

UW School of Law

Transcript - "Showing Up for Life: Thoughts on the Gifts of a Lifetime"

Kellye Testy: Well, good evening everyone. I think we'll go ahead and get started. I'm Kellye Testy, the Dean of the University of Washington School of Law and it's a great pleasure to welcome you today. So glad you could join us. I understand that traffic was a little bit busy out there, so we particularly appreciate you making your way to the law school. I want to welcome you to this discussion with Mr. Bill Gates, Sr. regarding his book "Showing Up For Life: Thoughts on the Gifts of a Lifetime." And, let me start, Bill, by thanking you so much for being here. We're just very grateful to you for being here to talk about your book and answer some questions about...

Bill Gates, Sr.: It's my pleasure, Kellye.

Kellye: Thank you. In some ways, Mr. Gates is the person who, maybe, needs no introduction, but I am going to introduce him just briefly. In part, because I want to brag, just a little bit, because Bill Gates is a graduate of this law school from the Class of 1950. And is also one of the University of Washington's Regents. So, we're very grateful for his leadership in that sense. Of course, what brings him here today is that he is also, of course, an author. So we have a wonderful chance to talk with him about his book. He co-founded the law firm Preston, Gates, and Ellis, now K & L Gates, I think as many of you know. Has practiced law for many years in Washington State and serves as co-chair to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Bill Gates, Sr. is one of the most exceptional leaders for justice that I have ever met. And every lawyer in this state, and so many across the country recognize that leadership, and have been so grateful to him for that leadership, in so many ways, throughout the legal community here. The Washington Bar has recognized that for many years. The American Bar Association awarded him its highest honor last summer with the medal of honor at a wonderful ceremony in Chicago.

So, let me say, Bill, that we do welcome you. We are incredibly proud to claim you as one our Alums. And, we appreciate all of your support of the School of Law including this fabulous building. Which I think all of you know is William H. Gates Hall. Right?

So, let's get started and talk a little bit about this book. Let me begin by just asking you to talk a little bit about why you decided to write the book. What was your motivation?

Bill: Well, it started out as what I felt was a great need to write a memoir. I had seen memoirs that various colleagues of mine had written about their life's experience. I thought that it was very interesting that they had done it, it was interesting to read. But, even more to the point in my own case is that I have almost a complete absence of the Gates' who went before. It just didn't happen to be something that came down to me, well, at all. I despair of that a bit and I didn't want my grandchildren and beyond not to know a little something, at least, about family from which they are progeny of, as time went along.

So, I'm going to write a memoir. I'm sure some of you have had the experience that you decided you were going to write something and sat down and started to write it and three years later, you're still looking at it. [laughs] And you're still fussing with it. That was my experience--it was very hard to hunker down and get to work on it.

I decided the only way I can really make this happen is I'll hire somebody to help me, which I did. Then it did start to move along. Actually, we finished it, it does exist.

[laughter]

Bill: But, the interesting thing that happened along the way is that this person who was helping me with--her name is Mary Ann Mackin. You'll see her name on the cover of the book as a co-author. She said, "You know, you should do more with this. This is something you should publish." And she pestered me about that for a year, year and a half. And, I was very hesitant, didn't have any real interest in it. And I really didn't think that it merited publication. Anyway, she heckled me and heckled me and finally it was easier to say "yes" than to keep saying "no."

[laughter]

Bill: And I actually, I put it on... "Well, let's see if you can find anybody who wants to do something with it." And lo and behold, she went off to New York and came back a few days later... She had an agent and the agent was ready to put out bids for a publisher and all that stuff. So, I was into it in a big way. And, she did... The agent did find a publisher. And so, that's the complicated reason behind the fact the book exists.

Kellye: That's great. That's great. Tell me if the... Has the reaction to the book surprised you in any way?

Bill: No, not really. It depends on how much you discount the nice things people say to you. [laughter]

Bill: People say nice things all the time and I don't know how many people who've read it who would say something not-so-nice or said, "I read the first 10 pages and threw it away." [laughter]

Bill: I haven't heard a lot of that. We all, being human beings, like to put the best color possible on those nice remarks. So, taking those seriously, which I know I really shouldn't, I've been happy about the result.

Kellye: Great. Well, I can guarantee you that our faculty...it criticizes work. So, if you're hearing good things from our faculty, then it's good work. [laughter]

Bill: Thank you.

Kellye: You're welcome. [laughter]

Kellye: I enjoyed it very much. I enjoyed, so much, hearing the memoir part and hearing more about you and your family. And I wonder if there's one particular thing, as you wrote it... I know you wanted to share that story, but as that story then, came out and evolved and you finished the book... Was there one particular thing that you then hoped that people would take from it?

Bill: I guess if there's some anxiety about generating conviction or attitude or something, I think it would be the notion that we're all in this together. Seems to me that's a very important axiom and particularly some of the finer implications of that axiom are important and valuable. And, to the extent that anyone may have increased their acceptance and belief in that particular point of view about the world... Why, I'd be gratified.

Kellye: Great. That's great. I wonder as you--you know, we open up a little bit, of course, in reading the book about your life, and we all admire you for all the things you've accomplished over the course of your career. Could you share a little bit with...? As you reflect upon that... Were there major turning points for you in your life? Things that...what Frost might say, "the road diverged and I took one path versus the other?"

Bill: Not particularly. I guess that... Only... I think the decisions to do this and go this way and that were all sort of... They weren't difficult or vexing. The decision that I would be a lawyer was not a close thing. So, there isn't much in my life I think back about that there was any real chance I might have gone differently. Maybe there's one incident that does fit into that question. That is, that there was period of time in which I had a huge hankering to be a federal judge. And when you get into something like that, it's quite consuming. I spent a lot of time talking to people like John Ehrlichman and people down in Olympia, and the politics of Federal judicial appointments is a world all of its own, and [laughs] it's really quite interesting.

And then one day, when there was a vacancy, and I was excited about it, and somebody confided in me that there was this deal made, somehow, that the two democratic senators would permit the administration, it being the Nixon administration, to have an appointment every third time, or every other time, or something like that.

The exact arithmetic I don't remember, but it was obvious that that little piece of politics was going to put a Republican on the, or somebody chosen by a Republican president, on the bench the next time around, and those things didn't come up often, so that was the end of that ambition.

[laughter]

Bill: I didn't actually so much change my mind as I lost the race is the real [laughs] truth of the matter. But, let me go on and say that I think it was a wonderful fortuity from my own point of view, because I'm really not at all sure that I would have been a very good federal judge. I see how some of the good ones function, and I wouldn't compare myself with them. And the joys and some of the pleasures that I've had a result of being in private practice all that time, rather than having gone on the bench, have been exceptionally rewarding, so it's not something that I regret.

Kellye: So, you wouldn't change it if...

Bill: No, I wouldn't. No, I wouldn't.

Kellye: Anything you would change if you could go back and make something turn out differently?

Bill: Do I think...?

Kellye: Is there anything...you wouldn't change that, but is there anything in the course of your life that you might change if you had another chance, another opportunity, as they say?

Bill: I don't think of anything, to be honest with you. No. No. I may not be very particular, I don't know.
[laughter]

Bill: I don't think of anything I'd have done any differently.

Kellye: That's great. That's great. Well, I know one of the things I think, especially maybe some of our law students would appreciate hearing a little more reflection on is that difference between, that you see between, having a judicial role versus a lawyer's role. Why do you say that you probably would have been more, or you believe you would be less content being a judge versus a lawyer?

Bill: Well, the first thing was that, after it was kind of over, I did develop the conviction that I probably wouldn't have been as good at it as I thought when I first started moving in that direction. I can't imagine the situation where you're sitting on the bench, and don't feel like you're doing a good job. That must be about the worst thing that can happen to you. But, you know, the confinement, the things you're deprived of when you put those robes on are pretty significant. It's quite a different life. You don't get to go out and argue politics, and you don't...there's a whole array of things that you give up. And I think some of those would have been hard for me.

Kellye: Bill, you're looked to as a leader and as a role model by many, many people, and I wonder if you might reflect on who were your role models, or who were leaders that you particularly admire and respect or took inspiration from?

Bill: Well, that's a pretty long list. In terms of this audience, one of the names that's on that list is Judson Faulkner, who was the Dean at this law school, as you're all well aware. He was kind of special. He had a sort of an air about him, that was maybe just a bit on the regal side, but I enjoyed the guy, and he was a wonderful lecturer. It was just a pleasure and to go to his evidence classes and hear him talk about evidence,

and he had great style. He was a very good Dean of the law school, and that exposure over the period of three years was a very, very positive thing for me.

I enjoyed immensely being close to, because of my wife's being on the Board of Regents, being close to the Gerberding operation of this university. He did a wonderful job of running the university in my opinion, and we become very good friends, and he's a person whose qualities I admire a great deal.

And certainly, high on that list, would be a person who's a very good and close friend of mine, but it would be Dan Evans, who was a pretty remarkable character, as a matter of fact. I remember so vividly when he finally announced that he was not going to run for governor again, and he and Nancy were at some event. This was at about the time the King Dome had just been built, and there was some event there, and they were in the audience, and the master of ceremonies introduced them.

He was just in the audience. He wasn't any part of the program at all, and the entire assemblage stood, and--this is touching for me--and stood and clapped, and clapped, and clapped, and it was just an incredible testimony to what a wonderful job he'd done as our governor, and the wonderful human being.

Kellye: Completely.

Bill: Those are some of the people on that list.

Kellye: Great. Thank you for sharing that story with us. Let's turn a little bit to looking at your role at the Foundation. Tell us a little bit about your role there now, and how that may or may not have changed since your son's more involved with the Foundation at this time.

Bill: Well, I think, I'd describe my role there as gadfly, which is a fairly accurate description. I don't have any specific responsibilities, but I kind of have a little bit to do with everything, and I go around and give speeches here or there about almost any subject you want to bring up. Somebody will write me a speech, and that's kind of fun. [laughter]

Kellye: And you'll deliver it [laughs].

Bill: But, as a matter of fact, I do enjoy speaking, is the truth of the matter. But, I don't...I'm not really a line operator there. I mean the line goes from the CEO, Patty Stonesifer, now Jeff Raikes, to Bill and Melinda, and I'm just, as I say, I'm on the side, and I chip in a little something here and there. But, I don't have any real responsibility, either, so it's kind of a neat thing at my advanced age to not have an awful lot of responsibility. But, I'll go on and say that, in terms of interest, notwithstanding the huge interest you could readily develop in any of the number of things we're involved in, like global health, global development, that sort of thing, I've taken, by far, the greatest interest in the public education stuff that we're doing.

And I think that the effort that we and many, many other people are making to basically reform basic education in this country is very challenging, exciting, promising. And that has a lot to do with getting me up in the morning.

Kellye: That's great. Is that an area that you would cite as--do you think it's been one of the most successful areas for the foundation? Are there other areas that you think have been particularly successful? Or even ones where you [inaudible 18:03]

Bill: No, no, on the contrary. You know, the fact of the matter is the first person we had in charge of that aspect of the foundation's work had this belief, and it was a perfectly legitimate one. That the real problem with public education was the size of public high schools. And that the thing that needed to happen was the impersonality, the fact of students being there in a 2500 person high school. There's nothing personal, no real relationship with the faculty. And we were on that tact for quite a while, and it wasn't misguided. It was just that, as it turns out, we began to sense that there was no possibility that that particular solution was going to

go to scale. It just appeared that that just wasn't going to happen. Although, there are a lot of places where there are a lot of smaller high schools than there used to be as a result of that work.

There are great big high school buildings in Manhattan, and around there, which used to be one high school, now four high schools all in one building. And you go down the hallway and you go through a door. You go from Lincoln High School to Roosevelt High School or whatever. Quite interesting.

It did appear to us that we needed to take another look. And it didn't take but a moment then realize that the real problem with public education is the quality of teaching. We've managed to let that major aspect of American life go awry. You ask if it's a success. Heavens no. I think our strategy is a success, but doing it is, we're talking about to bring about the kind of change that needs to happen is about 10 or 15 years struggle.

Kellye: Is there an area of the foundation's work that you would cite as what you think of as being the most successful?

Bill: The one in respect to which impact is most measurable is the global vaccination activity, which is... We hadn't done this alone, by any means. Quite to the contrary. And it's had huge support from the United Nations and the World Health Organization. So there's this gigantic vaccination program that's gone on in the poorest countries in the world. So that there are actually many millions of kids who have been vaccinated as a result of this work. I will say that this was a movement that the United Nations was on back in the '70s. And it got a lot of steam, kind of got going. But there's almost a rule in life, it seems to me, that even the greatest of ideas can't generate interest or support or activity over an indefinite period of time--and this one faded out. And along in the '90s, the amount of vaccination going on had really gone way down. It was basically not happening.

But what was true was there was this residue of fabulous individuals who had been involved in that work who were at wit's end about the fact that it had kind of tapered off. So recruiting those people, and meeting with them, which we did. Which I will say, unquestionably generated what's happening now is that the impetus first came from getting those people re-involved.

The perfect example is a little story that Bill and Melinda had those people at a dinner at their home. Wonderful people. A guy named Bill Fahey whose name is now well known around here and a guy from Australia, Gus. What is his last name? Anyway, a variety. There were three or four of those people who came to this dinner and we talked about reviving this movement or this cause. And it was wonderful because they were so knowledgeable about how it worked and the problems and the difficulty of it.

And anyway, when we all got to the end and the thing was kind of winding up, Bill looked around at those people and said "Now, this is important. And I want you to remember. Don't be afraid to think big." Which is not a bad thing to hear from the richest guy in the world.

[laughter]

Kellye: A wonderful invitation.

Bill: And they took off from there and it's wonderfully successful. But you know, eight or nine countries make huge contributions to the running of the thing, and there's a wonderful staff. It's awesome.

Kellye: That's great. Well the philanthropy of the foundation and your family has been truly transformative in so many ways. I wonder if you could talk a little bit about the spirit of philanthropy, and do you try to instill that in your grandchildren? Is that something that you've made an intentional effort at?

Bill: Actually I don't think I do much instilling in my grandchildren. [laughter]

Bill: We are in frequent contact, but I'm not sure it's the kind of contact that generates high flown ambitions. On the other hand, their parents I think are in all cases very committed to the idea that part of what you do in

the world is to give things away, and it's an important part of what you do. So I haven't got the slightest doubt that those kids will be fall-overs.

Kellye: That's great. Are there other philanthropists that you particularly admire?

Bill: Oh gosh, yes. I think that the great foundations are all much to be admired. Rockefeller, Carnegie. Perhaps Rockefeller in particular, because they did some really unique and interesting things. The whole business of the quality of medical education in this country is a direct consequence of a decision of a guy who was working there who saw what was happening at our country and compared it with what he experienced in Europe. And recognized that medical education was prospering and really working there, and it wasn't in our country. So the Rockefeller Foundation really generated and reformed and created a first class medical education system, which has a lot to do with the quality of our medical world.

Kellye: I want to read just one quote from your book to you, and ask you to say a little bit more about it. You state in your book that "Enormous good is achieved when women are empowered and given choices." Say a little bit more about that. What's the most important means of encouraging and fostering strong women here in the United States and also abroad?

Bill: Well, first of all, it's just a simple matter of equity. The curious thing into which the undeveloped world has created this axiom of life that women are secondary. It's gross and it's everywhere. We have some talk about women's equality in this country, but it's nothing. For instance, there are a lot of places where nobody would think about letting a girl go to school, things of that kind. And the fact of the matter is that [laughs] I think it's entirely possible that women are better people than men. [laughter]

Kellye: [laughs] You heard it here first, folks. [laughter]

Bill: And it is true that in terms of the small nest egg that a family in the poor world has, it's very clear that the women's role in that, which is occasionally recognized by a husband, is much more conservative, much more family-oriented, and much less "Let's go buy a new truck" kind of thing. And it's going to be a huge thing to bring that about. And there isn't the slightest doubt it is going to be brought about, by the way. There's a lot of people working on that issue and wanting to bring the role of women up where it belongs in the world. It's a very important thing.

Kellye: Right. I want to ask you about just a couple other issues that I know you've spoken about before, have strong feelings about. And one of them you touched on a minute ago, which was education. And you've been a particularly strong supporter of the early education movement. Tell us why you're so passionate about that and what you see, also, as the role of parents in early education.

Bill: OK. Well, my illustration of that is contained in this story. Just imagine, Mary Jane. First day of school, single mother in a small apartment, who goes off to school, sits down at school, and the kid next to her is reading a book and knows how to read. The kid next to her on the other side can tell time and knows arithmetic. And she's sitting there, and she doesn't even understand what they're doing or talking about. And she comes home, and mother comes home from work and says, "Well, Mary Jane, how was school?" And Mary Jane looks at her mother and says, "Mom, I hate school." Now, that is not a good beginning for a 12-year experience. And I suggest that the demeaning of kids who have not had the advantage of parents teaching them to read, talking with them in an intelligent way about things with some kind of vocabulary, the whole difference between middle and upper-class America and poor America, in terms of the experience of children, has just put a big weight around those kids. And when they go to school and see themselves as being inferior, it can be life-affecting, obviously.

And, to be even more specific about the reasoning here, there are places in this world, like Finland, in particular, where they don't wait for kids to be six to start learning things in terms of an organized educational system. I mean, those kids in daycare and that sort of thing are learning their letters, learning to read.

And, as a part of this, there's an emotional element here that is a problem for kids in poorer families, where parents are not insightful about how to encourage and optimize children's attitude. So there's just a huge amount that deserves to be done, both in terms of earlier learning to read, learning your numbers, and having the example of, for example, a daycare teacher who is insightful about encouragement and how to raise a child with a degree of optimism and self-satisfaction.

And the evidence around the world is terrific in terms of our competition with other nations. Their kids are performing on standard tests... Well, I think, actually, the numbers are very clear: somewhere around 23rd in the world for the United States, against 22 other nations, where the test scores are much better.

Kellye: One of the issues within that calculus is, of course, poverty. And I know that's something that you've spoken a lot about. And one of the angles on that, you've talked a lot about our tax system and suggested several reforms there, including being an advocate for the estate tax, I believe. So, can you speak a little bit about that, and whether that advocacy is related to these income disparities in any sense?

Bill: Yeah. I'm an opponent of the notion that what you earn during your life, or what you put in the bank, or whatever, is all yours. In this country, we put a great emphasis on the importance, the absolutism of private property. Well, OK. Sure, in terms of not having somebody sneak in the back door and steal it, that's nice. But the fact of the matter is that people of great wealth owe so much to this society because, to start with-- Warren Buffett's got the best expression about it. He says that those people won the ovarian roulette. [laughter]

Bill: And that's right. They didn't happen to have the bad luck to be born in Zambia. They were born in a country that made it possible to accumulate wealth. And so much of the source of the product of an active business life, for example, is a function of things that people have done before, of all the people who got a free education who work in your company and that sort of thing. Another piece of this is that I don't see any great social benefit arising from people leaving millions of dollars to children. I think the difference between somebody who's well-to-do, who retires at 65, and has got a billion and a half dollars in the bank, made a success. But the difference between that person and somebody who has got \$50 million or \$200 million, the \$200-millionaire and the \$1-millionaire is not 200 times better person or more deserving. That's pure, unadulterated nonsense. And the difference between them is something spelled in four letters, like L-U-C-K.

And I live in a family that understands that proposition very well. And at the end, it's the perfect time. I mean, we tax transfers. Why not transfer to these kids, a not-unimportant social act at all, to impose some kind of a tax? We used to tax that at the rate of 70 percent, with a \$250, 000 exemption, something like that. And now we're all appalled at--well, the 45 percent that currently exists, the people that are talking about extending the estate tax: "Now, well, maybe we can go to 35." Come on.

Anyway, it's...to me, there's no better tax than the estate tax. It makes all kinds of sense. It's a due bill for the people who've had this wonderful comfort of a life of not having to worry about money.

So, anyway, I think we've won this one, by the way. The estate tax is not going to go away. There's the remotest chance of that in the current political atmosphere. I'm going to be sorry if we don't keep it at a fairly aggressive level, and I'm pretty sure we won't, but anyway.

Kellye: I appreciate your reflections on that. Since we're here in the law school, let's talk a little bit about the legal profession itself. What's your general assessment of the state of the profession today? Are there any changes you think necessary?

Bill: Well, part of the experience I had, was that there was a great deal of emphasis, great deal of description of the profession, and your role in it, as being a continuum--that law school is one thing, but practicing law is not separate and different, and the profession that you're in is a critical element to be honored, when you're practicing law. And my sense is that that last part of the story has been omitted, and that I would guess that most law school graduates don't think much about the profession they're in or it's importance, being involved in it. And that concerns me a great deal, because I do think that the lawyer's sense of professionalism, sense

of obligation that arises from the principles of the profession, is an absolutely critical element in the survival of the law practice and in the contribution it makes to our society.

And I'm apprehensive about that particular thing. One thing I don't know about, I have some concern about is whether that kind of thing is even being talked about much in law schools anymore as it was a great deal in my experience at law school. But, anyway, that's an apprehension I will say that I don't see any particular evidence that the profession is losing its role or losing its sense of principle at this point. But, I worry about that.

Kellye: Yes. Well, it's an issue that most, all law schools are really looking very hard at right now. The Carnegie study of legal education evaluated law schools and said there's probably more law schools can do to really not only help students with the thinking that goes along with being a lawyer, but also in--I'll use that word "instilling" again--instilling the values of the profession. And so, that's something I know that we, like many law schools, are looking at how we can do that even more fully than we do now.

Bill: I'm glad to hear that.

Kellye: I'm curious, too. I can't resist asking you this question since you're here in the wonderful building named after you and we, of course, have the Gates Public Service Law Program named in your honor, and one of things that many of us think about here when we're here talking about reforms that we might make is, we wonder what would make you most proud of this law school? What are some of the things that would make you feel very, very good that your name is on this building?

Bill: Well, [laughs] it's a pretty ordinary thought that I have, but I would like to have it be acknowledged that it's among the best half a dozen law schools in the country. I would exult in that possibility. [laughter]

Bill: And that's just sheer personal competition, but I do feel that way.

Kellye: I feel that way, too [laughs]. [laughter]

Bill: Then, we may get there.

Kellye: Absolutely. Absolutely. We have our shoulders to the wheel on that, so we'll do our very best. How about sharing with us today what you most want to be remembered for?

Bill: You know, I'm not even sure I want to be remembered. [laughter]

Bill: That's a real fact. I don't know. Do you have ambitions about being remembered for something? I don't know. I don't care. [laughter]

Kellye: There we go. All right. [laughter]

Kellye: That makes it easier [laughs]. No, that's great. I appreciate that. I want to open this up for our audience questions for a few minutes before we close today, but before we do that, I want to give you a chance just to ask you whether there's anything that you want to share with the audience tonight that might not have been prompted by a specific question from me. Any area about writing your book, or content of the book, or just anything that you'd like to talk a little bit more about before we open it up for audience questions?

Bill: Well, I just extend the question about profession. I think it would just be wonderful if all of you who are practicing law or who are lawyers not only took pride in the profession, but somehow took an interest in the profession, in its prosperity, in its intelligence, and managing the affairs of "lawyer-ing." It takes that, and I just think the more widespread the interest and concern professionals have about their profession, the stronger and better that profession will be.

Kellye: OK, Bill. Well, let's open it up. You may have some questions you want to pose. I'll call on you, and I'll...also please bear with me. I'll repeat your question. They've asked me to do that so that we can make sure everyone hears, and then it also goes into the mikes that we have. So, anybody have a question? Yes.

Man 1: Hi, Bill. So, awhile back you were asked by the governor to take a look at our tax system in this state and make recommendations about we needed to do, but I seem to recall that one part of your mandate was not to look at education and funding of education. Now that you're in this role at the foundation, what's your sense of what we need to do to finance basic education in this state?

Kellye: Let me just repeat quickly. So, the question's around what should we do to finance basic education in this state?

Bill: I am not a small government spokesman. I think the most important things we do for ourselves are provided by our government, and right at the top of that list is education. I don't think that the wheels of commerce would come to a stop if we were required to pay more taxes than we pay today. So, I would be delighted if there were some movement, some acceptance of the idea that we can't have a state just sucking wind, as this state currently is, to continue to provide the things that are at the very top of our shopping list. Not a new pair of shoes, but a place for a kid in school. That's kind of it. We're having this horrible situation and we're going to have... This stuff is going to happen and I think it's maybe one of the things that we should take some pleasure in. Because it is absolutely a characteristic of capitalism. Which, as far as I'm concerned, it has proven itself.

But, nevertheless, I think there is a way to design the rainy day fund, the tax levels and that sort of thing so that we can carry on the things that government provides for us. As I say, if you made a shopping list of the things that were most important to you, many of the things at the top of that list would be the things which are supplied by government.

[pause]

Kellye: Yeah. Joe?

Joe: I guess my question is, as a dad, of all the interesting things that have happened in your life... Observing the explosion of Microsoft that occurred, not only to your son, but really to your whole family. There must have been some times, certainly very gratifying and some times where it raised some concerns about the affect that it might have, or how your family, and your children, and your son, might respond to it--in a dad's point of view.

Bill: Well, Joe, I think that...and they're more concerned, directly, than I that the business of raising three children in a setting like theirs is very challenging. And they spend a lot of time thinking and conducting themselves in a way that they think will avoid very possible bad consequences of a child growing up in a situation where there's nothing you want you can't have. On the other side of the coin... If there's element of my life which has the biggest impact on the joy and fun, is just the incredible success of my son. Awesome! God, I've got it; best job in the world.

Kellye: Yes.

Woman 1: Further on education. You said the basic problem is the quality of the teaching. What can we, as citizens, do to help change that?

Bill: You know, it's surprisingly simple... I think what we know, looking at our world at large is that people perform better when they have incentive. Or even when they have risk. And there's no such thing as firing a teacher. The incentives, pay-wise...there really aren't incentives, because you just move along on this graduated scale as you continue to practice. You just get older and your pay gets a bit bigger. But, there's nothing... Nobody is paying any attention to whether you're doing a good job or a bad job in that classroom.

That's fundamentally wrong...fundamentally diminishing to the effort. And, the difference... We all know the difference in great teachers... You had some great teachers. I had some great teachers, everyone.

There isn't any argument about that. The great ones were great ,and they knew how to do it and the others... The other, I don't know, 60, 75 percent, whatever, were just making time. Not bad, but no inspiration. Nothing to turn the bad student into a medium student, or the medium student into a really great student. Or to turn on the curiosity bump and all that sort of thing.

And there are people like that. We could have a 100 percent of teachers of that kind. But, there isn't any doubt that it could be improved upon. And, the elephant in the living room is that we can't afford it. We don't think we can. Because teachers--I don't, for whatever it's worth--I don't think there's any reason why a great teacher shouldn't make a \$100,000 a year.

Kellye: Got a question in the back.

Man 1: Yes. [inaudible 50:10]

Kellye: Can you repeat that once more?

Man 1: I said, as a father, how did you feel when your son decided to go to Harvard [indecipherable 50:23].

Kellye: The question is: How did you feel when your son decided to go to Harvard and chase his dreams?
[crosstalk]

Kellye: He dropped out of Harvard.

Bill: That was...

Kellye: Sorry, of course...[laughs]

Bill: Well, one thing about that you have to appreciate is... That "suddenly decided to do," which was just to take a semester off. [laughter]

Kellye: It's gradual.

Bill: That caused a certain discomfort on his parent's part. But, he took a semester off, went to Albuquerque, worked in the company and did go back to school. But then, he stayed in school another semester and then he was going to take another semester off. At this point, we could see the handwriting on the wall. We we're really quite concerned about it. Mary and I grew up in a situation where your kids go to college. They get a degree... What's going on here? [laughter]

Bill: One of the great moments, last year, in June at Harvard... He had this honorary Doctorate granted to him and I was sitting there in the audience. He went to the mike and he started right off. He said, "Dad... [laughs] You know, Dad, I always told you I'd come back to Harvard and get my degree." [laughter]

Kellye: That's great. Great. Maybe we have time for one more question? Yeah, Sylvio?

Sylvio: What are your religious views?

Bill: Can you help me?

Kellye: He said, "What are your religious views?"

Bill: Would you object, a lot, if I didn't answer that question?

Sylvio: No.

Bill: I think I'd rather not.

Kellye: OK. One more?

Woman 2: I'm curious about your book title [indecipherable 52:52]

Kellye: What was the first part of your question? What...?

Woman 2: About, regarding the book...

Kellye: The book title. OK. So, curious about the book title and how you decided upon it?

Bill: Well, it all has to do with a guy named... Oh come on...

Kellye: Woody Allen?

Bill: Yes. Yes. Woody Allen. Who said, "Eighty percent of success is showing up." And, I believe that. [laughter]

Bill: I believe that being there has an awful lot to do with successful activity. If you're on a board, a committee of some kind, and you go to a meeting and nobody else showed up... And there only are a couple of you there and there are 12 members...that says something about whatever you're there trying to do. That's a very strong example. But, it's the kind of thing that I'm talking about. That you support causes by showing up and, obviously, participating. I think it's a grand observation about the good life.

Kellye: I think that's a wonderful place to close tonight. Let me ask you all to join me in thanking Bill Gates, Sr. for being here tonight, for showing up here. And I want to thank you for showing up... [audio ends]