

Jeannette B. De Jesús

Executive director,
Hispanic Health Council

Who is your most influential role model, and why?

There is not one person who embodies all of the important lessons that I've learned. Life is too complex to choose just one person as a role model. From my mother, I've learned the value of hard work and to face the unknown without fear. My father's entrepreneurial spirit and sister's bravery inspire me each and every day. And a high school English

teacher taught me to have compassion for others. My biggest victory is to be in the position of having so many choices that can positively impact the lives of others. My biggest defeat is the daily realization that, even given the superior work of those I'm blessed to work with each and every day, we may never be able to do enough to effect change in the lives of the most vulnerable.

When the stress level gets too high, what's your secret remedy?

“Living a meaningful life has always been important to me, and I've never considered money an accurate long-term indicator of my self worth.”

teacher taught me to have compassion for others.

Why are you good at what you do?

Success is measured in different ways. I've worked very hard and surrounded myself with people who knew more than I. I try hard to be patient and have a long-term vision that keeps me focused. Living a meaningful life has always been important to me, and I've never considered money an accurate long-term indicator of my self worth.

Professionally, what has been your greatest victory? Your biggest defeat?

I'm a regular at the paint department of my local home improvement store. I covet beautiful wall color, and spend countless hours painting to the melodic sounds of Lucecita Benitez, Puerto Rico's most talented balladeer.

How have you tried to balance your career and your personal life, and is there an example or two you can share?

I'm not sure it's possible to balance the two. One always gets more than the other, and it's a daily struggle to choose which one gets more of my attention. Now that I've accepted that balance isn't always possible, it's not such an overwhelming struggle.



PHOTO/STEVE LASCHEVER

What advice would you give to young women just starting their careers?

Know who you are and be patient with those who are still figuring it out. Laugh a lot and get your nails done often. ■

Name: Jeannette B. De Jesús

Age: 39

Occupation: Executive director, Hispanic Health Council

Location of business: Hartford

Education: Masters in Public Administration, Harvard University; Masters in Social Work, New York University