

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

### LISA J. WHALEY: Her journey through life and the lessons learned along the way



Lisa J. Whaley speaks to associates at the Wal-Mart Home Office during the "Women in Leadership" series, sharing secrets of sacrifice, commitment and devotion.

Wal-Mart's Office of Diversity, recently sponsored another "Women in Leadership" series, with work, life, balance coach Lisa J. Whaley. Whaley, a former vice-president at IBM Corporation, gave a personal testimony why she left corporate America and followed her true passion.

Lisa shared with *Community Partners* what she told the audience about her approach to work, life, and balance.

#### Sacrifices Come With Success

"The higher you climb in corporate America, the greater your personal sacrifice," said Whaley. Whaley started at IBM as a programmer who was riding high on opportunities to travel and learn more about cor-

porate America. "Back then, life was easy because it was just me and the world." Things changed when she got married and started a family. It was the first time in her life that she had to balance a prosperous career as a corporate executive and find equal time for her family.

"I always had high aspirations for my future with IBM. Unfortunately, I married someone who was just as ambitious. We delegated too much parenting to nannies to care for our children," said Whaley about her early years of handling family and a career. "Back then, I thought I was being a good role model for my daughters by showing them that as a woman you could do everything."

Lisa was forced to make changes when her daughter told her that she and her husband were not good parents. Lisa said her

older daughter had been acting out for years, and she had turned a blind eye to her cries for help. "What my daughter said to me broke my heart. It was truly a humbling experience that made me come to terms with everything in my life including a failing marriage."

We can never change another person or their behavior. The only person we have direct control over is ourselves.

#### Taking Matters Into Her Own Hands

"Suffering in silence from severe depression, I thought the solution at that time was to take my own life. I got in my car, turned on the ignition in my closed garage, and sat waiting to die," said Whaley as she reminisced about her attempted suicide. "Then, I had a revelation. I didn't want my youngest daughter to come home from school and find me dead in my car. I didn't want my colleagues to think that I was a failure. I realized that I needed professional help. I decided to come to grips with everything in my life, and do something about it. I was a fighter and I was going to fight."

#### Tools For A Healthy Future

"One day while cleaning out a file drawer at home, I found a document entitled *The Guiding Principles to Achieving Harmony Between Work and Life*. As I kept reading, I realized that it was a document that I had written early in my career. I realized that I had violated many of my own principles."

#### About Lisa J. Whaley

Lisa J. Whaley is the founder and president of Life Work Synergy LLC in Woodbridge, VA. After a 20-year career with IBM, she decided to pursue her passion as a life coach and motivational speaker. She is a best selling author and weekly internet radio talk show host.

For more information, visit [www.lifeworksynergy.com](http://www.lifeworksynergy.com).

## Lisa's Rules:

1. Be yourself and be happy.
2. Set realistic goals within your values.
3. Use your support network.
4. Make time for yourself.
5. Make yourself marketable.
6. Take a vacation.
7. Effectively multi-task.
8. Enjoy life and have fun.
9. Weigh your options carefully.
10. Don't over-commit.
11. It's ok to say no.
12. Tackle guilt and stress.
13. Find your passion and follow it.
14. Get enough sleep and rest.

#### Take the SPA approach through life.

- State what you want.
- Plan what you need to get it.
- Act by executing actionable tasks.

