



Leslie A Wilson
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Leslie has spent over two decades in the financial services business. While receiving her degree from Wellesley College, she participated in exchange programs at both Harvard and Dartmouth. She started her career at Drexel Burnham as an options trader before moving on to SG Cowen Securities as Vice President of their Private Banking division. During her six-year tenure, she managed asset portfolio of over \$600 million. She joined Whale Securities in 1990 and has raised over \$1 billion for emerging growth companies through IPO's, secondary offerings and private placements. Leslie lives in New York and is involved with a number of volunteer organizations throughout the city. She enjoys tennis, skiing and travel.

professional

What character qualities do you look for when hiring?

The obvious things would be honesty, sincerity and authenticity. I value people who are themselves and express themselves sincerely and honestly and don't try to anticipate what's the right thing to say. To sort of advance themselves, to get along with people in the room ... I can spot that a mile away and I can't stand it. I'm not like that, so I particularly don't like that in others. So that's maybe a negative way of answering. So what I do like is honesty and sincerity, authenticity. People who are themselves and speak the truth and what they really think and are not afraid to say the wrong thing to the wrong person at work.

What are the pitfalls of success or careerism?

How did you get involved in the career you are in?

personal

How do you define success? How has your definition evolved?

I didn't really want a "career". Not because it wasn't a goal, but because it was an expectation. A natural expectation was that I thought I'd be married at a young age. I mean, if I had got married when I was 23, that wouldn't have seemed the least bit strange to me. It was just kind of a factual, chronological given in my mind. What I wanted to happen was to have a good job. I wanted to work somewhere that was impressive, that had status. I was kind of building a resume for myself, which I sort had done my whole life. I liked to get good grades, I wanted to be in the right this, the right that. I wanted ... even little clubs. I wanted to be the class President. What I wanted was to be married, after I had this great job and I wanted to have gone to good schools. I wanted to have a table talk knowledge about a lot of things I liked. Reading. I liked being sophisticated. I wanted to be married and I wanted to have a huge family. I mean, if I had 12 children, I thought that was okay, too. 16 years later it was dramatically different. I don't know if it has been forced upon me or my own personal realization. What I thought was going to happen didn't happen, which is I guess natural in life, but one of the major things which was that I would be married with a family, would sort of dictate your life. What you would be doing and I guess the boundaries of your life, where they would fall. So such a major thing not happening ... and it has not, even up to this second ... and I don't lament that. But if someone had told me when I was 20 that you would not be married at X age and not have children It literally would have been like saying, I was going to be a heroine addict or a transvestite. It just would have been literally impossible for me to have gotten my hands around that. The difference would be the things that I thought that I wanted I no longer have an expectancy really, with a result



attached. It's nice to have expectancies. I would like to be a millionaire, but if I'm not, am I going to jump off a bridge? No. So I had these expectancies, but they don't have the same attachment in that if they don't happen, that's it. This year there will be no Christmas.

How do you deal with stress? How did you used to deal with stress?

Today I pray. And believe it or not I don't get as stressed as I used to. Today I'm having a particularly bad day and I did kind of say something to one person that I wished I hadn't said, but in general, I would say my stress level is appreciatively down. I usually say I could calibrate my stress level by my directions with cab drivers. Because if you live in New York City, riding in a cab every day, for whatever reason, I'd be late and I'd act like it was his fault. And I would be thinking, "Which way is he going, where is he going?" Or the light was yellow and he'd sort of slow up and I'd think, "Oh ... " I wanted to hit the gas. I would be, for whatever reason, extremely reactive in a taxicab. And I noticed ... I mean, I can't even remember the last time I had an altercation with a taxi driver. So that might not be significant to others, but that's a significant barometer to me.

What was the best tip you ever ignored?

s p i r i t u a l

How does your faith help you in your personal life?

It influenced me dramatically. As I developed faith ... and I don't mean to make it sound like something you can sort of do yourself, per se ... I think you can be determined to pursue it. But what actually occurs, the transaction, is not necessarily because of your determination. Because I, in the past, have been determined to do a lot of things, and I determined to fail. But I did determine to pursue spiritual things. Sometimes out of a nice, philosophical foundation, that it was nice, it was added value. Something I should do. I know I'm going to die some day, whether I like it or not. So there's kind of a natural affinity, at least for me there was, to pursue those things. But again, it was more that I would pursue God and faith for selfish reasons because I wanted safety on a plane. I still don't like to fly. To big things like I'm going for this interview tomorrow, I want to get that job. I like this guy, I want him to like me, I want him to be madly in love with me. I want him to like me more than I like him. Things like that. So I basically was still looking at God in the pursuit of God ... not necessarily intentionally, but when I look back on it, it was kind of like a sugar daddy. What have you done for me lately? If I look into this, what's in it for me? What will I get out of it? Why should I? It wasn't so much for the most altruistic reasons. However, operating on what I knew at the time, it was kind of like a four-year-old's pursuit, from what I knew, those were the goals and those were the reasons why I was pursuing faith. So that may have been why I started out, or a lot of the reasons why I was interested. I might have set out to find one thing, but it turned out to be much, much more than I truly ever could have dreamt. I don't want to sound corny like it's a thrill of a lifetime, but it has been a thrill of a lifetime, in spite of myself, because I did not set out to get what I got. So that's the most humbling part of it. It amazes me that I would have thought it was A, and I God ... and the rest of the alphabet.