From:  Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy  
To:     All Chief Petty Officers  

Subj:   CONNECTIONS  

1. The Chiefs Mess was designed to be “the connection” between officers and enlisted. If we’re not creating connectedness, we are not fulfilling our role. We work closely with officers, where ideas and orders are generated, and translate their direction to enlisted Sailors who execute tasks and orders. 

2. Our Mess must be inclusive. A significant level of trust is bestowed upon us that can be lost faster than it is earned. We must generate mutual trust with our people and empower them as they develop. We must reward those who create strong outcomes and positive culture. We have to encourage others to speak up and share their ideas; then act on those ideas. No good idea can be restricted by rank or time in service. We need to keep an open mind and encourage feedback. 

3. Chiefs connect with Sailors by listening well, by being authentic, and by caring about their well-being. Sailors connect with Chiefs who model ability, trust, loyalty, and respect. The type of leadership we exercise is reflected in our Sailors. A great majority of Chief Petty Officers today are effective leaders because they were led by Chiefs who modeled these behaviors. 

4. Sailors connect with strong leaders who are competent, committed, and fair – a leader who will not remove their challenges, but teach them how to navigate through them. We are constantly being observed on how we direct, ignore, act, respond, tolerate, and correct. Our egos can be our weakness, just as lack of care, burnout, laziness, procrastination, entitlement, and a victim complex can. We have all seen this in our career and our Sailors suffer because of it. 

5. Our connection with the wardroom is unconditional and continuous. There is no daylight between an effective Mess and the Wardroom. We are one team with different roles, responsibilities, and expectations, and it is a Chief’s responsibility to mentor and develop junior officers. This should be embraced and not looked at as a different standing. This relationship is valued and revered, and to think otherwise is not understanding your role as a Chief. 

6. It is imperative that we project ourselves as humble servant leaders, professionals, and teachers, and steer away from the perception that the Chiefs Mess is prideful and exclusive. If we are unaware of how we project our image, we will be perceived as arrogant, hollow, and ineffective to our leaders and our Sailors, which will tear at the heart of our connectedness.

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