

Run for Elected Office— and Win

Jana M. Kemp

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Through 4-H program participation, I was introduced to the importance of community and civic service. While standing in the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. as a teenager, I was inspired to run for elected office.

Seven generations of my family have been involved in U.S. public service, from fighting in the Revolutionary War to holding elected office. My family members modeled public and community service while I was growing up, and have continued to be supporters, fans, consolers, and best of all—my family!

My immediate family is to be credited for their creativity, grace, and patience during my 2010 Independent race for Governor of Idaho. I am grateful for their continued love and support.

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About the Author

Jana M. Kemp represented District 16B (Garden City and parts of Northwest Boise) in the Idaho House of Representatives, 2004–06, where she served on the Transportation, Education, Local Government, Commerce, Human Resources, and Responsible Budgeting committees. During the 2010 election cycle, she ran as an independent for governor of Idaho, placing third in the five-candidate field.

Jana is a small business owner. She founded Meeting & Management Essentials in 1993 in Minnesota and, in 1994, moved the company to Idaho, where she received the following honors: 2010 Trailblazer, National Association of Women Business Owners of Boise and Southern Idaho; 2006 Women of the Year, *Idaho Business Review*; 2001 Accomplished Under 40, *Idaho Business Journal*; 1999 Integrity Counts Small Business Award, Better Business Bureau; and 1996 Entrepreneur of the Year, Alpha Kappa Psi. Her clients include Fortune 100 companies, non-profits, trade associations, and government agencies. Jana is the author of five books on management and community service, which have been translated into numerous languages: *No!—How One Simple Word Can Transform Your Life*, *Prepared Not Paranoid*, *Moving Meetings, Moving Out of the Box*, and *Building Community in Buildings*. She was a business columnist for the *Idaho Press Tribune* and *Idaho Business Review*, and hosted a business-radio talk show for four years.

Jana has served as an officer and volunteer in many service organizations, including Learning Lab, the Idaho State Bar Association Public Information Committee, the Idaho State Association of Parliamentarians, the American Society of Training and Development, Easter Seals, Goodwill, and Senior Solutions. Jana is also a graduate of the Citizen Law Academy, the Citizen Police Academy, and the Idaho POST Police Academy. She lives in Idaho with her husband and step-daughter.

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Most of all, I want to thank the teams of people who supported me in 2004 and 2006, and the amazing 2010 Vote Kemp Team that formed around the cause of seeing an independent and capable candidate become governor of Idaho. I am grateful that the team stayed true to the cause of shedding light on the darkness at work in state politics, so that voters can see what is at work in state politics. May the light keep shining on all elected officials and candidates for office! Americans need to know for whom they are casting their votes.

Introduction

“Why did you decide to run for office?” This is the question I get asked most often when speaking to groups about public service. The next question is, “Are you going to run again?”

My aha! moment of inspiration to run for elected government office came to me in 1982, when I was a teenager on a 4-H trip to Washington, D.C. Standing in the U.S. Capitol rotunda, looking at the history on the walls, soaking in its solemn majesty, and admiring the monumental architecture, I was struck by a sense of the sacred mission of serving as one the people’s chosen representatives. The charged atmosphere spoke to many of us Minnesotan 4-Hers on that trip: one of us went on to run for U.S. Senate; another became speaker of the house in her state and ran for governor in 2010. I went on to serve as a state legislator in the Idaho House of Representatives (2004-2006), and then run in 2006 for a second term, which the voters opted not to give me. This loss created space for my 2010 independent run for governor of Idaho.

My predisposition to public service was formed from infancy by my parents, who met when my father was serving in the U.S. Army and my mother was working for the Kentucky Extension Service. Both my parents instilled in me the conviction that our American republic can survive and flourish only if good, just, honest, capable, ordinary citizens heed the patriotic call to present themselves for public service, as my ancestors did in the Revolutionary War.

The earliest example in my life that I can remember of taking up the fight for justice dates to elementary school in Indiana in 1976. I earned my way onto the boys’ basketball team, taking all kinds of heat from boys and girls in the process. By the end of junior high school, our family had helped my father campaign for a school board position in Minnesota, and I had run twice for student body council offices. During the school assembly speeches in one of my races, a boy campaigning for the same office said, “And she plans to paint the bathrooms pink”—which was an outright lie. Another year my painstakingly homemade campaign signs were torn off the walls. A wise friend who had stayed after school to help put up these signs counseled me, “Don’t

let them win. Just keep putting the signs back up.” In 2004, 2006, and 2010, I repeated this advice to my campaign team members who were upset about disappearing signs: “Just put the signs right back up.”

During junior high and high school, I participated in 4-H programs and club meetings. I served in the elected positions of treasurer, secretary, reporter, vice president, president, and county officer positions. In high school, I ran for president of the Honor Society. I talked to every person in the society whom I knew and asked them to vote for me. The day of the election, the vice principal called me into her office. “We’ve counted the ballots and counted them again,” she said. “We’ve never seen this happen before. You’ve lost the race by just two votes.” Of course, I was deeply frustrated, and spoke to people asking whether they’d remembered to vote. I found out that three people who knew me well, and whom I had asked for their votes, hadn’t voted. Lesson learned: ask, ask, and ask again, and remind people to vote for you as they may not otherwise remember to even cast a ballot.

Over the years of early adulthood, I ran for and held my college’s student body academic head position, neighborhood association offices, trade association positions, precinct committeeman, and elected office in volunteer organizations. Each of these service terms provided opportunities to learn about group process, decision making, and the need for social interactions along with business task accomplishments that most human beings need in order to stay involved in an organization.

These positions and school-days campaign experiences taught me the rudiments of parliamentary procedure, business organization, and served as the foundations for the business that I founded in 1993, Meeting & Management Essentials. In my early thirties, to expand my knowledge of parliamentary process, I became a member of the National Association of Parliamentarians.

Being involved in the community is what helps you to build your understanding of the area you wish to serve. Being involved in a variety of organizations and positions also helps you to build name recognition—which you’ll most definitely need if you want to win the race you enter.

For example:

From 1996 to July 2009, I wrote regular business columns for the *Idaho Business Review* (distributed statewide) and for the *Idaho Press Tribune* (distributed in the county adjacent to the one in which I live). These columns helped me gain insight into our state’s business community and gain name recognition around the state.

From 1998 to 2002, I originated and hosted a live business talk radio program on Idaho’s only 50,000 watt station (which means it covers about one

third of our state). To this day, people will say, “Didn’t you used to be on the radio?” During these same years, I provided periodic business tips on the highest-rated morning news show in our market.

In 1999, I participated in the Citizen Police Academy to learn about the workings of the local police department. This experience gave me insight into the law enforcement community in a way that just living in the community doesn’t. I also met people who became supporters in the state races I would go on to run. In 2000, I participated in the Citizen Law Academy to learn about the state’s judicial and legal system. This experience provided insight into the judicial branch of government and became the basis for my citizen service on the Idaho State Bar Association’s Public Information Committee. In 2002, I graduated from a ten-week course at the Idaho Police Academy, prerequisite to becoming a sworn police officer. This experience raised my level of awareness about my personal safety, the safety of every community member, and the threats of drug addiction in today’s society. Police academy experience led to contracts for my business and became the basis for my book, *Prepared Not Paranoid*.

In March 2004, someone said to me, “Jana, did you know there is an open House seat in your district? Why don’t you run?” It was the beginning of the two-week filing period, so I didn’t have much time to make a decision. I did my research and jumped into a tough Republican primary race. I’ll share more of the story in the pages ahead.

If you already know you are running for office or are interested in holding public office, this book will help you. If your heart is in public service for a good greater than yourself, this book is absolutely for you.

At the end of any given race, sometimes you will have won and gained the elected position. Sometimes you will not gain the position you sought, and yet the run will still qualify as a win because you and your team were able to demonstrate integrity, honesty, and intelligence, and to raise the standards of public discourse and public expectations.

Stay tuned as to whether I’ll run again. In the meantime:

Run for Elected Office—and Win!

Jana Kemp
Boise, Idaho
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Run for It

Why the Future Depends on You

Every election has the potential to change people's lives, to affect the way a community operates, to determine the way a business might grow, to define what will happen in our children's schools, to outline what can happen in the county or state, to address the needs of people, and to etch indelibly into our souls a sense of safety and security or a sense of danger and corruption. In today's world, citizens are hungry for a sense of security in their everyday lives. They want to see their hopes realized by—rather than continually disappointed by—their elected officials. Elected officials' poor decision making and behavior in the public and personal arenas lead to citizen disenchantment with the value of voting and disgust with anything related to government. In today's world, protests and marches register dissent with governments. As in the past, concern for the future is driven by what is and is not happening in the present.

The level of concern, frustration, and disenfranchisement that exists today indicates our country's need for improved governance from elected officials at all levels. This far-reaching need for better leadership is why the future depends on your decision to run for elected office. This book will help you discover whether your thoughts about running for office are worth pursuing. We need more good people—especially people who view elected office as a public service rather than as a life-time career. The Founding Fathers envisioned an America in which elected office was a duty and privilege with positions to be filled for a time. Then, after completing the term of office, a person's lifetime profession would be resumed.

Opportunity exists. At any given moment, there are about two million elected officials in elected positions in the United States of America. The exact number is difficult to pinpoint, owing to the abundance of elected positions in the labyrinthine matrix of levels, branches, and departments that constitutes American government. Levels of government, each with nested interdependencies but competing sovereignty and prerogative claims, range across federal, state, county, city, township, village, tribal reservation, and special district (such as various school, zoning, management, and conservation districts). Branches and departments range across legislative, executive, judicial, fiscal, administrative, legal, medical, and law enforcement jurisdictions. Then there are the on-the-ballot elections for political party and other such positions. As an American citizen, you have virtually infinite opportunities to serve in elected office.

If you are looking for a book about how to become an elected public servant for a portion of your life, then this book is for you. *Run for Elected Office—and Win* will tell you everything you need to know: how to select the office that is a good match for your interests and skills; how to plan and run your campaign; and how to survive the election, whether you win or lose. In the chapters ahead you'll learn the ins and outs of an election from an author who's done it and won—and done it and lost. We'll begin by pinpointing your passion for service and identify the position that matches that passion. Then you'll explore whether you want to declare a party affiliation and how that fits into your selection of a position. Along the way, you will discover tips for saying what you mean and attracting media attention. You'll learn how much money it takes to run and what it takes to win.

Why the Future Depends on You

The future of representative democracy in America depends on you—because if you don't run, then who will? Yes, I hear you sighing, “My neighbor ... or that guy with more money than I have ... or even the #@!\$%*! who's been in office all these years.” These alternatives reflect exactly why you are needed. Most people in America are saying the same thing and waiting for someone else to address the problems that are frustrating us all and to present some new ideas and choices that would benefit us all. Worse, more and more citizens are just tuning out the non-stop media barrage of inane political rhetoric, staged histrionics, and permanent campaigning. When it comes time to vote, many are too jaded to bother.

On the upside, there are unmistakable signs of a swelling popular revolt against the ethos of impotent resignation: Tea Party and Occupy Wall Street

grassroots activists, union supporters, independents, and interest groups of many stripes are all pouring into the streets and state capitols to shout their unhappiness with politics as usual. They have decided to act.

You can do the same. Rather than abdicating your personal autonomy and giving up on your family's and children's future, discover what position is a good match for you to pursue (more on this in Chapters 2 and 3) and go for it.

If you think that money is a barrier to running for office, you may discover that money is not the challenge. True, presidential races involve millions of dollars. President Obama's 2008 election spending was a record \$740 million. And yet there are local elections that are still regularly won with as little as \$100. Don't let money be the barrier to your entering a race. (More on this in Chapter 8.)

Do you find yourself agreeing with the idea, "Why run when the incumbent has such a lock on the seat?" Maybe it is time for the incumbent to be ushered out of office and you are just the one who can do it. You may determine that the incumbent's name recognition and ratings are so high that his or her seat may not be the best seat to run for at this time. That is perfectly OK. There are dozens of other elected offices you might choose to run for in order to prepare yourself for the seat you first had in mind. In the meantime, you can gain experience and watch for signals that the incumbent is retiring or weakening.

Another way to help you decide whether a run for office is worth the effort is to research how well the people in elected office are informed about the issues you care about. Start doing your homework. Consider my first run for elected public office. In 2004, I heard reports of House Education Committee members discussing children and learning by saying things like, "We all know that children don't learn until they are six." My reaction was, "Are they kidding? Didn't they watch their own children grow up? Never mind that research over the last twenty years has proven how much children learn *before* the age of six. Are they not even paying attention to their children and grandchildren growing up?" Such cavalier displays of ignorance, intolerance, and incuriosity in my legislators compelled me to run for office.

America needs reasonable, realistic, and well-researched ideas at every level of elected office. Right now, cynical rhetoric and canned rage are drowning out reasonable discourse. We are seeing decision making that is too often bizarrely out of touch with what most of us know to be the realities of everyday life. If you have ideas to offer and solutions that can work, we need your voice in the discussion for the sake of our common future. Right now we

listen to many voices pointing out what is not working and what is never going to work, but the same people are often silent when it comes to offering solutions—especially to our country’s protracted economic emergency. With growing alarm, we hear more each day of the deepening financial woes and retrenchments of our states, counties, and school districts. Our elected officials have led us into financial disarray: a condition in which more money is needed than is had to maintain basic services, infrastructure, and obligations. They lack workable economic growth strategies to redress the imbalance.

Now is the time to focus on what will move America forward with dignity, grace, compassion, competence, and accomplishment. Although we will never reach perfect consensus on how best to move America into a successful and sustainable future, the fact is that if we don’t talk about our ideas, then nothing gets done. Without conversations, debates, and problem-solving discussions, we will not find solutions to our problems. If you feel that your ability to listen and talk with others is above average, our future depends upon you. If you believe that debates do not have to make enemies or start wars, our future depends upon you. If you believe in problem-solving rather than blame-throwing, our future depends upon you.

America Needs Public Servants, Not Career Politicians

One of the reasons people run for elected office is to become public servants who are focused on public good. During my time in elected office, when people would confront me about how selfish, high-paid, and uncaring people in elected office were, my response was that of the 105 legislators with whom I served, a full 95 to 100 were there as public servants, pursuing public good. This is not to say that we all agreed on how to fulfill the idea of “public good,” because we didn’t. The point is that people were of compassionate heart from their point of view and they were focused on their highest sense of public good rather than being focused on personal gain or personal benefits.

A taunt that I sometimes heard as a candidate was, “Why would you want to be a politician?” I smiled time after time and said, “I don’t. I’m working to be elected as a public servant.” That reply usually brought a smile: “Well, doesn’t it mean the same thing?” Perhaps it has come to mean the same thing to the general public when thinking about state and federal elected officials, because it has become so hard at these levels to really see public service in action. However, I invite you and your family members and

friends to look around your communities at all of the elected offices held by people who indeed are serving the public and are in no way acting merely as self-aggrandizing politicians.

It is more important today than ever to distinguish between being a *politician* and being a *public servant*. Being a *politician* implies cultivating a career based on gaining and holding elected office, by engaging in behaviors that are more about money, power, fame, self-service, and getting re-elected than they are about making good and difficult decisions for the greatest good. Being a *public servant* implies working first and foremost to solve problems and accomplish tasks in ways that serve the greatest good for all involved rather than focusing on personal or special-interest gain.

America needs public servants. Every one of our united states, every county, parish, borough, township, city, village, school board, and water board needs public servants rather than politicians in its elected offices. Without public servants to voice the needs of the people, to craft the solutions that will really work in the public interest, and to challenge the policies and lobbies undermining the public interest, America will fail. Only by replacing politicians with genuine public servants can we hope to move toward a bright future.

Our children's lives depend upon us, too. They may not have reached a point in their lives when they might consider running for office. But your knowledge, wisdom, experience, and passionate concern for multigenerational outcomes will enable you to represent their interests by changing things in this country for the better. Without good and capable public servants in elected office, all levels of government suffer and descend further into endless budget woes, union/non-union battles, and splinter-group battles—all driven by anger and us vs. them disputes. These dilemmas and battles leave many bystanders wringing their hands and not knowing what to do.

We don't need more politicians running to serve themselves and their districts only. We need public servants running for office at every level in every election cycle and for every seat so that the good of the whole trumps the gain of the few.

Reasons to Run

I know—just because you are needed doesn't mean you'll necessarily be able and willing to run for elected office. When considering your reason to run, I suggest that you run “for it”—not “to it” and not “despite it.” Here's what I mean. Running “for it” means accepting the challenge to run for an

office, as opposed to putting on your running shoes and heading out of town. Running “to it” means that you are drawn to the appeal of holding office, like a moth to a flame, with the danger of getting burned once obtained. When I suggest not running “despite it,” I mean that you should be motivated by the assurance that you can transform an elected office tarnished by abuse and incompetence into a fit instrument for improving your community and changing your constituents’ lives for the better.

Running for office is grueling and invigorating all at the same time. You’ll need every ounce of energy you can tap. Knowing all of your reasons for running will help you to maintain your focus and energy. You’ll need that thorough self-knowledge to answer the battery of standard questions you’ll face from the media and potential contributors and endorsers (more on this in Chapters 7 and 10 through 12).

Over the years, people have asked me why I think people choose to run for elected office. After years of listening and observation, my response is that people choose to run for elected office for many of the same reasons people choose any profession. When I attended the police academy as a cadet, my classmates would give three main reasons why they’d chosen to become police officers: “My dad was a cop;” “I want to serve the community;” and “I want to shoot a gun and drive cars fast—legally.” These three reasons boil down to family business, public service, and power.

Sometimes a person chooses a particular career because it’s the family business. Think of the professional clustering in families of doctors, scientists, lawyers, veterinarians, police, firefighters, and teachers you know. In the national arena, consider the many political dynasties and successions that have flourished under such family names as Adams, Harrison, Roosevelt, Kennedy, Bush, Gore, Romney, and Clinton. At state and local levels, it is perhaps even more common for certain family names to persist in public office for generations.

Another reason people run for office is public service. Some of us run for office because we believe that holding elected office is a civic duty and responsibility. This is my own credo: “Running for elected office is like being willing to serve on jury duty—if none of us does it, we will throw away the systems of justice and representative government that make us uniquely the United States of America.”

Yet another reason people run for office is to aggrandize money, power, and fame. The media focuses on those offices offering the most lucrative rewards to the officeholder. Few elected offices in America, however, pay rich dividends. Indeed, most officeholders forfeit better sources of income

in order to perform public service. Admittedly, some power and visibility come with every elected office to some degree, but consider the spectrum. At one end, a precinct worker who is elected precinct committeeperson gets no power with the position—just a lot of work to help a political party. She gets very little visibility—just with the few dozen faithful who typically show up at precinct committee meetings. At the other end of the spectrum, certain state and federal elected officials command global power and attention. Remember that having power is not inherently bad. Leveraging power and visibility to good effect can change the world for the better.

Characteristics of the People We Need in Office

As conscientious citizens, we need to put people in office who are public servants dedicated to making the best possible decisions for the good of the whole, rather than politicians dedicated to serving themselves and their special interests. Public servants need to be vetted for excellence in the following traits, skills, and qualities, all of which are essential to their performing effectively in office: human interaction and management skills, intelligence, knowledge, problem-solving skills, speaking skills, reading skills, listening skills, questioning skills, research skills, backbone, stamina, honesty, decisiveness, empathy, and goal-driven perseverance. Let's look at each of these fifteen performance criteria in turn.

- *Human Interaction and Management Skills:* Human interaction skills are the starting place. You've probably heard the saying, "No one cares about you until they see how much you care about them." This is never truer than when it comes to winning elections. Candidates who relate better to voters (and have more name recognition as a result) often have the upper hand in winning races, even over opponents who are more intelligent, capable, articulate, and skilled. Human interaction skills range from your listening and handshaking skills to your ability to remember names and things about a person from a previous conversation. They also include your ability to lead a team: first your campaign team and then, if elected, your staff. If you as a candidate have a tough time relating to people, you and your campaign team must find a way to overcome this and demonstrate how you will interact with people and do it well. Take customer service, interpersonal relationship, and body-language courses to improve your skill and comfort in interacting with others.

- *Intelligence:* Just because we need intelligent officeholders who can help our world make its way into the future doesn't always mean we elect them. Take for instance, the very nice grandmother who served in the Idaho House when I was there. She was often without a clue on the procedures in motion, the topics under discussion, or the next steps that should be taken. At the same time her ability to connect with people to help them feel they were heard and that their problems would somehow be addressed was a valuable asset. Despite her limited intelligence and precisely because of her constituent care and name recognition, she continues to get re-elected. I continue to maintain that if her constituents really knew that they were not being well-represented, there would be an outcry heard statewide. So, here's what I mean by intelligence: someone can have a high IQ and strong human interaction skills and be a good candidate. However, intelligence is more than just IQ. Today's world needs intelligence in the form of intellectual capabilities, emotional understanding, a nose for research, ability to ask clear questions, and, perhaps most importantly of all, life experience that has provided the foundational intelligence for living effectively and making reasonable decisions. People without these forms of intelligence do get elected and re-elected, so when you vote, ask around to find out whether you are truly being represented well, or whether a really nice person is simply keeping a seat warm and has no aptitude for the job that needs to be done.
- *Knowledge:* An elected official or candidate for elected office does not have to be an expert on all subjects related to the office. What you as an elected official or candidate for elected office do need to be is well-informed about your community, the needs of the people you wish to serve, the realities of the budgets which exist to provide governmental services, and who the go-to people are from whom you will be able to gather relevant, accurate, well-reasoned, and well-documented information, analyses, and briefs. To become well-informed on the subjects related to the office which you hold or are running for requires skilled listening and diligent research. The larger the territory and scope of the position, the more likely you will want a research team to support your information gathering. For instance, you may assign team members to research specific topics, organize town hall meetings so you can hear people's concerns, or research specific areas of concern within your election district.

When contemplating what describes a well-informed person, Patty Collinworth, writing for *The Christian Science Monitor*, wrote that a well-informed person sees “the world clearly ... not through the cloudy lens of partisanship and prejudice.”

- **Problem-Solving Skills:** The American public is tired of blame-throwing, finger pointing, and name calling. Voters disengage when a race is all about bashing other candidates and decrying their policies. Voters expect solutions. Candidates must be able to demonstrate their problem solving skills in action and in laying out cogent ideas for solutions.
- **Speaking Skills:** To be articulate is to be able to speak clearly, to the point, and on topic, and to be easily understood by others. While long, winding, rambling presentations from people who convey how much they care may persuade some people to vote for them, the fact is that America needs people who are both caring and articulate. We’ve lived through enough rambling and roughshod presentations. It’s time for clear solutions and clear plans of action that are good for the present and the future. Take every opportunity to polish your speaking skills. Consider joining Toastmasters.
- **Reading Skills:** To perform effectively as a candidate and elected officeholder, you must bring strong, retentive, and voracious reading skills to the job. You’ll read to gather information to respond to phone calls, emails, and letters, to review and approve minutes, to read white papers, to gather news from papers and online stories, to glean information from magazines and trade publications, and to find out what voters are thinking in letters from home. Whether plowing through full-length documents or skimming your staff’s digests, reading is a daily part of your job demands.
- **Listening Skills:** Listening, like reading, is also daily part of your job demands. You must be able to hear what people are telling you and asking you on the campaign trail. You must be able to hear people in a variety of settings with a huge difference in noise levels, in the volumes with which people speak, in rooms with poor acoustics, and on audio recordings of variable quality. Listening is the way in which you will gather information that is critical to the decisions you will make. If you have any auditory challenges, get hearing aids or assistive devices. There is truly no way to be effective in committee meetings,

council chambers, or on the floors where elected officials meet if you cannot hear or see a transcript of what is being said. Being a strong listener includes being able to understand both content and emotion, both proposals and complaints. Listening is often more important than speaking. Voters want you to listen to them. Talk less; listen more. As an elected official, your success depends on what you hear, listen to, read, and understand.

- *Questioning Skills:* To get the information you want, you need to be able to ask clear questions. You will also need to be able to read listeners' body language so that you know whether they have understood your question. At all times you need to be able to restate your question so that people can understand what you are asking. To restate is to ask the question again using different words; restating a question is not repeating the same words. Questions are your tools for uncovering information, for finding matches or discrepancies, and for discovering what additional questions may still need to be asked and answered before a best-possible decision can be made.
- *Research Skills:* When you don't know something, find out. If you don't know how or where to find out, ask for help. Every community has access to a library, and a research librarian is a great asset. When you think you know the answer, more research may still be helpful. When you do not know the answer, admit it and ask for help.
- *Backbone:* The willingness to stand up, speak up, and stay strong is your public service backbone. We see so much waffling or flip-flopping on positions, failure to commit to a decision and carry it through, and so much unwillingness to even commit to a decision in the first place. Our children know which parent to approach to get their way—the one without backbone. Unless you have backbone, you'll succumb to those who whine and complain. Finding good solutions takes a backseat unless you have backbone. When you have a strong backbone, you ask the right questions, gather the right information, find the right solutions, and implement the right action. Find your backbone now. Unless you have one, the media will catch you in what appear to be conflicting statements or comments. With a backbone, however, you will be trusted as being consistent and forthright, even when people may disagree with your position. To identify where your backbone is, ask yourself: What am I most passionately committed to and most willing to take a stand upon? Until you can answer this question, you are not ready for the candidate questionnaires and the media inquiries that will come your way.

- *Stamina*: Walking four miles in a parade requires stamina. Going door-to-door for eight to twelve hours a day requires physical, emotional, and mental stamina. Standing for two to twelve hours a day in a fair booth requires endurance and stamina. A friend of mine working the fair booth one afternoon said after the first hour of a two-hour shift for volunteers, “How do you do this twelve hours a day, Jana?” I asked in turn, “What do you mean?” She elaborated: “I mean stand here for twelve hours with this sea of humanity, of engagement, of agreement and disagreement, of apathy, of disconnect, and of distraction and still have any energy left?” On the last day of a gun show, at which I had manned my campaign booth for ten hours each day, a neighboring booth owner came over and said: “I don’t know how you do it; you listen to experts all weekend telling you what they know and what they think can work and end the weekend with a smile on your face.” In both cases I smiled. In the first case, I gave my team volunteer the option to leave if it was simply too exhausting. In the second case, I smiled and said, “I guess I was blessed with the genetics and the personality to survive with a smile.” Having stamina is absolutely critical to running a race to win. For some people it is physical stamina that wins. For others it is mental and intellectual stamina that wins. For still others it is the stamina of running year after year with the hope that the physical workload will ease up as one’s name recognition spreads. Sleep well. Eat well. Delegate well. You really can’t do everything every day and expect yourself to cross the finish line. Start now, get fit enough to walk miles, stand for hours, shake hands by the hundreds, and speak to thousands in one day. Your body must be able to carry you through—the race depends on you.
- *Honesty*: Voters want to know whether you are honest. Every voter will have a different measuring tool to assess your honesty. You know what your own standard for honesty is. Live up to it every day. People can see, hear, and smell honesty. So, establish your personal standard and live up to it. Communicate clearly to your campaign team and staff team members what you expect on the honesty front, and on all fronts. One team member’s decision can forever destroy your ratings on the honesty scale. However, you are the only one to manage the daily decisions and choices that can ensure honesty is occurring in all cases, on all days, in all ways.
- *Decisiveness*: The ability to take a firm and unequivocal yes or no stand as befits your principles and judgment is crucial to your effectiveness as a campaigner and elected official. Although a unique trait,