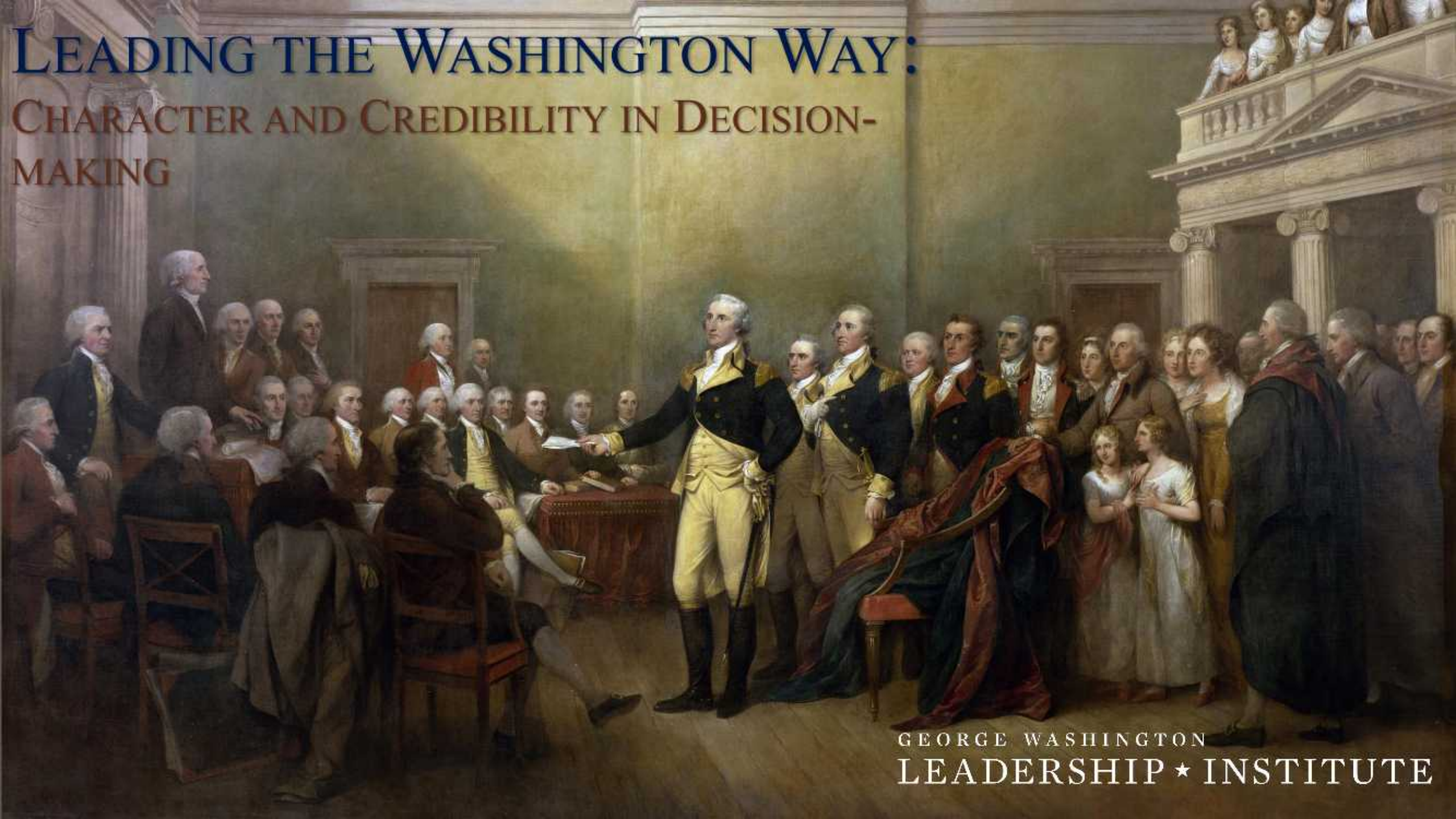


LEADING THE WASHINGTON WAY: CHARACTER AND CREDIBILITY IN DECISION- MAKING



GEORGE WASHINGTON
LEADERSHIP ★ INSTITUTE

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHARACTER

“The final proof of the sincerity and seriousness of an organization’s management is uncompromising emphasis on integrity of character.”

- Peter Drucker

“Remember, that it is the actions, and not the commission, that make the Officer—and that there is more expected from him than the Title.”

- George Washington

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHARACTER

- **People may forgive incompetence, ignorance, insecurity, or bad manners, but they will not forgive a lack of character.**
- **They will also not forgive management for choosing a leader that lacks character**

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHARACTER

- To build an officer corps trusted by its soldiers...
- To build an army trusted by its legislators...
- To build a government trusted by its citizens...
- **Washington needed to lead with character above reproach.**



LEADING WITH CHARACTER AS A MANAGER

- **Focus on subordinates' strengths and what they can do, not what they can't**
- **See subordinates' weaknesses as opportunities for coaching and challenging them**
- **Be a realist and not a cynic, your attitude sets the tone**
- **The question is always "What is right?" not "Who is right?"**
- **Always reserve the highest standards and expectations for yourself**

LEADING WITH CHARACTER AS A MANAGER

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Nathanael Greene:
Quaker farmer to
quartermaster and tactician



Henry Knox:
Bookstore owner to
Chief of Artillery and
Secretary of War



Alexander Hamilton:
College dropout to
Aide de camp and
Secretary of Treasury

LEADING WITH CHARACTER AS A MANAGER

- **Be a realist and not a cynic, your attitude sets the tone**

Private Correspondence

“I am wearied to death all day with a variety of perplexing circumstances—disturbed at the conduct of the militia, whose behavior and want of discipline has done great injury to the other troops, who never had officers, except in a few instances, worth the bread they eat.”

George Washington to Lund Washington, 30 September 1776

Public Correspondence

This army—the main American Army—will certainly not suffer itself to be out done by their northern Brethren—they will never endure such disgrace; but with an ambition becoming freemen, contending in the most righteous cause, rival the heroic spirit which swelled their bosoms, and which so nobly exerted, has procured them deathless renown. Covet! my Countrymen, and fellow soldiers! Covet!

General Orders, 3 October 1776

LEADING WITH CHARACTER AS A MANAGER

- **The question is always “What is right?” not “Who is right?”**

“We should all be considered, Congress—Army &c., as one people, embarked in one cause—in one interest; acting on the same principle, and to the same end.”

- George Washington to John Banister, 21 April 1778

“Were we in an enemy’s country robberies would be unwarrantable; against our friends they are base, cruel and injurious to the cause in which we are engaged”

- General Orders, 26 December 1777

LEADING WITH CHARACTER AS A MANAGER

- **Always reserve the highest standards and expectations for yourself**

I think it my duty, Gentlemen, as I have the Honour to preside over you, to give this small assurance: my abilities, and interest of the Service, dictate; to observe the strictest discipline through the whole economy of my Behaviour. On the other hand; you may as certainly depend upon having the strictest justice administred to all: and that I shall make it the most agreeable part of my duty, to study merit, and reward the brave, and deserving. I assure you, Gentlemen, that partiality shall never biass my conduct; nor shall prejudice injure any: but throughout the whole tenor of my proceedings, I shall endeavour, as far as I am able, to reward and punish, without the least diminution.”

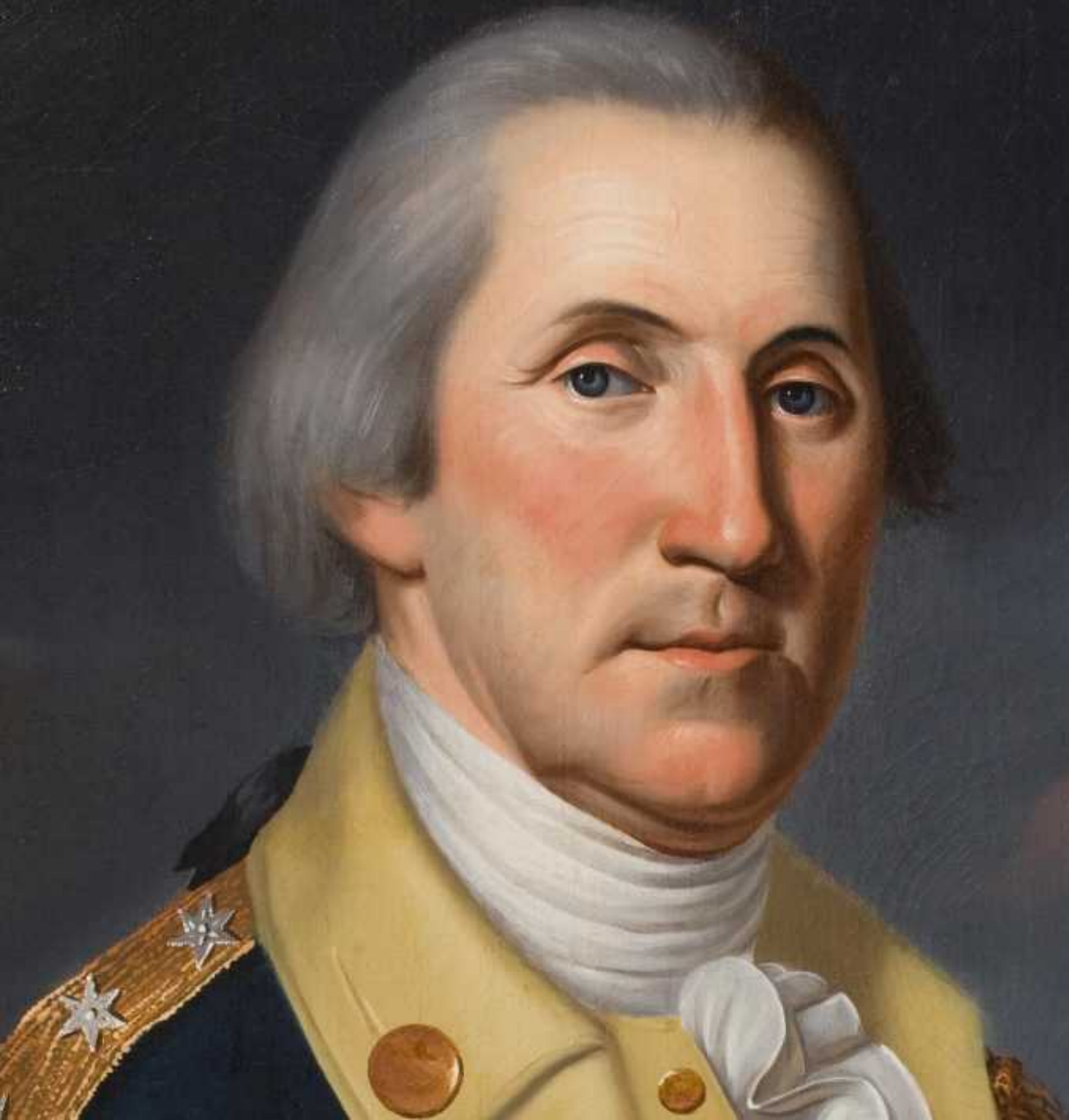


- George Washington to the officers of the Virginia Regiment, 8 January 1756

INTEGRITY LEADS TO CREDIBILITY AND TRUST

- **Credibility and Character, the foundation of authority when times are tough**
 - Waited to be asked to serve as Commander in Chief
 - Resigned his commission
 - Waited to be asked to lead the Constitutional Convention
 - Waited to be asked to serve as President
 - Retired after two terms as President





DISCUSSION