

Five Questions With: Gail Lowney Alofsin



Our parents instilled a culture of volunteerism in us during our elementary school years."

[By Patricia Daddona](#)

PBN Staff Writer

5/2/14

Gail Lowney Alofsin is director of corporate partnerships for the Newport Harbor Corp., an adjunct professor at the Harrington School of the University of Rhode Island and a professional keynote speaker. She leads workshops and speaks at national and international conferences on the topics of work and life integration, communication, personal branding and leadership. She has just published "Your Someday is Now," a book on these topics through Aviva Publishing of New York, drawing on personal and professional relationships with people in both the for-profit and nonprofit worlds. She's also active with various nonprofits, including the Martin Luther King Jr. Center in Newport and the Haitian Health Foundation. The book launch is May 20 at the Casino Theatre at the International Tennis Hall of Fame and Museum. Those book sales will be donated to the ITHF while subsequent sales will go to the latter two nonprofits with which she is closely affiliated. She speaks here about her own motivation as a writer and doer, and insights she's gleaned about the working world, including her work with nonprofits.

PBN: What prompted you to write "Your Someday Is Now," and what would you say is the primary message of the book?

ALOFSIN: I wrote the book for four reasons. The first is to inspire people to live their “somedays” – as best possible – now. There are things that you may be putting off. What are we really waiting for? Will there ever be the “right” time? Think about what you want to accomplish – personally and professionally, and just start!

The second reason I wrote the book was to capture the business, communication and leadership lessons that I have had the privilege to teach for the past 30 semesters at the University of Rhode Island. The third reason was humbling. When speaking at conferences and corporations, audience members would ask, “When are you putting this presentation into a book?” Fourth and most important, the book is a high school graduation gift for our son, Samuel.

The primary message? “LIVE every heartbeat.” The book is comprised of 15 chapters focused on work and life integration, communication, personal branding, organization, procrastination and suggestions on how to “bless and release” negativity and “snap out” of a bad mood!

PBN: What prompted you to donate proceeds to three nonprofit charities? Why and how did you select them?

ALOFSIN: While writing the book, I had lunch with my friend and former Martin Luther King Jr. Center Board Member, Gary Stiffler, president of the Matlet Group. Over lunch it was decided that we would co-sponsor the donation of the first 1,000 books so that 100 percent of sales from these books would benefit nonprofits. The center was a natural as we are both affiliated with this impressive nonprofit.

The Haitian Health Foundation was started by my mother and father – 32 years ago – at the request of Mother Teresa of Calcutta. Our outpatient clinic provides medical care to more than 200,000 people per year in Jeremie, Haiti and over 100 surrounding villages. We also have a Center for Women’s Health and a school for grades K-12. While I have physically volunteered in Haiti for over three decades, I realize that the best contribution I can offer is fundraising year round for this outstanding organization.

The International Tennis Hall of Fame will be the site of my book launch on May 20. The Tennis Hall of Fame is an important community partner and their CEO, Mark

Stenning, has been a professional and personal friend for over two decades. In addition to all the Hall of Fame does for tennis, it is also a venue where the community has been gathering since 1880. Since my book is truly a collaboration of insight from so many community partners, it made perfect sense to host the book launch at the exquisite Casino Theatre on the Hall of Fame property and give back to this iconic local organization as part of the book launch.

I have received requests from other nonprofits and have been assisting them via book sales as well. Several corporations have purchased the book for their employees with a donation to their favorite nonprofit.

PBN: Your book is replete with insights from professionals, including those who work at nonprofits, like Stenning and Barbara Shea, tourism marketing manager for the Preservation Society of Newport County. What did you learn from these professionals and others about time management, setting priorities and keeping a work/life balance?

ALOFSIN: I had the pleasure of interviewing over 100 friends, clients, colleagues and former students to share their insight. These interviews are organized in the back of 14 of the 15 chapters under the heading of “What Are You Waiting For?”

Among the insight that has been both learned and reinforced is wisdom such as “Always be the calmest person in the room,” by Robert DiMuccio, president of Amica Mutual Insurance; “Don’t judge other people’s work schedules,” by Terri Conners, executive director of NewportFilm; “We are all Wonder Women...,” by Barbara Shea; “Start early and get as much as possible done before the day of an event,” by Kati Machtley, director of the Women’s Summit at Bryant University; and “Time Management is like a baseball game...,” by Chuck Paiva, general manager and co-owner of the Newport Gulls.

PBN: You’ve worked or volunteered for many nonprofits. Cite one revelation from the book that came from that type of experience. How did it enlighten you?

ALOFSIN: Our parents instilled a culture of volunteerism in us during our elementary school years. That said, the most impactful revelation for me was seeing, first hand, pigs and people competing for food on my first trip to Port-au-Prince, Haiti during my junior year of college. Can you imagine? This was and still is heartbreaking and life altering. I returned to Tufts University and worked at the Tufts Experimental College to create and

teach a class entitled: “Ever compete with a Pig? Making it in the Third World.” The main message of the class still remains relevant today – it is an opportunity versus obligation to serve others, especially with the many gifts we have been blessed with.

PBN: What is the sequel?

ALOFSIN: My plan is to write another business/personal development book as a college graduation gift to our son, Samuel. I have four years: the cou