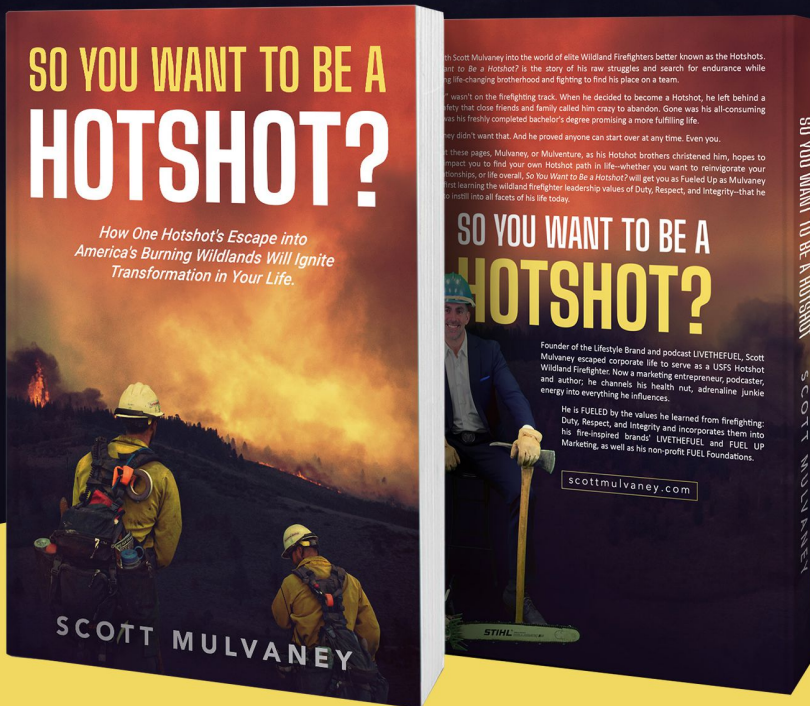


# NEW BOOK

LAUNCH DATE **AUG. 27, 2021**

## SNEAKPEAK CHAPTERS

Chapter 15 "Getting Humble"



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**FORMER HOTSHOT WILDLAND FIREFIGHTER**  
**SCOTT W. MULVANEY**

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# CHAPTER 15

## GETTING HUMBLE

*“Every person that you meet knows something you don’t. Learn from them.”*

*~ H. Jackson Brown Jr.*



It’s crucial that a chapter about “Getting Humble” exists in this book. I touched on it in an earlier chapter, and all of these lessons do overlap.

My thought process behind getting humble centered around the fact that I never truly understood the value of the word “Humble” until my attempt to enter into a firefighting career.

Now I’ve actually had a few humble lessons prior to taking a break from the big business corporate world.

A great example was when I took the step to go back and finish my degree before I started firefighting.

I set this goal in the mid-2000s, and to tie it into the lessons learned from serving as a Hotshot Wildland Firefighter, there were mistakes made and hurdles to overcome.

I have been humbled many times, and have learned it is great to get humbled from time to time. Granted, it is also good to shoot for the stars, too—to be the go-getter and try and become an overachiever.

## GETTING HUMBLE

The point of this chapter is to align those initiatives with the importance of understanding what it takes to get humble quickly.

### Getting Humble Quickly

The faster you can “check yourself before you wreck yourself,” the sooner you can get into the humble mindset. Achieving the level of wearing your successful armor is great, but you must still find ways to balance the humble component.

***“Tony Robbins is a mountain of a man with hands that could palm your entire skull. He’s like a gigantic fluffy bunny of success, though. I feel he strives to be a deeper level of humble every single day.”***

That’s what I mean when I say it’s important to work on being humble.

I had been working my way up in the telecommunications world for many years and was in my second career in telecom at a company called Omnipoint. Omnipoint eventually merged with Western Wireless, which then rebranded as Voicestream Wireless. Those transitions concluded with a final acquisition and the company known today as T-Mobile USA.

I started my career path by simply answering phones as a call center representative in the late 90s. I can’t remember exactly how much I made, but I think it was between \$12 and \$14 an hour. When I got hired, I said, “I’m a go-getter with a bit of a Type A personality. I want to move up and do more.”

Once I was in that job, I realized that I enjoyed learning a lot and

## SO, YOU WANT TO BE A HOTSHOT?

then teaching what I had learned to others. I started working my way up in the company and eventually moved into a leadership role where I helped my fellow representatives work on answering questions and supporting the team as their lead.

Over time, I gathered enough experience, and my supervisors gave me a shot at being in a semi-permanent team leader position managing 20-30 personnel. There were many, many teams in this 24-hour call center here in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

Some people would answer a simple phone call; others held managerial roles. Right before my promotion hit, I was still trying to follow the management's guidelines to lead my people.

When I think back on that time now, I suspect some of the opportunity went to my head. I didn't understand the importance of the value of being humble yet.

In my transition to team leader, our manager was unavailable, and there wasn't enough coverage for the team. I couldn't step up in the way that I wanted to because the resources weren't there, but I was ready to show the rest of the team what I was capable of.

This went on for several months before one of the call center managers, Gerry, pulled me aside and said, "Scott, you are definitely putting in a lot of time, and we know you're the go-getter and want this opportunity, but you're not ready yet."

Gerry went on, "I have observed that you are always willing to slow down enough to tell us all the work that's being accomplished. You're always telling us what you're doing here and what you're doing there, but you're not letting your team lead the way. You're not speaking to each of their accolades."

I was young, and lacking experience, and a part of me was frustrated because I was obsessed with moving up, and it wasn't happening. My

## GETTING HUMBLE

age was a variable. But I didn't care how old I was. I wanted that salary bump.

Gerry was one of many leadership influencers in my professional career. I'm happy I paused and took in all of the valuable feedback to grow and improve. If I could have coached my team even better, they would have been singing my praises.

Gerry made me consider how important it was to let your team sing your praise.

A leader needs to be truly inspiring. A leader needs to motivate their team and let them shine, even if it's on your behalf.

Back in the day, I didn't realize that it was about the team as a whole and that I was just a cog in the machine for all of our success.

I didn't think about how I could help my team members shine through my leadership.

Fortunately, my manager skills would eventually improve, but I have never forgotten that lesson in my early twenties.

About a year later, I did eventually get promoted to a management role. The timing couldn't have been better since the job management job titles were being removed from the frontline of the call centers, and we were all to be retrained to become business coaches. This was a great turn of events since my fellow business coaches and I would now learn to develop and lead our fellow personnel through behavioral analysis and one-on-one coaching development.

I ended up having the honor of leading one of the top-performing teams in the call center, which ensured that my teammates and I could always pick our preferred working schedules to guarantee consistent life balance outside of our very committed work lives.



## SO, YOU WANT TO BE A HOTSHOT?

As a firefighter in 2011, as you know, I had already learned some of the lessons of being humble.

I had already begun to understand those values.

It had been five years since I had left T-Mobile, and I'd worked at a couple of other businesses and returned to school during those years.

As I joined the fire crew, I thought, *I have a great resume, a Bachelor of Science in Marketing, and I've studied psychology to boot. So, I've got a pretty good clue, right!*

When I became part of the Hotshot crew, I thought I was pretty bulletproof professionally. I felt confident and ready to be one of the preferred crew members they could entrust responsibilities to.

But I was about to be knocked down a peg. I was about to learn about humility all over again.

I was back to where I was before becoming the overachiever; I was the rookie.

That's when I was told by leadership from the superintendent and down to the squad bosses, and even the team leads: "Scott, listen, man, it doesn't matter what degree you have. It doesn't matter what career you came from and all the stuff you've achieved. When you show up here as a rookie Hotshot, you're no better than anybody else in this group."

He went on, "Just like everybody else, whether they're 18, 21 (or in my case, 31), you step up every single day and show us what you're capable of. We don't need your voice. Your voice means nothing to us. We see that you're not just reading the training, studying it, and memorizing it; you're capable of implementing it."

That was the point of our thought process as we went through critical training at the beginning of the season. What we were supposed to

## GETTING HUMBLE

do didn't just encompass physical fitness. We also had to be able to acclimate with each other and work together. All of the time spent growing the crew cohesion would eventually improve communications and safety on the fire line.

Now, all these years later, I still have a lot to learn. I still have the opportunity to be humbled.

I didn't think that I was better than anybody else on the crew, but I did think that I had a better opportunity to step up as a leader because I'd already lived ten years more than some of my brothers and had served in other forms of leadership roles.

When you're in this position, you don't just want to focus on yourself. You want to focus on everybody because we are only as strong as our weakest link.

It's important to remind yourself to keep getting up and stepping up, not just for you, but for your crew too. Don't be afraid to put in the work—that sweat equity—and definitely don't be afraid to keep your mouth shut, rookie. It's all about the asses and elbows in the beginning.

On the Hotshot crew, it was all about putting your head down, shutting up, listening, and taking it in.

They wanted healthy fit people, and quality men and women.

***"I learned rather quickly that Hotshots weren't necessarily looking for leaders when you were a rookie or Snookie."***

But you do want to consistently rise to the occasion as you grow through your position and assignments. When you are ready and leadership has seen the right behaviors, they will choose you. Your hard work will sell itself.



## SO, YOU WANT TO BE A HOTSHOT?

My team already had its leadership structure in place. They had their new superintendent, they had their squad bosses, and their leads established.

It was my job to be a good little runner and get the tasks done. But I was eventually responsible for our crew's entire cache—all of the gear, storage, and inventory management. I geeked out on it, and I suspect leadership already knew this. They saw I would be a good fit.

My rookie year was a great, great reminder and lesson in the importance and the power of living humbly.

It was a big wake-up call for me, and I relearned the same lesson the next year—when I became a Snookie.

You're only as good as the work that you put out, so shut up, put your head down and get to work.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**Scott W. Mulvaney & wife, Dr. Kristen Fenstermacher VMD,  
at their ski wedding in the Canadian Rockies, 2019**

Founder of the Lifestyle Brand and podcast LIVETHEFUEL, Scott W. Mulvaney escaped corporate life to serve as a USFS Hotshot Wildland Firefighter. Now a marketing entrepreneur, podcaster, and author; he channels his health nut, adrenaline junkie energy into everything he influences.

He is FUELED by the values he learned from firefighting: Duty, Respect, Integrity and incorporates them into his fire-inspired brands LIVETHEFUEL and FUEL UP Marketing as well as his non-profit FUEL Foundations.

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