



Executive Women in Government
Leadership Spotlight



HONORABLE REBECCA F. DYE

Commissioner

Federal Maritime Commission

FAVORITE QUOTE OR MANTRA THAT YOU LIVE BY?

There are many, but my latest is from Simon Sinek, "There is no going back to normal."

YOUR ADVICE TO OTHERS ON HOW THEY CAN BE SUCCESSFUL IN THEIR CAREERS?

You can read your way to being a better leader. I've added a few of my current favorite authors (and YouTube stars) to the end of this Spotlight. Read lots, find your favorite, and try it on. I find this is a very personal thing. Don't try to imitate a leadership approach that you find doesn't fit you well. Stay away from leadership "slogans." These may make you sound like an amateur leader and destroy your credibility with those who report to you and moreover, with those to whom you report.

CONTACT

PHONE:
(202) 523-5718

WEBSITE:
www.fmc.gov

EMAIL: rdye@fmc.gov

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO WORK IN YOUR FIELD OF EXPERTISE?

I admit that I didn't begin my career with a "passion" for ships! I ascribe to the advice of the TV reality show star Mike Row (Dirty Jobs): Don't follow your passion, follow opportunity! You may find success in an area you would never have imagined. After graduating from law school, I realized that I didn't want to be a typical lawyer. Not a good place to be! But my favorite law professor pointed me in the direction of the United States Coast Guard because of my interest in international law. His was the best career advice I ever received and set me on a path to encounter all of my future opportunities.

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

Find a senior sponsor in your organization. This is a person who is not necessarily a mentor, although at times the roles may overlap. A sponsor will advise you when you need internal "political" interpersonal advice and will intervene at senior levels when you need help. I am a sponsor for several of my senior staff. This is because they are outstanding performers and among the best people I have ever worked with. To obtain a sponsor, you must be this type of professional. I should also mention that successful men always have senior sponsors who take an active role in their careers.

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

I think we all are in the best position to measure the leadership traits of those we know first-hand. I've worked with many talented leaders in my career, many of whom were demanding of themselves as well as their staff. It's exciting to work with someone who is committed and intensely engaged, and so I'd say that a strong commitment to the business at hand is an essential part of being a successful leader. The other most important traits I have found in successful leaders is the respect and trust that they extend to those who work with them. The best leaders I know create a collegial atmosphere in which success is shared. Finally, successful leaders do not waste time dwelling on failures; they quickly deal with setbacks without "drama," and maintain focus on success!

SUGGESTED READING FAVORITES FROM COMMISSIONER DYE

More suggested reading Latest favorites:

Anything from Patrick Lencioni (great At the Table podcasts)

Also, anything from Simon Sinek (I love The Infinite Game)

My all-time favorite is Jim Collins (Good to Great will lead you to read his other books).

Several general good reads:

In Extremis Leadership by Thomas A. Kolditz

The Innovators by Walter Isaacson

The Black Swan by Nassim Taleb