
GEORGE WASHINGTON & LEADERSHIP

Not Power; Not Position;
Principle.



DEFINING LEADERSHIP

“The Great difference between the real leader and the pretender is that the one sees into the future, while the other regards only the present; the one lives by the day and reacts upon expediency, the other acts on enduring principle and for the immortality.”

-Edmund Burke



INTRODUCING GEORGE WASHINGTON

- ★ Born in 1732, died in 1799
- ★ 6'3", a splendid horseman and dancer
- ★ Assistant Land Surveyor by the age of 16
- ★ Inherited Mt. Vernon in 1752 following the death of his half-brother and was commissioned as a Major in the Virginia Militia
- ★ Lt. Col. with the Virginia Militia in 1754 at the age of 22
- ★ Elected to the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1758
- ★ Marries the widow Martha Dandridge Custis in 1759
- ★ Assumes command of the Colonial Army in 1775
- ★ President of the Constitutional Convention of 1787
- ★ First President of the United States in 1789

James Monroe would say to Jefferson, “His influence carried this government.”



DESTINED FOR LEADERSHIP?

★ Not a Scholar

- John Adams: George Washington was “too illiterate, unlearned and unread for his station”
- Thomas Jefferson: George Washington “had neither copiousness of ideas nor fluency of words”

★ Not a Military Genius

- Known for his debacle at Fort Mifflin in 1777
- Consistently out-maneuvered and outfought in the American Revolution

★ Not a “Guru”

- His temper was legendary
- A fellow officer wrote that at the Battle of Monmouth, “[Washington] swore ‘til the leaves shook on the trees. Never in my life have I heard such wonderful swearing.”



LIMITED SUPPORT; LIMITED EDUCATION

- ★ Father died when George was 11; the opportunity for formal education disappeared as George was the son of his father's second wife
- ★ At age 11; George became the primary supporter of his mother and four younger siblings
- ★ One of only two Presidents that did not have a formal college education
- ★ Simply, by the age of 16...George Washington had no higher education, no wealthy family connections and seemingly no prospects

**4 VALUES:
UNLOCKING THE
FOUNDATION OF
WASHINGTON'S LEADERSHIP**



CHARACTER

“I hope that I shall always possess firmness and virtue enough to maintain what I consider the most enviable of all titles, the character of an honest man.”

-GW in a letter to Alexander Hamilton, August 28, 1788

SELF CONTROL: “THE RULES OF CIVILITY”

- ★ Rule #4: In the presence of others sing not to yourself with a humming noise, nor drum with your fingers or feet.
- ★ Rule #7: Put not off your cloths in the presence of others; nor go out of your chamber half drest.
- ★ Rule #51: In your apparel be modest and endeavor to accommodate nature rather than to procure admiration; keep to the fashion of your equals such as are civil and orderly with respect to times and places.
- ★ Rule #56: Associate yourself with men of good quality if you esteem your own reputation; for ‘tis better to be alone than in bad company.
- ★ Rule #98: Drink not nor talk with your mouth full neither gaze about you while you are drinking.

HUMILITY

“All see, and most admire, the glare which hovers round the external trappings of elevated office. To me there is nothing in it, beyond the luster which may be reflected from its connection with a power of promoting human felicity.”

-GW in a letter to Catherine Macaulay Graham, January 9, 1790

“In the discharge of this trust [the Presidency], I will only say, that I have, with good intentions, contributed towards the Organization and Administration of the government, the best exertions of which a very fallible judgment was capable. Not unconscious, in the outset, of the inferiority of my qualifications...has strengthened the motives to diffidence of myself...”

-Washington's Farewell Address, Sept. 19, 1796

AMBITION (I.E. VISION WITH A PLAN)

“It should be the highest ambition of every American to extend his views beyond himself, and to bear in mind that his conduct will not only affect himself, his country, and his immediate posterity; but that its influence may be co-extensive with the world, and stamp political happiness or misery on ages yet unborn.”

GW to the Pennsylvania Legislature, Sept. 5, 1789



WASHINGTON'S LEGACY

★ Great Leaders:

- Are first and foremost “good”; they have character and integrity
- Demonstrate self-control
- Possess humility
- Exercise ambition



WASHINGTON'S ULTIMATE LESSON

Ultimately, great leaders understand that leadership is not a right resulting from position or power; rather, leadership is a duty founded upon principle.

