

The Tuskegee Airmen

On December 7th, 1941, Japan attacked American ships in Hawaii; every American was shocked at this sudden attack, and wanted to help the United States win WWII. Then, Nazi Germany, who was friends with Japan, declared war on America. America had to stop Japan from taking over the entire Pacific and Asian regions. Plus, they had to help stop Germany from taking over Europe and committing genocides against people who weren't "perfect" Germans. Everyone wanted to help stop Japan and Germany, including African Americans. Sadly, at the time America wouldn't let blacks serve in the American Army, and they certainly wouldn't let them be pilots, until in 1941 when FDR created the Tuskegee Airmen.

However, at the time, the program wasn't called the Tuskegee Airmen. It was called the Tuskegee Experiment, because people didn't think that they would succeed. Yet they did succeed, because they had six guiding principles that would help them become amazing pilots. The first one was **Aim High**. The airmen had to aim high and do the best they could to defend the bombers moving over Italy and Germany. The Airmen knew that these bombers were vital to winning the war, so they did the best they could to fight off the German planes. The second principle was **Believe in Yourself**. The airmen had to believe in themselves, because the people who saw the program didn't believe in them, hence the name Tuskegee Experiment. The airmen, however, believed that they could do amazing things. The third principle was **Use Your Brain**. The airmen like all pilots, had to use their brains in order to shoot down German planes and defend bombers on missions to weaken the Wehrmacht (German Infantry) defenses or to bomb cities and German camps. Every pilot had to use their brains to counteract enemy plane movements.

The fourth principle was **Be Ready to Go**. The Tuskegee Airmen went on about 1,800 missions between 1941 and 1945, and anything could happen when they weren't on missions. In war, you always have to be prepared for anything so you don't die. You have to always be prepared, because most of the time you don't know what the enemies are going to do, until they are already doing it. The fifth principle is **Never Quit**. They experienced a lot of racism and horrible treatment even while they were pilots, but they didn't let other people's prejudices get to them. They didn't listen to others' hurtful words, because the airmen knew those words weren't true. Lastly, there is **Expect to Win**. The Tuskegee Airmen were known for getting bombers safely to the enemy positions and back. The reason they had such a great record is because they believed that they could do the missions successfully. If they thought that they couldn't do the missions then they wouldn't have been as good. This is the same with normal things!

All of the six principles can also be applied to modern day situations, not just life threatening dogfights in the air. First, **Aim High**. I usually aim to do well on tests and use technology very well. Second, **Believe in Yourself**. If I believe in myself then I can do great things. I believe that I can make good animations and they turn out good. Third, I have to **Use My Brain**. If I don't use my brain I can't do anything good so I have to use my brain to do things. For example, the main reason I get good grades in math is because I use my brain. Fourth, **Be Ready to Go**. I always have to be prepared in life for things that might take us by surprise. The pandemic took us all by surprise and we weren't prepared. What happened afterwards is what happens when you aren't prepared for things. Fifth, **Never Quit**, because if I quit then I can't do the thing I am trying to do. For example, I make animations and even though it takes hours, I don't quit. Lastly, **Expect to Win**. Like believing in myself, I have to think that I can win and do well on something if I want to win. When I take a test I can expect to get a good grade and I end up getting a good grade. Those six principles helped the Tuskegee Airmen be great pilots and they can also help me be great.