



# Former NYC Mayor Shares Leadership Lessons Learned During 9/11

Whether it was leading his constituents and the nation through the aftermath of September 11, 2001, or personally facing a life-threatening disease, Rudy Giuliani leaned heavily on the principles of leadership that he's developed during a career of public service.

**T**he former mayor of New York City, who was also a federal prosecutor and is now mentioned as a possible future presidential and senatorial candidate, addressed the attendees of the National Electrical Manufacturers Representative Association's (NEMRA) 35th annual conference in New York City earlier this year. His message of leadership resonated with the audience as they learned how to apply life's lessons to their personal and business lives.

Looking back at what he, the city and the nation faced following the attacks of 9/11, Giuliani noted, "I had been through every problem imaginable — airplane crashes, high-rise fires and hostage situations — but I never went through anything like that before in my life."

According to Giuliani, the six principles of leadership that saw him through that and other crises in his life are:

- **Strong beliefs** — "If you don't have strong personal beliefs, you can't lead anyone," he said. Citing former President Reagan as an example, Giuliani noted, "Reagan stood for something. He held two

strong beliefs: Communism is evil and it should be confronted. His contemporaries felt it was too dangerous to confront communism. Reagan said confront it and you can liberate people."

The former mayor added that Reagan was also a firm believer that government

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had gotten too large. "While the New Deal was constructed to bring people out of poverty," he said, "Reagan believed it had gotten so large that it hurt people and kept them locked in poverty. Neither of these ideas was popular, according to public opinion polls. But the president followed through on his ideas to make government smaller and less intrusive. These ideas were all based on the sum total of his reading, writing and believing."

In gauging the effectiveness of what Reagan accomplished, Giuliani urged his listeners to look at a map of Europe today and see how it has changed. Then do the same with this country's domestic politics and see how they have been altered. "These changes come about when you have strong ideas and can look beyond public opinion. It's the same thing in running a business. When you go through the bad times, determine what your principles are. Then make

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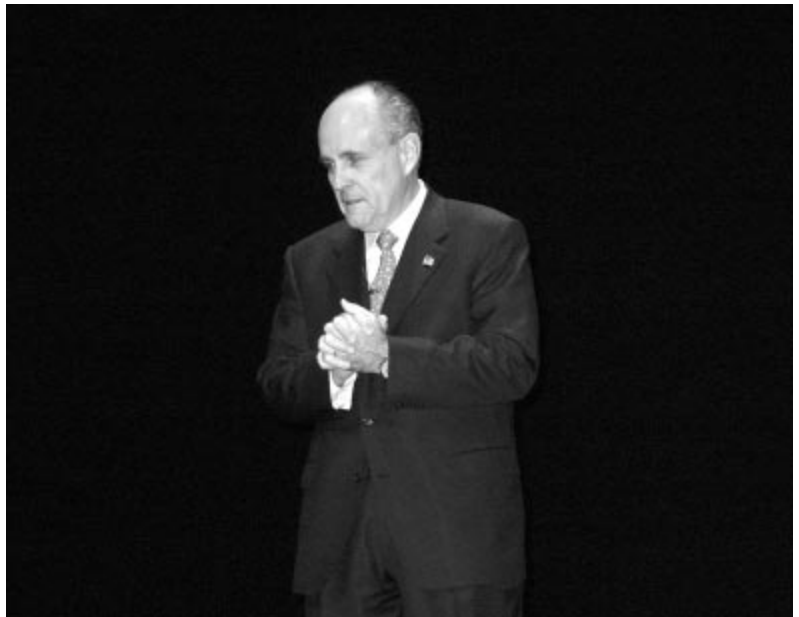
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- **Optimism** — "Imagine what would happen if I said 'Things are lousy and they're going to get worse — follow me.' No one would follow that kind of person. Most of New York City and the whole country follow hopes, dreams and the fulfillment of dreams. That's the magnet of dreamers. Reagan was considered a hopeless optimist, and that's why people followed him. People are drawn to optimism."

- **Courage** — "Courage is not the absence of fear," said the former mayor. "Rather, courage is the ability to manage fear in order to do what you must do." To make his point, he cited the examples of courage set by New York City's police and firefighters during the terrorist attacks of September 11. "People always tell me that they were real heroes and that's what courage is, but that's not exactly true. Those individuals were afraid, just as any of us would have been, but they managed their fears and performed their jobs." He added that "the question remains, should we be afraid of terrorists? Sure, we should. If you're afraid, welcome to the human race. Now, what do we do about it? That fear will allow us to better prepare and to push government and private institutions to do more to face the possibility of terrorism in the future. At the same time, however, we should go ahead and live our lives and not allow terrorists to interfere with our lives."

- **Relentless Preparation** — Giuliani noted that his career as an attorney taught him that cases are won during the preparation performed in the office, not in the courtroom. Recalling how he began his legal career, Giuliani said, "My first job out of law school was clerking for a federal judge. Part of what he did was to train all of us to be trial lawyers, because that's what we all wanted to do ultimately. Thankfully this judge had a lot of lessons for us, and one in particular stuck with me. He maintained that for every hour you spend in the courtroom, you need four hours of preparation. You must be able to anticipate anything that will happen in court. Then he emphasized that no matter how much time you spent preparing, something unanticipated will happen. If you prepared properly, you can handle it. Whatever the unanticipated is, it will be a variable of what you've already done." He then recalled that as he approached the World Trade Center on September 11, "I froze and realized we had never faced anything like this before — we didn't have a written plan to follow. But then, we began acting, and everything we did grew out of a



*Rudy Giuliani*

plan — situations we had faced before. If you prepare for even the unanticipated, you're ready. That preparation gave me great strength, and I was able to convey it to others."

- **Teamwork** — "Success has nothing to do with an individual, rather it's all about the team working together," maintained Giuliani. "If you are a leader, success is all about them (i.e., the team), and not me." In creating an effective team, he said, "You have to ask the question: 'What are my weaknesses, and how do I balance those weaknesses with the strengths of others around me?'"

- **Communication** — "If you properly possess the first five principles of leadership, then communication is just talking to people," Giuliani said. "Some leaders are fiery, others are understated, but communication is just getting out of your mind the things you want others to do."

In closing, Giuliani said "When things are going wrong, leaders can't hide. You must be there — you must be seen. Remember, mistakes will always be made, but you'll get through the worst situations."

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