

SES CDP: Advice

For folks that are considering going into an SES career, I think one important thing to remember is to follow your intuition and follow your desires for a career. First and foremost, choose positions or choose a pathway that's rewarding to you. The questions of work life balance and accomplishment will be a lot easier to answer if you're doing something that you truly want to do. To pursue something because of grade or power or whatever else might be a motivating factor. I think those are really shallow things and you really need to be thinking about what it is you want to accomplish and what's fulfilling for you. Let that be your guide as you go forward in an SES career. You have to be happy first and foremost.

So I would say don't think small. Don't think because you work in a bureau you have to come up with only bureau-wide solutions or that somehow you're robbing your bureau of your time if you just have a collateral hobby going on the side of trying to find a government-wide solution for something. Similarly, if you design something that you think is a good initiative, work with the Department on this initiative and on the development of it because more than likely they need the same solution or they need a solution to a similar issue or problem, and if you can provide them with a solution that works for your bureau then they will adopt it so you can be a hero for the Department that way, and also you won't have to inherit something that maybe won't fit as well for the bureau that was developed by somebody else for some other bureau, so there's a positive consequence to being kind of able to anticipate what the next thing is that's gonna need to be

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solved. And I would also say be creative. I've taken some significant risks in my career. There have been a couple times when I thought my career was gonna end because of these, but in the end I always trusted that if you do the right thing you can defend it. If you tell the truth you can defend it. So far that's worked. I'm still here, and I would say just be creative, think about solutions that are things that you personally would be proud of having done, and don't hold back and just take the small risks because it's the big ones that can lead to big changes.

Well, I would tell my successor and folks that are coming out of the SES CDP (Senior Executive Career Development Program) course that they have a great opportunity ahead of them and that public service is a noble calling, and I think by virtue of the fact that they are currently in public service, probably have been for a number of years, are aware of that, they have a great opportunity to assume a leadership position in some organization, to give meaning to that noble call, and in many cases they'll be at the top of the pyramid and they'll be able to shape and influence decisions, they'll be able to create a work environment in which employees have an opportunity to excel, and they'll be able to take advantage of the change in demographics and bring in new blood, new employees, and new awareness of change in technology.