

## Women In Leadership Seminar Highlights February 29, 2008



Jacqueline Welch

**Jacqueline Welch: “Leadership from the Inside Out”** – VP, Employee & Org. Effectiveness, Rock-Tenn Co. She’s quickly becoming one of Atlanta’s most recognized and respected executives and civic leaders. A graduate of Leadership ATL, board member for PADV and BDN, Jacqui continues to be honored for her outstanding contributions to our city, as represented by the 2007 Women of Excellence Award and ATL. Woman Magazine’s “Most Powerful Women of 2007.” She’s also the Co-Chair of United Way’s Johnnetta B. Cole Society and...a devoted wife, mother of a toddler, and a leader wise beyond her years.

“My early dream of becoming a doctor died after completing an internship in the field. At 20 years old I became an executive director where I found people jobs. From that experience, I realized I could have an impact on others in the HR field.”

“Next I entered a position as a retail-buyer which was practical business experience (very practical for an English major.) In 1991, I set a goal to make \$30,000, which I was offered. But my male counterpart negotiated for the same position and was paid \$35,000. (There’s an important lesson here re negotiating!)”

“I moved from New York City to Atlanta and reconnected with Tarik Welch, a childhood friend who is now my husband of ten years. My first job in Atlanta was with Towers Perrin where I worked for 18 months before I was recruited by what was then Andersen Consulting (and is now Accenture). My explicit goal: to make partner. I worked for Andersen Consulting / Accenture for five years and then just got burned out. I learned a key lesson from this experience: if you’re in a position or organization and you’re truly unhappy, make a change. In my case, I began to do a lot of self-reflection and realized how much I didn’t like leaving the people I loved every week. I remember vividly in July 2001, driving to the airport and crying all the way. It was NOT a good week.”

“When I returned home, my husband suggested I quit. WHO KNEW that was an option?! Not long after came 9/11, very dark days. I’m from New York and had lots of family and friends still living there. Executing my decision to leave was very easy to do after that.”

“The decision I made was to quit Accenture. I had no Plan B; but we figured I could take a year off and we’d be fine financially. Key lesson here: have your financial affairs in order. Money does give you more options. Six months into my self-imposed sabbatical, I learned about an opportunity at Rock-Tenn Company. I was interviewed by a woman who became my boss and my predecessor. Again, I did not negotiate but this time I did have a range in mind for salary. Six months after I was hired, my boss left the company.”

“Another key lesson: You are constantly being evaluated. Prior to my boss leaving, I had interacted with our Chairman and CEO several times. I treated every planned interaction like a client engagement and always had an elevator speech in my head for unplanned interactions. When my boss left, I prepared a presentation for what I thought should happen next for my department which included me leading the team. I asked for the job and got it. March 4, 2008 made was my sixth anniversary with Rock-Tenn Company.”

“What’s next? I feel I was born with a variety of skills and many ways to express those skills in the marketplace. I also have a list of 100 things I want to do before we die, which I add to regularly when I complete something. Items include: travel, run for office, write a book and teach.”

## **Summary:**

### **Important Points List:**

- ASK for what you want; negotiate. Take time to prepare before you do ask. Prepare facts and data as to why you deserve what you’re asking for. Bring your “A” Game and your confidence. Be specific.
- Check your internal or personal compass to make sure you stay on track with your goals, what you want to do, and where you want to be. Money and titles aren’t everything.
- Time is winding down, it is not winding up. Manage the time you have available to you.
- Cut back on the media. It’s too much to keep up with in addition to your real life. Do a 3-day media fast to ascertain just how much time you are wasting, particularly in front of the TV. TiVo is great. Watch only what you tape.
- Practice saying NO. You can’t and shouldn’t try to do everything.
- Know the consequence of saying no, i.e., turning down jobs, moves, etc. Women often think “that’s not fair” when their decisions lead to certain consequences, but don’t think like a victim. Own your choices.
- Know the value of your skills in the market place. You, individually, are priceless, but your skills have a certain value. You must be objective and aggressive when assessing your skills and their worth.
- Never ask a question when there’s only one right answer, allow people to honestly answer.
- Work/Life Balance (I say, “Kill it!”) Life is like a wheel. Work is one spoke. It isn’t the whole wheel. You are more than what you do to make a living.
- Get your money straight! Managing your finances is important because not worrying about money creates options.

- Have a spiritual practice. We all need something to center us.
- Remember, it's important to always be on point. You are always being evaluated.

Participant question: How do you balance it all?

Answer: "Know when to rest. If your responsibilities and things you typically enjoy feel like a burden, it may be that you are tired and need to rest. Listen to your body."

Question: How do you handle young employees that seem to want it all today?

Answer: "There are now four generations in the workplace. You must engage and temper the younger ones. They bring a lot to the table, but lack the experience and maturity of the older generations. Guide them, mentor them and learn from them, too."

**Favorite Books / References Mentioned by Seminar Attendees  
(Some titles may be inaccurate)**

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| 1. She Flies Without Wings   | 23. The Purpose Driven Life  |
| 2. The Secret  | 24. It's Not About the Bike and Every<br>Second Counts, both by Lance<br>Armstrong         |
| 3. Sophie's Choice   | 25. Don't Block the Blessings  |
| 4. The Knowing   | 26. The Greatest Salesman  |
| 5. Lord, Only You Can Change Me  | 27. The Prophet  |
| 6. The Kite Runner   | 28. The People You Meet in Heaven  |
| 7. The Power of One  | 29. Near Earth   |
| 8. Let Your Life Speak   | 30. The Total Money Makeover   |
| 9. Wit and Wisdom  | 31. The Feminine Mystique  |
| 10. Water for Alton  | 32. Talking from 9-5: Women and Men<br>and Work  |
| 11. The Bible  | 33. The Power of Intuition   |
| 12. Definitely Not Proud   | 34. Who Moved My Cheese?   |
| 13. 7 Habits of Highly Effective<br>People                                       | 35. My American Journey  |
| 14. One Minute Manager   | 36. The Power of a Praying Husband   |
| 15. For Colored Girls Who Have<br>Considered Suicide When the<br>Rainbow is Enuf | 37. What Should I Do With My Life?   |
| 16. The Secret Life of Bees  | 38. Angela's Ashes   |
| 17. Les Miserable  | 39. The DaVinci Code   |
| 18. Rich Dad Poor Dad  | 40. Forty Million Dollar Slaves: The<br>Rise, Fall, and Redemption of the<br>Black Athlete |
| 19. The Greatest Generation  | 41. Dive for Dreams, a poem by E.E.<br>Cummings  |
| 20. Hour to Live and Hour to Love  |  |
| 21. The Fountainhead   |  |
| 22. Listening to Your life   |  |