

## **Duke Energy - Charlotte**

### **A Year of Everyday Leadership**

As the newly elected Professional Development chair for the Duke Energy - Charlotte Chapter of Women in Nuclear I knew that I wanted to continue the use of TED Talks to engage with our membership. But where to start? There are over 3500 talks available! Leadership seemed an appropriate category as we were about to embark on a journey thru *It Worked for Me: In Life and Leadership* by General Colin Powell and because one of my core beliefs is that we are all leaders even if we aren't in the management pipeline.

I started going thru the list of leadership talks. And there it was. The talk that would be the foundation for my first year: Everyday Leadership by Drew Dudley. He uses a poignant story to remind us that we are leaders everyday and we should feel good about it. We shouldn't fear this incredible power but embrace it and value the impact we can have on other's lives. Everyday leadership is a choice we can make.

Subsequent talk topics needed to build on the message of bringing out the leader we all have inside of ourselves. In her talk Your Body Language May Shape Who You Are, Amy Cuddy explains how to go beyond "fake it until you make it" and fake it until you become it. We could all use a confidence boost!

It was at this point that I reflected on our freedoms here in the United States. I came across Leila Hoteit's talk 3 Lessons on Success From an Arab Businesswoman. She provides a personal look into her experience in Lebanon and the United Arab Emirates as an electrical engineer and as a mother to a daughter and a son. Arab women of her generation didn't have role models. She came up with three lessons to help drive her success. My favorite one is "join forces, don't compete" which aligns with U.S. WIN pretty good.

We shouldn't feel afraid to be ambitious. Dame Stephanie Shirley founded an all-women software company in the 1960's. In her talk Why Do Ambitious Women Have Flat Heads? she explains why she had to go by "Steve" and how equal opportunity legislation made her pro-female policies illegal. Her approach to her company was simply trust the staff. And yes, she does answer the question about flat heads!

Building on that sense of shared purpose and trust, you Listen, Learn...then Lead. General Stanley McChrystal discusses how a leader stays legitimate and credible while recounting his experience in the aftermath of 9/11. He came to believe that leaders are "good because they're willing to learn and to trust."

By now some of you might be wondering how any of this could apply to you because you may feel that you're not a "people" person. Did you know that some of the world's most transformative leaders have been introverts?

Susan Cain points out the special power introverts have in her talk The Power of Introverts. Understand also that leadership doesn't have a manual. In her talk Learning from Leadership's Missing Manual, Fields Wicker-Miurin explains how changing the way you look at the world can be inspiring. And bringing out the best in others brings it out in you. Margaret Heffernan points out the value of social capital in Forget the Pecking Order at Work – redefining leadership such that people do their most courageous thinking together rather than by themselves. Everybody has value.

I wrapped up the year with Simon Sinek's Why Good Leaders Make You Feel Safe. When leadership makes you feel safe and protected, our natural reaction is trust and cooperation – the greater good. You see, leadership is a choice. Everyday.