

A life of ronald reagan



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

To many, the 40th President of the United States, Ronald Reagan, is considered to be one of the greatest presidents who have ever lived. Many even suggested that his face be carved into Mount Rushmore. While most of the United States remembers Reagan as a tremendous leader, others are often skeptical of the amount of credit he has earned for his success while in office.

Critics may question the positive reception that has generally been affiliated with his name, very seldom deny the achievements garnered in both the social and political arena. The admiration and skepticism that Reagan has received could be due to a variety of similar sources. Reagan's achieving 8 years in office is likely derived from his charismatic and likeable personality, his ability to affectively communicate, and simply being in the right place at the right time.

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Ronald Reagan was born on February 6th, 1911 in Tampico Illinois. At a young age, Reagan witnessed his family economically suffer through the 20th century recession, The Great Depression. Former President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt, introduced an economic plan known as The New Deal, which supported Regan's family through these those trying times. As a result of Reagan's admiration for President Roosevelt and the poverty that he and his family had endured, he grew up with very progressive political views.

Reagan was raised by a caring mother and an alcoholic father, whose influence played a huge factor on shaping him into who he was as a leader.

Due to the trauma that he experienced while growing up in a home with a neglectful and often abusive father; he always strived to maintain a positive outlook in life, even in the most stressful of times. He was very non-confrontational person and his emotional intelligence allowed him to easily get along with others.

Reagan utilized his charismatic personality in many occupational fields he was involved through out his early life. He served in the military during World War 2, but due to his poor eyesight, he spent most of his service acting in American propaganda films. Shortly after the War ended, Reagan was made president of the Screen Actor's Guild, where he met his wife, Nancy. 3 years after dating, they got married in March of 1952.

He was also a popular actor in Hollywood and eventually signed a contract with Warner Brothers Studios. He played a part in over 50 films, which made his attractive personality highly notable throughout the nation. He was entrenched to the Hollywood lifestyle, which shifted his already progressive views even further left.

As Reagan began to distance himself from the celebrity culture that often accompanies the film industry, his interest in politics began to grow, and his political views seemed to gradually shift further right. Following World War 2, Communism was on the rise. Most conspicuous at the time was the Soviet Union and their adoption of the communist regimes. This led to the Cold War and consequently, Reagan developed very anti-communistic views. As the Cold War intensified, so did Reagan's conservative values, both politically and socially, and officially became a registered Republican in 1962.

A few years later, Reagan was convinced to run as Governor of California by a few small business owners. He was elected as Governor in 1967 and served 2 terms. His time in state office helped him develop political experience and solidify his political beliefs.

In 1980, Ronald Reagan was elected President of the United States, defeating the unpopular incumbent, Jimmy Carter. Winning both the popular vote and the Electoral College, he took office in January of 1981. Reagan commenced his time in office with higher favorability ratings than his 3 most recent predecessors, and his go lucky, cheerful personality helped him get along with almost everyone in the White House. He was kind, humorous, inspirational and an eternal optimist. Although Reagan was elected as a Republican, due to his time as a democrat, his views were fairly bi-partisan, which assisted him in working well with Congress and passing his proposed legislation such as his economic plan which was coined the name Reaganomics.

Reaganomics was President Reagan's first inaugural domestic priority, where he cut taxes from major cooperations and the upper class, in order for wealth to be distributed down into the middle and lower class, essentially to boost the economy. Although the incorporation of this plan had a rocky start, the economy made a gradual improvement during his tenure in office.

Reagan's commendable time in office eventually hit an obstacle when an executive political scandal was exposed to the general public. The scandal, known as the Iran-Contra Affair', took place during Reagan's 2nd term in office, which involved unelected officials of the Reagan Administration

illegally dealing weapons to Iran in hope to release several of United States hostages. Reagan publically claimed that he was unaware of the events that were taken place; nevertheless, this took a toll on his general approval ratings, dropping it from 63% to 47%.

Although Reagan experienced some negative press during his presidency, it is plausible that the results could have been much worse for a president who was not as amiable or trustworthy as Reagan was.

Because of his bi-partisanship, his relationship with those of Congress and in the White House, and his sunny disposition, Reagan was able to receive success in the presidency, despite some unfortunate events that took place, which even may have been out of his spectrum of knowledge.

President Reagan was no rookie when it came to addressing the public. After he graduated college, he was a radio announcer for a few different stations and later on became a sports announcer for the Chicago Cubs baseball games. These occupations of course helped him develop an ability to effectively communicate, and his time in Hollywood only strengthened his abilities. Reagan also served as a conservative spokesman for the Barry Goldwater campaign in the 60s. Likewise, his time as Governor of California helped him develop his political communication skills and cognitive abilities.

On January 28th, 1986, 7 astronauts were killed in NASA's failed space mission known as the Challenger Disaster. This traumatic event came as a shock to many Americans, as many mourned over the fatalities of the NASA crewmembers. For the sake of the unfortunate occurrence, President Reagan postponed his State of the Union address in order to publically reach out to

the American people in regards to what had recently taken place. Some of his most impactful words were as stated:

For the families of the seven: we cannot bear, as you do, the full impact of this tragedy. But we feel the loss, and we're thinking about you so very much. Your loved ones were daring and brave, and they had that special grace, that special spirit that says, " Give me a challenge, and I'll meet it with joy." They had a hunger to explore the universe and discover its truths. They wished to serve, and they did. They served all of us. We've grown used to wonders in this century. It's hard to dazzle us. But for 25 years the United States space program has been doing just that. We've grown used to the idea of space, and perhaps we forget that we've only just begun. We're still pioneers. They, the members of the Challenger crew, were pioneers (Ronald Reagan).

The words of Reagan struck the hearts of the American people, as he was able to council them in a time of need. His ability to mourn with the American people and provide them with hope created greater confidence between Reagan and his constituents.

Although Reagan was sympathetic towards the American people in many of his addresses, he also had the ability to be witty and humorous. In March of 1981, the newly elected President was shot in his side and wounded by John Hinckley Jr. Although Reagan suffered with a punctured lung and internal bleeding, he was able to maintain his humor during the recovery process, even telling the doctors who were treating him that he hoped they were all Republicans. His humor and optimism was appealing to the American people,

and always seemed to know how to make someone laugh, even in the worst of times.

Reagan was also a firm and straight shooter when necessary. During his Presidency, he dealt with several serious issues such as homelessness, abortion, civil rights, and the Cold War. Reagan took a hard stance against the spread of communism and often publically expressed his concern of communist influence in the world. In the first few years of his presidency, he took a rather unyielding approach in attempt to end the Cold War, such as building up the military and even going as far to publically title the Soviet Union as an evil empire. On March of 1983, Reagan addresses the American people regarding the nuclear tension that existed between the United States and the Soviet Union. Some of his most impactful words were as follows:

I believe that communism is another sad, bizarre chapter in human history whose last“ last pages even now are being written. I believe this because the source of our strength in the quest for human freedom is not material, but spiritual. And because it knows no limitation, it must terrify and ultimately triumph over those who would enslave their fellow man (Reagan, 1983).

Reagan did all that was in his political power to educate the citizens of the United States of the evils of communism and fight against the U. S. S. R. However, his aggressive approaches seemed to decrease when Mikail Gorbachev was put into power as the General Secretary of the Soviet Union. Due to the new communist leader, the endurance of the Cold War, and influence from the First Lady, Reagan decided to take a more subtle approach in handling the international contention. He was able to develop a strong and civil relationship with General Gorbachev, which relieved nuclear

tension between the 2 countries. Many would argue that the relationship that Reagan and Gorbachev developed played a huge factor in setting the path to the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War.

Ronald Reagan is remembered as one of the greatest public communicators to take office in the history of the United States. His background as an actor, announcer, spokesperson and politician likely improved and developed his abilities to communicate both politically and casually. It is reasonable to assume that his verbal aptitude helped him push his political agenda as president, as played a crucial part in gaining the trust of the American people and setting a path to the end of the Cold War.

Reagan experienced an exceptional amount of success while in office. Regardless, many would argue that he has received a lot more credit for his major accomplishments than deserved, and that he is, simply put, an overrated president, and was just in the right place in the right time. So the question remains, is Reagan an overrated president or was he a truly effective and influential leader?

In 1976, shortly after Reagan decided he would not seek reelection as Governor of California, he ran for president against Gerald Ford in the primaries, however, Ford barely succeeded him and advanced to the general election. Jimmy Carter, a democrat from Plains, Georgia, then defeated Ford and became the 39th President of the United States. Jimmy Carter was a president known to have poor managerial skills and organizational capacity. Due to his unpopularity, a Conservative movement began to grow in the

United States, and Carter left office with an average approval rating of 45.5%.

Due to the growth in the conservative movement and the low approval rating, this was the perfect opportunity for the highly favorable Reagan to seek reelection. For these reasons was Reagan able to win the general election by a landslide. Winning 489 electoral votes and 50.7% of the popular vote.

One of Reagan's most crowning achievements was that he was very influential in bringing the Cold War to an end. However many political scientists and politicians would dispute this, arguing that the ending of the healing of United States' relation with the U. S. S. R. is a result of hard work and diplomacy from the presidents and non-elected officials that proceeded Reagan's administration.

Additionally, as mentioned previously, Reagan's first approach to settle relations the Soviet Union was firm and somewhat confrontational, however, this approach did not seem to bring about any success. Within the first half of Reagan's presidency, 3 of the General Secretaries of the Soviet Union, Leonid Brezhnev, Yuri Andropov and Konstantin Chernenko, had passed away consecutively. In March of 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev was made General Secretary of the Soviet Union. It was then that Reagan started to take a more subtle approach on handling the contentious relations between the 2 countries. The positive relationship that Reagan developed with Gorbachev, and Gorbachev's belief that the U. S. S. R. needed a new political approach, lead to the signing of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, which

was a peace treaty between the United States and the Soviet Union, in which they would eliminate their intermediate range weapons and nuclear forces that served as a potential threat between the 2 countries. In December on 1991, shortly after Reagan left office, the Soviet Union collapsed, granting independence to its citizens.

Given the information provided, it is reasonable to assume that Reagan was just extremely fortunate on how the events played out during his presidency. Although he lost the Republican primaries in 1976, this could be considered an advantage to him. As a result of his defeat in 1976, he ran again in 1980 against an unpopular democratic president during a large Conservative movement, which provided him with populous advantage.

As President, his initial approaches to dissolve nuclear tension with the Soviet Union was unsuccessful, however 2 of their General Secretary's died within the first half of his time in office. It wasn't until Gorbachev was the Soviet Leader that Reagan was able to make progress with international relations. It almost is as if he had 3 chances to take the correct approach in handling these relations.

On the other hand, Reagan was a great leader. He was a man with vision, emotional intelligence and extremely effective political skill and ability to communicate. He was able to provide the American people with hope and optimism, while working with Congress to push forward his agenda. Although Reagan may have caught a few lucky breaks when handling the relation with the Soviet Union, he still was able to take the steps to acquire a positive relationship with Gorbachev and learn from his past mistakes.

It is no question that Reagan had several of advantages that helped him obtain success in his presidency, but he was able to take the steps to obtain his success. It is justifiable to believe that President Ronald Reagan receives too much credit for his accomplishments, and that he was simply in the right place at the right time, but it is illegitimate to assume that he was not a successful leader of our nation. With the hypothetical absence of President Regan, the United States would not be where it is today. He, a common man, was able to show the United States that success can be accumulated through our optimism, our methods of communication, and a little bit of luck.