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FAVORITE QUOTE OR MANTRA THAT YOU LIVE BY?

I love quotes, so I actually have many favorites. One that I think I try to remind myself of on a regular basis is from former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, "You might not be able to control your circumstances, but you can control your response to your circumstances."

NAME A LEADER THAT YOU ADMIRE AND THE QUALITIES THAT YOU BELIEVE MAKE THEM A SUCCESSFUL LEADER?

One of my favorite leaders is Madeleine Albright. She broke a reinforced glass ceiling in becoming the first female Secretary of State. She was a trailblazer, tough, strong, professional and a mom. In many ways, she has literally changed the world.

BEST PROFESSIONAL ADVICE THAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED?

I have to say that I have had many wonderful mentors. One of my favorite mentors said to me, what I later found out to be a quote from Alan K. Simpson: "If you have integrity, nothing else matters, if you don't have integrity, nothing else matters."

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WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO WORK IN YOUR FIELD OF EXPERTISE?

I was drawn to the criminal justice field because I wanted to be a lawyer. As I got closer to graduating from high school, I realized that my family situation was not going to enable me to just study for a six- year college commitment required to become a lawyer. I still had a strong interest in the law enforcement and justice system, so I pursued a criminal justice degree, I stumbled across Customs, and thought it was going to be a short term stepping stone towards another career, but it grabbed me, and 30 + years I am still learning and loving the work that I do.

ONE TIP THAT YOU WOULD GIVE TO WOMEN THAT ASPIRE TO BE IN LEADERSHIP ROLES.

It's important to remember that you have to know your business, be professional, work hard and strive to develop your strategic awareness. Many times, as we work our way through the ranks, we learn about the technical aspects of our own job, we move up into leadership roles, we have to be able to lead people and we have to understand the strategic aspects of situations, because that is what your bosses will be looking at and dealing with.

The ability to develop your strategic awareness will enable you to better understand the "why" certain decisions are made, but can actually allow you to make more informed decisions within your own sphere of influence. I also want to say to women that they need to have courage to speak up (professionally) for what you believe in, and be brave enough to step into roles or assignments that make you nervous. This is how you know you are growing.

YOUR ADVICE TO OTHERS ON HOW THEY MAY BE SUCCESSFUL IN THEIR CAREER?

I would say define what your idea of "successful" is, and be brutally honest with yourself about "what" and "why" you think you want that goal. I recognize that this doesn't sound very motivational, but it really is. Sometimes, as women, we get trapped in others' definition of a successful career. It's important to know yourself and know what success is to YOU. Then, and only then, will have the right goal to work towards.

Pro Tip: You can always reassess as you go.