



Connie Podesta | Executive Summary

Leadership isn't a 9 to 5 job. It's not about a title or a corner office. Leadership is a 24-7 job. It's about how you lead your life day in and day out.

The choices you make from the moment you leave the office, the type relationships you have, who you choose to hang out with, the quality of your life, how you take care of yourself, those choices will determine more about your career than anything you do on the job.

If you need your job right now, if you do not have the confidence in your intellect and talents to find employment if something happened, then you're never going to be happy at work.

If you think you need your significant other, if you don't believe that you could lead a worthwhile life on your own, then you'll put up with things in a relationship that you should never put up with. Relationships should be about choice.

You're on stage every single day of your life. You're sharing every day. Every one of your kids, clients, and customers is in the audience. They're watching you, and they're trying to determine how you're going to influence them.

I don't believe kids and employees are different than they were 25 years ago. They're still looking to their leaders for cues on how they should act. I think managers and parents are the ones who have changed.

There's not a single person in your life you can make happy. My parents weren't concerned about my happiness. They were concerned about whether or not I was respectful. Respectful of every human being with whom I came in contact. Respectful of myself and of others, even if I disagreed with them.

Also, my parents demanded hard work from me. Even if it was difficult or uncomfortable or I didn't like it, I couldn't quit. Not only could I not quit, I had to do it as best as I could.

Finally, my parents didn't tolerate selfishness. They absolutely demanded that I think of other people. They ensured I made decisions based upon what was best for my church, my family, my community, my coworkers, and my friends.

If we stopped worrying about making other people happy, and started demanding that they be respectful, hard-working, and selfless, if that was our focus and how we modeled leadership, wouldn't we also give people the tool to find happiness?

Character is the leadership that comes out of you when your life is so far from what you had planned that you can barely breathe. Your character comes through when you're tired. When you're angry. When you're under stress.

When you wake up one morning and you are proud of your professional choices, and you drive home to a family life you're proud of, then there will never be another person richer than you.

Action Plan:

- ✓ Over the next week, monitor your behavior during times of stress. Try to observe how you treat others when you're frazzled and take note of your attitude when you're under pressure. Doing so will reveal a lot about your character.

✓ Before your next major decision, pose the following questions to yourself:

- How does this decision affect my family?
- How does this decision affect my friends?
- How does this decision affect my community?

Doing this exercise will help to remind you that your life is about others, not just about yourself.