

Who said politics isn't entertaining? No doubt your eyes have been glued to this season's must-see TV—debates and election returns, of course!—so **supplement your onscreen entertainment with books about who the candidates are, and what's at stake for our country's future.**

SPREAD THE WORLD



Why Women Should Rule the World by Dee Dee Myers (\$25) Myers broke ground as our first female—and, at 31, our youngest ever—press secretary (from 1993 to 1994 under President Bill Clinton). Her new memoir describes her roller-coaster experience and offers her thoughts on why it would benefit *all* of us to have more women in charge. We asked Myers why politics is her passion. ▶

Why should women rule the world?

Myers: Women's brains are wired differently from men's, and they have distinct life experiences, so they approach leadership and resolve conflicts differently. As primary caretakers, women develop the exact qualities possessed by good leaders: They manage time well, they're more empathetic, and they're constantly gathering information and then making decisions. A variety of leadership styles create more options for a government or a company. The idea isn't to ditch our male leaders but rather to improve the mix—and for that we need women.

How was it being our country's first female press secretary?

Myers: Tricky. The job required me to be authoritative, which was hard because people are so used to having men in charge. President Clinton really tried to be inclusive—he chose me primarily because I was a woman—but it was still a boys' club in the White House. However, as a woman, I was able to make my environment less confrontational. I tried to get to know reporters, and I could suggest looking at situations from different perspectives. I'm proud that another woman [Dana Perino] is getting a crack at the job now under President George W. Bush—I think she's doing great.

What advice can you offer female leaders—and all women?

Myers: Be confident in your authority. Men are pros at this. Women need to know that their opinions are every bit as valid as men's, and to express themselves in ways that convey that. It's tough because there's a "damned if you do, damned if you don't" phenomenon wherein if women act too feminine they are perceived as soft, but when they defy gender norms they are seen as too tough. It's not fair, but it's a reality, and we have to keep working to find a middle ground so that we can be leaders and also women.

So why aren't more women in charge?

Myers: Because fewer women run for office. When female candidates run, women are more likely to vote for them and they are as likely to be elected. Not surprisingly, five of the top 10 countries on the United Nations's list of best countries to live in have had women leaders in recent years—there are great advantages in places where women have more power. Now, we just have to encourage more women to run here.

Which presidential candidate did you support in the primaries?

Myers: I have strong ties to the Clintons, of course; my sister works for Barack Obama; and my kids are friends with the Edwards children. I thought they were all great. So my response? I hid under my desk. ►