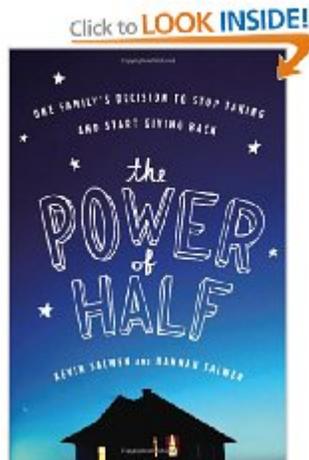


Women in Leadership Highlights December 18, 2009



“Philanthropy and Leadership: Start at Home” – featuring Kevin and Hannah Salwen. A graduate of Northwestern University, Kevin is a writer & entrepreneur. As a reporter, columnist and editor at the Wall Street Journal from 1981 – 2000, he covered 2 presidential administrations and launched 2 publications. Since 2000, Kevin co-created several media ventures, including *Motto* magazine, and he serves on the board of Habitat for Humanity. Hannah is Kevin’s 17 yr. old daughter, a student at the Atlanta Girls School, and volunteer at the Central Night Shelter and the Food Bank. The entire Salwen family – including wife, Joan, a teacher at AGS, and son, Joseph, are investing their money, time and talent to help build opportunity for people in Africa. Kevin and Hannah have co-authored a special book, “The Power of Half”, about their family project -- one family’s commitment to make a difference in the world.

Their story:

Kevin and his wife, Joan, had very successful careers and provided very well for their family of four. They refer to themselves as “typical consuming yuppies.” Their family was doing well and living quite well in an affluent neighborhood during what they call their “accumulation phase.”

Occasionally, the family would read together, e.g., *The Alchemist*, and that might raise the question, “Why are we here on this planet?” Joan might add, “What do we as a family want our legacy to be?”

But the real pivotal event came when daughter Hannah was 14 and was driving with her dad. Out of the window she saw a homeless man on the street and simultaneously, she saw a man in a Mercedes. That incident spurred the first of many family discussions around the dinner table. Hannah’s thought: if the man in the Mercedes gave up his car, the homeless man would have plenty to eat.

Taking that idea and applying it to their family, the concept of selling their “big house” and buying a smaller one was born. Over time, the family made the ultimate decision to downsize and give half of the proceeds to charity. Furthermore, the charity would be about eliminating poverty.

They established some parameters that would guide them, e.g., they would not create their own charity but instead would join with an existing non profit organization. Since the family was already engaged in several local projects related to feeding the hungry, they preferred an organization that has an international reach. Their research led them to the Hunger Project.

Through the Hunger Project, they learned about what was going on in Ghana. The objective: to empower people to build their own future over a 5 year program. This was not about handing out food, or even going there and building homes for the local villagers. Instead, it was about being a resource for the Ghanaians to help them change their own future. It was also about the Salwen family standing to one side – supporting the locals, but not doing the work for them. The ultimate objective is for local “ownership” of whatever gets done.

As a family, the Salwens spent 2 weeks in Ghana to see the Hunger Project “at work” and among other things; they visited a corn mill opening. The significance of this was profound. With the productivity of this mill, more girls could go to school, and would get educated VS having to walk miles and miles each day to carry the corn from their village to have it ground, and have no time to go to school. Incidentally, it became evident that much of what was going on in Ghana centered around women and girls. Helping them typically meant helping their whole family and possibly the whole village.

Another point the Salwens made was the difference between famine relief and chronic hunger. The Hunger Project addresses those that are chronically hungry, whose entire lives are spent hunting for food to keep their families alive from day to day, week to week, month to month, year to year.

The Results:

The Salwens said they started out to make a small difference, using half the proceeds from the sale of their larger home to contribute to the Hunger Project. However, the real results are more than the money they've given away. It's about the deeper and broader family ties that have been created. As a family, they said they have significantly improved their communications with one another; parents with their kids, and vice versa. They have also increased their openness, trust, and overall quality of their relationships.

Kevin and Hannah wrote a book that chronicles their family's experience with this project. It's expected to be published in Feb. 2010 and is available now on Amazon.com. *"The Power of Half: One Family's Decision to Stop Taking and Start Giving Back."*

The Challenge:

WHAT'S YOUR HALF?? Everyone has more than enough of something....and could give that half away. Doing it collectively can have an even more far-reaching impact.