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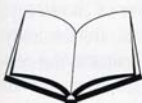
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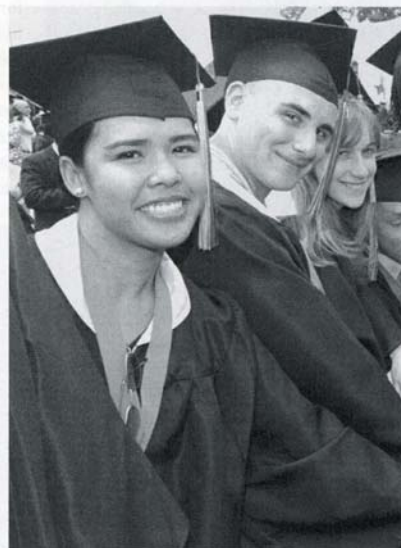


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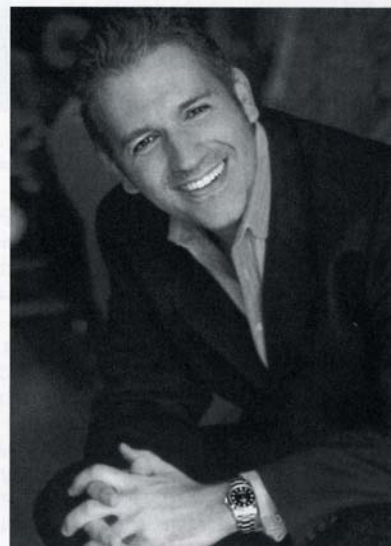
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Looking at Life Through an Immigrant's Perspective

by Diana Saenger

A father's constant urging and hundreds of notes on napkins came to fruition for Cuban-American author, business/motivational speaker, radio host and international entrepreneur Glenn Llopis this year when he released his book about leadership, *Earning Serendipity: Four Skills for Creating and Sustaining Good Fortune in Your Work*.

The book was a restrained labor of love. While Llopis worked in the corporate world, he gathered ideas and thought about a life full of valuable lessons he learned from his father. The book, much like Llopis' life, is the immigrant's perspective on entrepreneurship.

Llopis is the founder of the Center for Hispanic Leadership, president/CEO of the Glenn Llopis Group, and chairman of the E2E Mentor Program at the University of California (UC)-Irvine's Executive M.B.A. Programs. He is a faculty lecturer at Vanguard and Chapman universities, was keynote speaker at the 2008 United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Convention, and has a weekly segment on the Los Angeles Telemundo's "Trust Your Brand" afternoon news segment.

His parents were born in Cuba. His father, Frank Llopis, became a world-famous musician with his renowned band Los Llopis, and his mother was a prominent Cuban dancer. While touring in Buenos Aires, Frank Llopis received a phone call from his wife telling him not to return to Cuba because the revolution had started. Eventually, his parents came to America and settled in Monrovia, Calif., where Glenn Llopis was born. The family moved to Azusa, where Llopis' mother became a teacher; and his father, an engineer. Llopis attended the University of California-Los Angeles (UCLA) before hitting the road in corporate America.

After school, Llopis worked for the Gallo Wine Company, and then Sunkist. At 26, he became the youngest senior manager in Sunkist's 100-year history. He subsequently went to the Norway Seafood Co. where he became the

vice president. His entrepreneurial skills and effective leadership have since touched many businesses and earned Llopis a seat on the board of the Society and Business Lab at the Marshall School of Business at the University of Southern California (USC).

Education, said Llopis, was always important in his family. He attended UCLA, where he was the student body president and earned the Chancellor's Award.

"My father attended a military academy in the 1930s and graduated from Cornell with a degree as a chemical engineer before going back to Cuba. Yet he is so intuitive that when I wanted to push for a Ph.D., he could see beyond societal expectations. He told me, 'you have a Ph.D. in life.' However, I like education, so after UCLA I did some programs at Notre Dame and USC. Education taught me to do things I didn't like doing. It's people who do the things that they don't like but that stay the course with their passions that succeed."

Llopis is a believer in giving back and spends a lot of time in the education field as a mentor. Junior Achievement is a worldwide organization dedicated to educating students about work force readiness, entrepreneurship and financial literacy through experiential, hands-on programs. Llopis teaches one eight-week class per semester for the organization so the students learn what it means to live their purpose in business and life. In the E2E Mentoring Program, he spends time mentoring executives.

"I do this because I believe it's my civic duty to share my experiences of both the opportunities I missed and those I seized in business and in life," he said. "I want to help others achieve their goals."

With a desire to influence and help his fellow Hispanics, Llopis opened the Center for Hispanic Leadership in February. The center's mission is to serve the Hispanic business community by empowering the innovation and relationships of the more than 2.5 million Hispanic-

owned businesses in the United States and encouraging the growth and support of corporate diversity programs.

"I could see that Hispanics seize opportunities but sometimes jump in without strategic focus," Llopis said. "I knew there was a bigger purpose, and ultimately the methodology and the curriculum for the center is the backbone that relates back to my book. I want the center to serve, propel and give relevancy to Hispanic business owners, so they don't have to be afraid of trusting themselves."

Erica Ortiz, host/producer of *Hispanics Today*, finds Llopis' voice for the Hispanic businessman notable. "Glenn's powerful message of hope in uncertain times, paired with his path to entrepreneurial fortune, fills a much-needed role in providing leadership in the Hispanic world and beyond," she said.

Llopis credits his father with teaching him the philosophy to look at life through an immigrant's perspective. "I call this the immigrants' advantage. Most immigrants left their countries because they encountered either political or economic unrest and came to America because they see it as the land of opportunity. I learned in my early 20s that in the United States you have a *choice* to be an entrepreneur, while in other countries you *have* to be one to survive. If you look at society today, a lot of the immigrants who came to this country have done extraordinarily well because they have the immigrant mindset. They have the entrepreneurial spirit to see it, sow it, grow it and share it."

Part of Llopis' goal is to unite different communities of the Hispanic culture and empower them with an immigrant advantage to take all of their ethnic differences and turn them into a competitive advantage.

This could be very unique," he said, "But unfortunately, we spend more time talking about someone's native foods or music or accents instead of saying, 'We're a really powerful group, and if we get the other culture involved, who

knows where it will take us?"

Llopis' upbringing was very traditional. Spanish was the family's first language; they had dinner together every night; and their lives were filled with family gatherings and cultural celebrations. Yet he's adamant that his father is responsible for his successes.

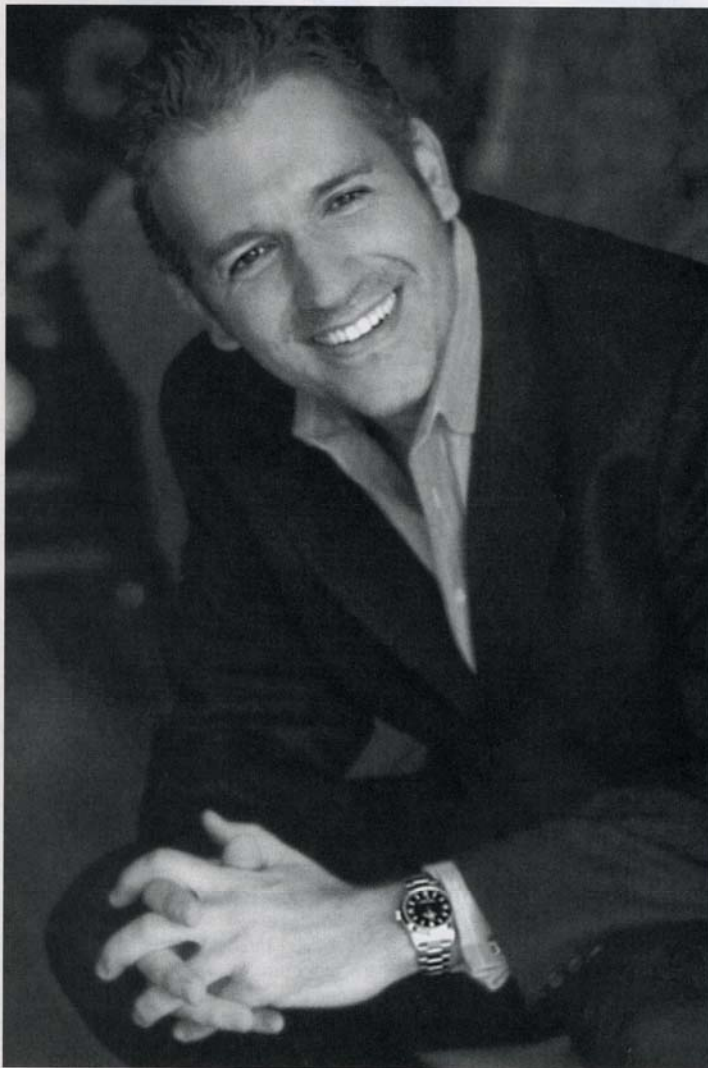
"As I traveled around the world, I would grab restaurant napkins and write down ideas. Over time, I filled shoeboxes full of notes," Llopis said. "For years, my father pushed me to write a book, but I didn't have time. He made me see that working in corporate America is more than a job. It's the opportunities within a job that I needed to seize and learn how to navigate around the cheats, corruption, stealing and lying. He showed me that if you build an environment on relationships that benefit other people, you'll never have to worry about earning a living. So in essence, he taught me the principles of social responsibility at a very young age."

Llopis has also acquired an insight into analyzing the reasons for failure, such as his take on today's economic tsunami.

"People took the systems made available to us – capitalism, democracy, free market enterprise – and abused them," he said. "They became greedy, over-leveraged them, and money shaped everyone's mindset. Leaders stopped leading, and trust was lost. This bubble grew because it was artificial. When you work against a system that wasn't made for these vicious acts of crime, it's eventually going to work against you. It only takes one bad thing to happen, and the whole thing collapses. I believe there are a lot of people who have money in the bank who are depressed right now out of guilt because it's not about earning money but earning the opportunity to see and seize it and do something responsible with it. Now that we're starting over as a society, President Obama is asking people to earn serendipity; he's saying go out there and see the opportunities and share them."

Since his book's release, Llopis has been on a whirlwind trying to keep up with television and radio requests and speaking engagements across the country. Meeting him in person, it's easy to understand his popularity. In addition to his charisma, his obvious desire to help others comes across like a trusted friend.

He's also earning respect from his peers in the financial world. Keith Ferrazzi, author of *Never Eat Alone*, said about *Earning Serendipity*, "How refreshing to read practi-



Glenn Llopis

cal business advice that comes straight from the heart."

When all is said and done, it is the heart that drives Llopis to want to help others.

"Hispanic people are very generous people," he said. "Our roots come from our family, and we're born to protect our family, and our desire is to help family and community. I want to be a role

model, to reach out and say, 'Hey, I'm here for you.' And if I can serve as a point of inspiration or solution for others to follow their dreams and passions, that's great. My father was that inspiration for me. He taught me those that earn serendipity see what others don't, do what others won't and keep pushing when prudence says quit."

