

Capturing Saddam with Empathy-Based Listening

Eric Maddox was the first civilian interrogator for the Defense Intelligence Agency. This groundbreaking role came about in large measure because he was the interrogator who got the intel that led to the capture of Saddam Hussein.

But there is one simple idea behind the headline that made this impressive feat possible. And the practice of this idea has come to define Maddox's work. The idea? Empathy-based listening.

If "empathy" is not the first word that comes to mind when you think of interrogators, join the club. During the Iraq war, Maddox was sent to join a Delta Force team tasked with finding Saddam Hussein. This was a new venture for Maddox, whose previous role in the military included Chinese Mandarin intelligence collection.

After arriving in Iraq, Maddox quickly developed the opinion that the current interrogation tactics were not as effective as they needed to be. Maddox developed a new approach of using empathy-based listening techniques on those he was interrogating.

Maddox began working to gain detainees' trust through listening to them and understanding their stories. As he conducted 300 interrogations over the course of five months, Maddox gained deeper and deeper insight into the insurgency. This eventually led to the capture of Saddam Hussein in a harrowing down-to-the-wire operation on the final day of Maddox's tour in Iraq.

Listen to the full interview with Eric Maddox on Life as Leadership with Josh Friedeman to hear more about capturing Saddam Hussein and to get the practical steps you need to use

empathy-based listening and gain the trust of anyone you interact with.

Eric Maddox gave his recommendation for the one thing you should do this week to be a better leader. See what he said by downloading the *free Leadership Action List*. This is a year's worth of weekly action steps you can take to become a better leader. {eoa}

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