

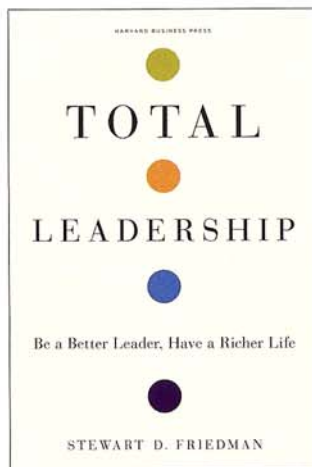
A moment that changed a career

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BY THE MID-1980s, my professional life was humming. I had finished my graduate work in organizational psychology, begun research on leadership development, and landed my dream job at the Wharton School. But my wife, Hallie, and I had been trying unsuccessfully to have a child for some time.

Then, finally, at 5:30 a.m. on a beautiful autumn morning, our first child, Gabriel, arrived. In a warmly lit room in

Pennsylvania Hospital I stood transfixed, holding this practically perfect being for the first time. Wrapped in a yellow blanket that covered him entirely except for his calm face, Gabriel looked at me and around the room, taking it all in. I wondered, what must I do now to make our world a safe and nurturing one for him?



I could not get this thought out of my head. A week later, I arrived back in my Wharton MBA class on organizational behavior and set aside the

topic for which we'd all prepared that day, on motivation and reward systems.

Instead, I told the story of what had just happened to me. I tried to extract the meaning my story might have for these talented students and incipient business leaders.

"What responsibility do you have," I asked, "for creating work environments that help cultivate the next generation? What will you do, as a business professional, to weave the strands of work, family, community, and self into the fabric of your own life?"

I didn't know it then, but that moment changed my career.

By giving voice to my feelings about what was important in my own life, and connecting them to the interests of others, I began a new journey. I refocused my research to reflect the importance of bringing the whole person to work. ■

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