



Mary Davie

Deputy Associate Administrator
Mission Support Transformation Office
NASA - National Aeronautics and Space
Administration

WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON BEING AUTHENTIC AS A FEMALE LEADER? OR AS A FEMALE LEADER, WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON BRINGING YOUR WHOLE SELF TO WORK?

You must be authentic and bring your whole self. I feel that is one of the most important things you can do for yourself and for the people you work with. No pretenses, no need to try to have all the answers. No one does. I have always felt comfortable saying "I don't know, but I'll find someone who does or do what I can to find an answer." I have experienced some discrimination and bias when I was young, and probably because I am female, but my response was to always demonstrate my capabilities and earn trust and respect.

I am not the type of person who puts on the face or pretends that I know all the answers or the has the "large and in charge" or "powerful" attitude. I believe that if you build trust and confidence and provide value, in the long run it will serve you better.

CONTACT

WEBSITE: www.NASA.gov

EMAIL: mary.a.davie@nasa.gov

NASA's Vision: To discover and expand knowledge for the benefit of humanity.

Executive Women in Government
Leadership Spotlight



MARY DAVIE

Deputy Associate Administrator
Mission Support Transformation Office
NASA – National Aeronautics and Space Administration

WHAT IS THE TOUGHEST DECISION YOU EVER HAD TO MAKE?

One of the toughest challenges I had was leading the rebuilding and rebranding of an organization following years of bad business decisions that became very public and impacted many of the federal agencies we were supporting. We did not have support or confidence from much of the leadership at the time and the workforce was concerned about the viability of the organization and their jobs. Because of significant financial losses, we also had to find a way to downsize the organization by 40%, about 240 people. I had to come up with a strategy to rebuild and regain customer confidence with a reduced workforce. This meant figuring out who would stay in our group and who would need to be moved elsewhere in the agency – we wanted to ensure that no one would lose their job and that everyone would have a place in the agency. I worked across the agency to ensure every office would help provide employees with new opportunities. It was a tough time for most everyone in the agency, but the agency really came together and took care of our employees. The toughest decision was figuring out who stayed and who had to go. It was complex and ground rules had to be established.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE SOMEONE WHO WANTS TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN HER CAREER?

A few thoughts on this: Do what you love, put the people and your organization first, and take chances – step up and step out to try new things and new opportunities.

It is important to be professional and take the work seriously but not yourself. We are human and we need to have fun at work and love what we do and who we work with. I am a lighthearted person in general and I even tell on myself when I make a mistake!

It is also important to develop a network and relationships. Get involved in different groups and organizations in your field and be active.

And lastly, never go after a job just for the promotion. That is usually not good for you or for the people you will be working with. Really think through what you can bring to a job and how you would be able to bring value in a role to help the organization thrive. Be self-aware and ask yourself if you will be the right person for the job. Be mindful of what you can give to others to run the organization.
