

MEDIA ALERT

CULTURE FIRST

9 Leadership Practices That Build Elite Teams

by Jon B. Becker

PRESALE BEGINS APRIL 1, 2026 • RELEASE DATE MAY 15, 2026

"Culture First is a no-excuses guide to building teams that win when it counts. Becker makes the point plain: culture isn't a slogan—it's the operating system that drives standards, decisions, trust, and accountability under pressure. Clear, actionable, and built for leaders who want results, this book shows you how to set the bar, reinforce the right behaviors, and make excellence non-negotiable."

— Rich Diviney, Retired Navy SEAL Commander, Bestselling Author of *The Attributes and Masters of Uncertainty*



ABOUT THE BOOK

After 40 years working alongside the world's most elite military and law enforcement units, Jon Becker reveals the nine leadership practices that separate good organizations from truly elite ones.

PUBLISHER

Lessons Learned Publishing

FORMATS & PRICING

Hardcover: \$29.99 | Paperback: \$19.99

Ebook: \$9.99 | Audiobook: \$9.99 (self-narrated)

MEDIA CONTACT

Milena Dean • mdean@aardvarktactical.com

AUTHOR CONTACT

Jon Becker • jbecker@thedebrief.live

BOOK DESCRIPTIONS

SHORT DESCRIPTION (100 words)

The world's most elite teams don't succeed because of better tactics or superior talent. They win because of culture. After four decades supplying and observing elite military and law enforcement units across five continents, Jon Becker identified nine practices that separate good organizations from truly elite ones. Whether you run a SWAT team, a tech startup, a sales organization, or a sports program, the fundamentals are identical. Culture First translates hard-won tactical wisdom into practical frameworks any leader can implement Monday morning. No theory. No fluff. Just the practices that build teams people would follow anywhere.

MEDIUM DESCRIPTION (150 words)

Most leadership books tell you what to think. This one shows you how elite teams actually operate when the stakes are life and death.

For four decades, Jon Becker has had unusual access to organizations that cannot afford to fail—special operations units, SWAT teams, and crisis response organizations where the cost of poor leadership is measured in lives, not quarterly earnings. What he discovered: the principles that build elite performance are universal.

Whether you run a SWAT team, a tech startup, a sales organization, or a sports program, the fundamentals are identical. The same practices that enable a tactical team to execute flawlessly under pressure will help any organization make better decisions, develop stronger leaders, retain top talent, and build the kind of culture people fight to join.

LONG DESCRIPTION (200+ words)

Why do some teams perform at an elite level while others—given the same resources, training, and talent—struggle to deliver even basic results? The answer isn't strategy, talent, or technology. It's culture.

Culture is your organization's operating system. It determines how decisions get made, how problems get solved, how people treat each other, and whether your best performers stay or leave. Get it right and everything else gets easier. Get it wrong and no amount of strategy will save you.

For four decades, Jon Becker has had unusual access to organizations that cannot afford to fail—special operations units, SWAT teams, and crisis response organizations where the cost of poor leadership is measured in lives, not quarterly earnings. What he discovered: the principles that build elite performance are universal.

Whether you run a SWAT team, a tech startup, a sales organization, or a sports program, the fundamentals are identical. Culture First breaks down nine specific leadership practices that separate elite organizations from average ones, with real stories from the tactical world, clear explanations, and 'How to Start' sections you can implement Monday morning.

THE NINE PRACTICES

Culture First presents a comprehensive nine-practice system designed to build and sustain high-performing organizational culture. Each practice addresses a critical element of elite team development, from intentional culture design through continuous improvement.

1. Build Culture Intentionally – Because the default is dysfunction
2. Build a Team of Selfless Leaders – It's not about you
3. Select the Right People – Kissing frogs enthusiastically
4. Embrace Strong People – Knives not spoons
5. Enforce High Standards – What you tolerate is your standard
6. Collaborate Deliberately – Thank you for disagreeing
7. Build a Decision Machine – Make a decision
8. Improve Continuously – Embrace the kaizen lifestyle
9. Take Risks & Embrace Failure – It's ok to spin the racecar

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Jon B. Becker has spent four decades dedicating himself to protecting tactical operators. He is the founder and CEO of AARDVARK Tactical, a leading provider of tactical equipment and custom solutions, and founder of PROJECT7 Armor. Jon hosts The Debrief with Jon Becker podcast (seven seasons, 1.5 million listens, top 100 government podcasts in 15 countries), is a TEDx speaker, documentary filmmaker, and recipient of the Spirit of the NTOA Award. He holds a JD from Loyola Law School and lives in Los Angeles with his wife of 36 years.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

ONE-LINE BIO

Jon B. Becker is the founder of AARDVARK Tactical and PROJECT7 Armor, host of The Debrief podcast, and a TEDx speaker who has spent four decades working with elite military and law enforcement units worldwide.

MEDIUM BIO (150 words)

Jon B. Becker has spent four decades dedicating himself to protecting tactical operators. He is the founder and CEO of AARDVARK Tactical, a leading provider of tactical equipment and custom solutions, and founder of PROJECT7, an armor manufacturer providing purpose-built, scalable tactical armor. He is also a licensed California attorney.

Since founding AARDVARK at just seventeen, Jon has had the privilege of working with some of the world's top law enforcement and military units, witnessing effective tactical leaders as they guide their teams through dangerous situations. His desire to share these leadership lessons led him to launch The Debrief with Jon Becker podcast, now in its seventh season with over 1.5 million listens. He is a TEDx speaker ('How SWAT Teams Make Better Decisions'), documentary filmmaker, and recipient of the Spirit of the NTOA Award. Jon holds a JD from Loyola Law School and lives in Los Angeles with his wife of 36 years.

FULL BIO (250+ words)

Jon B. Becker has spent the past four decades dedicating himself to protecting tactical operators. He is the founder and CEO of AARDVARK Tactical, a leading provider of tactical equipment and custom solutions, and founder of PROJECT7, an armor manufacturer that provides purpose-built, scalable, and integrated tactical armor built to suit operators' unique mission needs.

After founding AARDVARK at just seventeen, it wasn't long before customers began asking Becker to sell them tactical gear in addition to the climbing gear AARDVARK originally specialized in. During this time, Becker spent thousands of hours training with the teams he was serving while also attending Loyola Law School. Once he became an attorney, his interest in civil rights and police litigation merged into writing for many of the top tactical publications. As AARDVARK grew, it became involved in military system integration and specially manufactured gear designed to enhance operator safety—and that has remained the company's priority ever since.

Along the way, Becker has had the privilege of working with some of the world's top law enforcement and military units, including the amazing leaders who guide their teams through some of the most dangerous situations imaginable. Through The Debrief, now in its seventh season with over 1.5 million listens, Becker shares their incredible stories of leadership with the world. He is a TEDx speaker, documentary filmmaker, and recipient of the Spirit of the NTOA Award.

Jon holds a JD from Loyola Law School Los Angeles and a BA in Philosophy from California State University Los Angeles. He is a five-time Ironman triathlete and sports car racer. Jon lives in Los Angeles with his wife of 36 years. They have two adult children.

SELECTED ENDORSEMENTS

"Jon Becker is a national treasure."

— **John Dowd, Former Navy SEAL, Founder of Forge Software**

"Jon is welcomed into our tribe based on earned trust, proven selflessness, and a shared sense of purpose. For these reasons, Jon offers the lessons articulated herein with a rare level of credibility that makes Culture First an enduring work."

— **Brian Driscoll, Former Acting FBI Director**

"Culture First is a no-excuses guide to building teams that win when it counts. Becker makes the point plain: culture isn't a slogan—it's the operating system that drives standards, decisions, trust, and accountability under pressure. Clear, actionable, and built for leaders who want results, this book shows you how to set the bar, reinforce the right behaviors, and make excellence non-negotiable."

— **Rich Diviney, Retired Navy SEAL Commander, Bestselling Author of The Attributes and Masters of Uncertainty**

"Want your business to succeed? Want to build the best teams? Want to be known as a great leader? Build a great culture. In this book Jon Becker shows you how."

— **Pete Blaber, Former Special Mission Unit Commander, Author of The Mission, The Men, and Me**

"A 'must read' for every person in every organization that strives for successful outcomes."

— **Michael Lumpkin, Former Assistant Secretary of Defense, US Navy SEAL (Ret.)**

"Jon is extraordinarily credible on building a high-performing team—the reason we have him present to our entire team."

— **Lt. Lee McMillion, Commander, LAPD D-Platoon (SWAT)**

"No leader has an excuse for not reading this book."

— **Cmdr. Nick Sprague, President, Rocky Mountain Tactical Teams Association**

"I wish I had this book when I was a young SWAT sergeant. Without culture, tactics fail. With it, ordinary groups become elite teams."

— **Capt. Toby Darby, CATO Board Member, Glendale PD (Ret.)**

PUBLICATION DETAILS

Title: Culture First: 9 Leadership Practices That Build Elite Teams

Author: Jon B. Becker

Publisher: Lessons Learned Publishing, Los Angeles, CA

Presale Date: April 1, 2026

Release Date: May 15, 2026

Library of Congress: 2026904427

DISTRIBUTION

IngramSpark, Amazon KDP

FORMATS & PRICING

Hardcover: \$29.99 — ISBN 979-8-9943454-3-6

Paperback: \$19.99 — ISBN 979-8-9943454-1-2

Ebook: \$9.99 — ISBN 979-8-9943454-0-5

Audiobook: \$9.99 (self-narrated) — ISBN 979-8-9943454-4-3

CATEGORIES

Business & Money > Management & Leadership > Leadership

Business & Money > Human Resources & Personnel Management

Business & Money > Organizational Behavior

CONTACT INFORMATION

MEDIA CONTACT

Milena Dean

mdean@aardvarktactical.com

AUTHOR CONTACT

Jon Becker

jbecker@thedebrief.live

LINKS & RESOURCES

ONLINE

Personal Website: jonbbecker.com

Podcast: thedebrief.live

Company: aardvarktactical.com

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/jonbbecker](https://www.linkedin.com/in/jonbbecker)

VIDEO & MEDIA

Documentary: [confrontinghate.mov](#)

High-res images: jonbbecker.com/media