out on top, if only by one more sale or maybe a few percentage points. Other times, someone at a higher level gives you a goal based on some median expectation set for others. When Mike Abrashoff took command of a well below-average ship in the U.S. Navy, his goal was to get to average. He initially set average goals and expectations for himself and his crew until one day it dawned on him: his ship could be much better than just average. It was Mike's eureka moment: realizing they weren't in competition with anyone but themselves. To be their best they had to stop putting limits on what they believed was possible. That realization changed Mike Abrashoff's approach to leadership and led the same crew to accomplish one of the most remarkable turnarounds that was chronicled in the *Harvard Business Review*, *Fast Company* magazine and Mike's *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* bestselling book, *IT'S YOUR SHIP*. This presentation will challenge audiences to think differently on how to set expectations while realizing the only limits that you have are self-imposed.

GO DEEPER WITH HALF-DAY AND FULL-DAY PROGRAMS

Dive deep into the Leadership Roadmap with a half-day or full-day program. The sessions are most often used as a follow-on to Mike's keynote and provide attendees with powerful tools and strategies to apply in their work environment. Depending on the circumstances, these longer sessions are facilitated by a senior strategist from Mike's firm, Aegis Performance Group, or Mike himself. These sessions create an exciting interactive atmosphere where participants examine the key components of high performing leaders, teams and organizations. Inquire for more details and program descriptions.

MIKE'S VIDEO LIBRARY

- <https://vimeopro.com/speakervideos/mike-abrashoff>

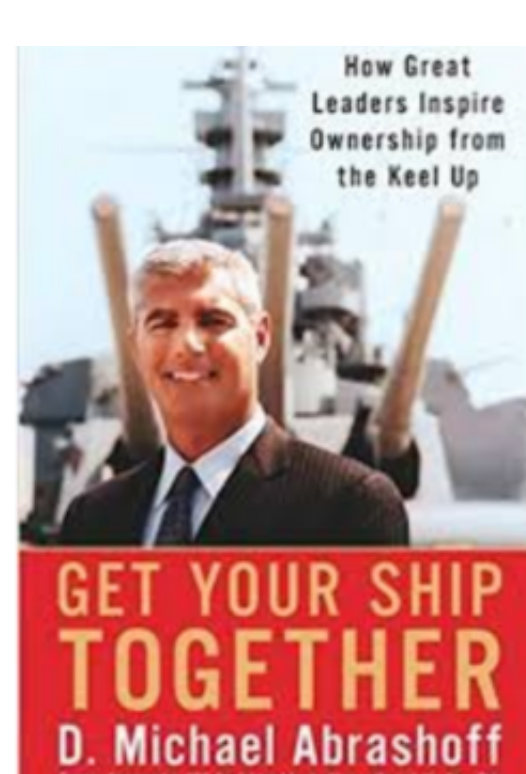
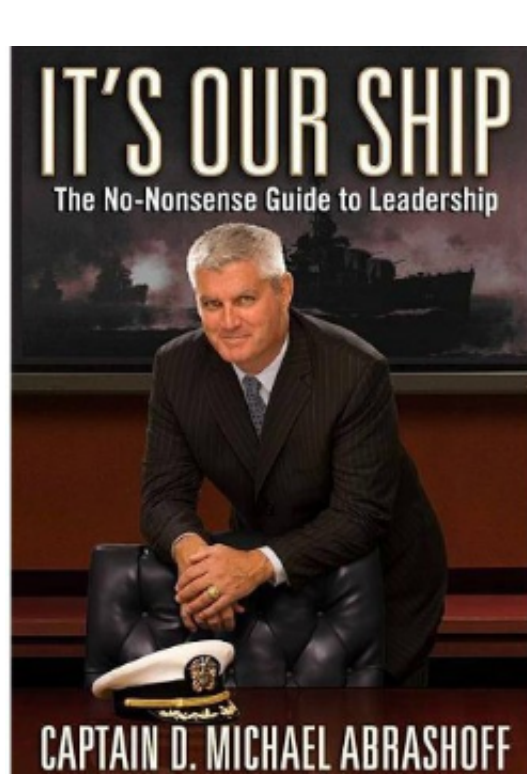
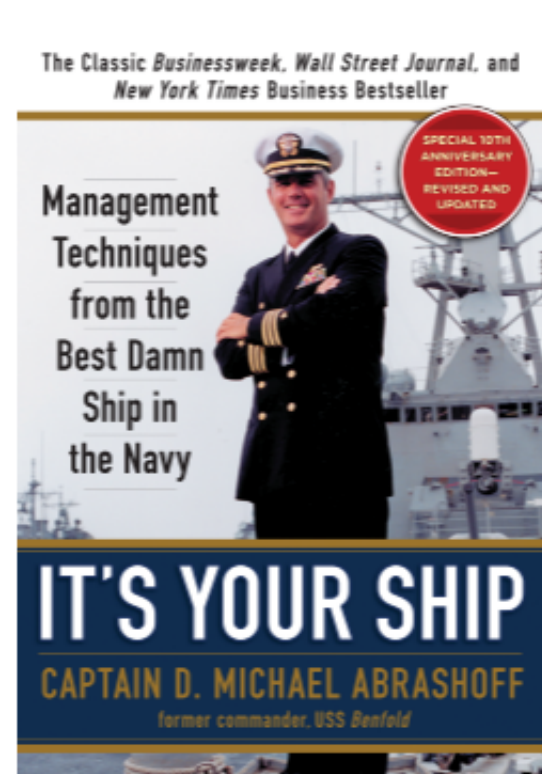
MIKE'S BIO

- [Mike's Story](#)

FEATURED MEDIA

- [Fast Company: The Agenda - Grassroots Leadership](#)
- [Mike Abrashoff: Change Management - It Begins With Me](#)
- [Mike Abrashoff: Safety is No Accident](#)

IN PRINT



TESTIMONIALS



"Mike was so fabulous – not a dry eye in the audience. He made us look good, but more importantly, he inspired our leaders to be their best and get better – even if by just 1% a day. We will definitely want to work with him again in the future."

– U.S. Patent & Trademark Office (VIRTUAL EVENT)



"Everyone loved Mike. He got a standing ovation. First time I've seen a keynote receive one in my history with ADESA."

– ADESA (Automotive Dealer Exchange Services of America)



"HOME RUN!!! Mike Abrashoff was a bases loaded home run! I believe he is the best that we have ever had. Wow!!!! Wonderful feedback from the members. All future speakers will be judged against a very high bar that he set!!"

– First Financial Resources



"It was a pleasure working with you – and it's always the best news when our audience responds so well to a speaker. Your average score over 9 meetings was 4.9 out of 5.0 – wow!"

– CoBank



"Mike, you hit it out of the park, as I knew you would. Your message – on point and was exactly what I was looking for. It emphasized some of the things we were already working on and provided a good foundation for us to build on."

– President/CEO, Empire Caterpillar Southwest



"You were amazing!! Kicking off the convention with a standing ovation is a home run."

– CEO, Material Handling Equipment Distributors Association (MHEDA)



"Mike – Your presentation was an absolute home-run and we have the survey responses to back it up. Not only would I recommend you without hesitation, I have already done so."

– President & CEO, The Lancaster Chamber of Commerce & Industry



"We have asked Mike Abrashoff to speak to our team twice now and he is in high demand for a third appearance. His message and coaching around leadership is perfect for every level of management in our organization ranging from the General Managers of our stores right up to our CEO."

– Chief Operating Officer, FIVE GUYS



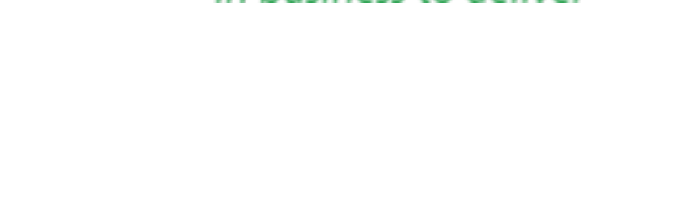
"We have never had such positive feedback so you very much exceeded our expectations. You were quoted numerous times throughout the remainder of the conference which says people took your message to heart and will put it to work in their everyday jobs – exactly what we aimed for!"

– Director of Staffing, Employee Relations & Development, Denbury Resources



"Any audience that cares about leadership, culture, change management, performance and teamwork would benefit immensely from your presentation. Our group enjoyed not only your message, but also your presentation style. Needless to say, you received very high ratings in our post-conference survey."

– Vice President, Industry Affairs & Member Relations, National Association of Chain Drug Stores



"The feedback was overwhelmingly positive! I personally have never listened to a better speaker. Your message was tailor made for my team and I look forward to discussing future opportunities with you."

– VP, TransCanada Energy Operations



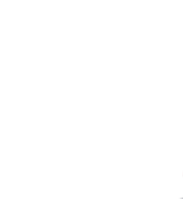
"Mike's personality and message was both inspirational and educational. Several conference attendees have told me that he was the best speaker we've ever had. He certainly was the best way to close out our Symposium!"

– Director, Public Relations, Mercy Health



"In the close to four years I have been here Mike's presentation was widely recognized as the best by far. He spoke for 75 minutes ...no notes... no overheads... No podium...right out front. His Q/A was outstanding... our managers appreciated that we brought in someone that good. He does not try to impress people with any gimmicks or trendy expressions. I will call on him again and trust him with our most valuable asset...our people."

– Chief Operation Officer, Atlantis Paradise Island, Bahamas



"He knocked it out of the park. He was so good and on point that it almost looked like we wrote his script. The group loved him and the parallels to managing a ship and mill are remarkable."

– Public Relations and Communications, International Paper



"Your presentation in New Orleans was outstanding. Not only was it the highest rated of the week (4.95 out of 5), it was timely, inspirational and informative."

– Sales Trainer, Nexstar Network