In January 2018, Mayor de Blasio appointed Laura Anglin to serve as Deputy Mayor of Operations. Prior to her current role, Deputy Mayor Anglin served as the Chief Administrative Officer for former First Deputy Mayor Tony Shorris. She worked as President of the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities for seven years. Deputy Mayor Anglin served in New York State government for 20 years in various leadership roles including Budget Director, New York State’s most-senior budget official.

MOA sat down with Deputy Mayor Anglin to discuss her new role at City Hall, as well as her thoughts on leadership, management, and success.

You made the change from State to City government. What attracted you to New York City government?

It is very similar and very different. I feel like I came home. At the State level, the things you do are at the 64,000 feet level. You make a law or rule change and you’re done. In the city, if you make a change, you see the immediate result and it’s up to you to implement that change. That’s very rewarding. I looked at education and public policy, but missed broader public policy and being in public service. I came to City Hall because the Mayor and I share similar visions and values, and I thought working here would be very engaging and exciting.

Is there any guidance you would provide to employees moving into a leadership position for the first time? Any particular advice for women leaders?

I love being a manager. You can be creative and you can also use the experience that you’ve gained over the years to watch people grow and help them develop, but managing is hard. In my first job as a manager, I was so excited, and I tried to do everything myself. My supervisor at the time, told me I needed to guide my staff because being a manager is not about doing their work, instead it’s about helping them understand their responsibilities. For women managers specifically, I would say be assertive, but not aggressive. Show them who you are and mean business.

As a new manager, advocating for change can be difficult. What tactics do you recommend to get buy-in for new initiatives, policies, or programs that may not be initially popular?

This happens all of the time! Especially when it’s a multi-agency initiative. You can’t assume that just because you think something is a good idea, that everyone is going to love it. When trying to get buy-in, I break [the initiative] down by each of the operational aspects. I explain to each agency how the initiative can help them. I try to look for the commonalities and I start working individually on the agencies.

Who are your mentors and on what important challenges have you sought their advice?

My mentor was my father. He made sure that I could do anything I wanted. He was a wise businessman and one of the smartest men I’ve ever known. He always gave me good advice. [He said], when your boss asks for your feedback, the best thing you can do is give your most honest, educated, and well-researched opinion. No one is going to go with everything, but you must remember to support them in whatever direction they decide to go in. [He also said], when things get overwhelming, there are only two things that can happen to you in this world: minor inconveniences and major catastrophes. A minor inconvenience is something like you left your briefcase behind. Let those go. It’s the major catastrophes—the sickness, the deaths—that’s the tough stuff. Focus on the important things, not the minor inconveniences.

What do you do to ensure you continue to develop and grow as a leader?

There are a handful of things. Some are more or less structured. I believe in doing self-evaluations. A few years ago, I did a 360 Evaluation. I was terrified of doing this because I was thinking, what do people really think of me? [But] it was great because you get to see areas where you may be able to improve. There is also the DISC assessment. The one thing that I like to do the best, that I feel makes you a good leader, is to watch other leaders and try to learn from them. I don’t do everything perfectly. I watch other managers and I see what they do that I think is effective. I try to build on that and use that in my day-to-day.