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Malaak Compton-Rock

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Malaak Compton-Rock

March 24th, 2008 · [1 Comment](#)



As celebrity involvement in charitable causes reaches new heights, it's often hard to determine who's sincere and who's in it for the publicity. A mantra such as "service is the rent we pay for living" leaves no doubt that the person who embraces it, even if a celebrity, has the right intentions. It is this powerful combination of celebrity and service that Malaak Compton-Rock, wife of comedian Chris Rock, applies to her professional life, which is dedicated solely to helping those in need.

As Manager of Special Events and Celebrity Relations for UNICEF, Malaak was responsible for managing and creating both fund-raising events and international field trips for celebrity spokespeople on behalf of the United Children's Fund. After dedicating three rewarding years to UNICEF, she was convinced that her next professional move would have to involve service, and she left UNICEF to pursue her dream of starting her own philanthropic organization. She founded Styleworks, a Brooklyn-based nonprofit that provides makeovers for women making the transition from welfare to work.

Today Malaak divides her time and support among various nonprofit organizations, including the Angel Rock Project, Styleworks, Safe Horizons, Champions for Children, CDF Freedom Schools, Bonita House, and an Africa initiative worthy of a humanitarian award. And, after we conducted this interview with her, Malaak was chosen to be a judge on the ABC reality show Oprah's Big Give.

Despite all of her commitments, she still has time to be a great mother, mentor, friend, and anchor for her family, which is no easy task when you're married to a mega-celebrity like Chris Rock.

What we learned from Malaak: Balance is essential. Family, husband, friends, and YOU need dedicated time to make each relationship work. When your equilibrium is off, you are not at your best. You need to reevaluate and readjust each relationship depending on what stage or place you are in your life.

On Balance



"I left UNICEF not because I wanted to, but because my husband has a job that takes him all over

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the world and it became quite difficult to keep up with the travel that my job with UNICEF required and the travel that was expected of me in my marriage. I made a decision that so many of us women have to make: I needed to make an adjustment in my life to make both my marriage and career work.”

This Woman’s Work”

At the time that I was evaluating my departure from UNICEF, the Welfare to Work program under President Clinton’s administration was headline news. I was inspired by this initiative and the opportunity to work with women making such an enormous transition. I founded Styleworks, an organization that provides comprehensive grooming services-hair styling, make-up application, skin-care services, accessories, and image consulting-for women entering the workforce.”

Don’t Judge a Book By Its Cover

“When a woman feels her best, when a woman reaches her full potential, everyone around her profits. This was the fundamental premise behind Styleworks. Presentation is key, and a gorgeous suit paired with the wrong hairdo, chipped nail polish, or heavy makeup sends the wrong message in a professional interview. Appearance means a lot in our society, so we prepare woman to look and feel their best.”

Misfortune Does Not Discriminate

“A good percentage of our clients at Styleworks are college-educated women who left the workforce to raise their children. Deep into motherhood and marriage they were faced with marital problems that led to divorce or separation and consequently left them in a precarious financial position. I preach often that being a mother is a full-time job. And part of that job is to secure the well-being of your family, so you need to stay connected to your finances. It is important to know that your name must be on all paperwork pertaining to your home, car, and investment portfolio.”

Inspiration

“Marian Wright Edelman, founder and president of the Children’s Defense Fund (CDF), is my single greatest source of inspiration. She is a lifelong advocate for disadvantaged children, and through my relationship with her I became involved with the CDF Freedom Schools. Most recently I helped raise funds for the CDF Freedom School located in the Ninth Ward of New Orleans, which was in jeopardy of closing due to lack of funding. It is also from Marian Wright Edelman that I adopted the mantra “Service is the rent we pay for living.”

On Service

“I feel that everybody can do his or her part in helping mankind. Service should be a part of everyone’s life and should be embraced early on. I tell my children that when you get a toy, you give a toy. Teaching gratefulness and sharing your blessings are essential to living a productive and balanced life.”

Yes You Can

“A lot of nonprofits, particularly grassroots organizations, can truly utilize the expertise of lawyers, publicists, accountants, marketers, and writers who are willing to volunteer their services. If you want to get involved in the nonprofit world, then ask yourself what your talents are and apply those skills to helping others. Grassroots organizations don’t have the funds to hire professionals and heavily depend on volunteers. Donating your writing services or organizational skills are just as valuable as writing a check. Another important factor in getting involved is aligning yourself with a cause that you are passionate about. Once you find the cause, the support will come naturally.”

Angel Rock Project

“As a way to highlight the organizations that I am actively involved with, I recently launched the Angel Rock Project (www.angelrockproject.com). The Angel Rock Project will function as a community of service. It will provide tips and guides to getting involved with nonprofits and will highlight grassroots organizations that have compelling stories and need assistance. It will also showcase the many endeavors I am involved with, including humanitarian campaigns, television projects, and writing.”

Keep In Touch

“My greatest strength in business is maximizing connections and maintaining good relationships. Don’t underestimate the effectiveness of a thank-you note. Let people and peers know that you are thinking of them and let them know that you are invested in their issues. One of my mentors, Terry

Williams, cuts out press clippings and sends them to friends and clients each time she reads about them in a positive light. I love getting a clip from an obscure paper that I am sure no one read ... only to be proved wrong because Terry is always looking out. That is such an effective way of networking. Simply let people know you appreciate them."

Big Advice

"Courage is a virtue in women. Don't let fear hold you back."

Parting Thoughts ...

- "I am happiest when ... on safari in Africa with my family."

- "I care most about ... my family and the people who I serve through my humanitarian work."

- "I care least about ... awards and recognition."

- "The key to being a great boss is ... knowing how to do every job that you expect someone to do for you."

- "Every entrepreneur should ... immediately send thank-you notes."

- "The most embarrassing thing that happened in my career was ... when I forgot a Styleworks videotape that I needed for a speaking engagement, called my mother to FedEx her copy to me, she did, and I put it on in front of an audience and it was my wedding video."

This Featured Lady was profiled by [Alexandra Salas](#), a Buenos Aires-based writer.



ONE RESPONSE SO FAR ↓

PINKBEATS -- March 26th, 2008 at 12:49 am

Wow what a GREAT article!! I am so inspired by Malaak and all of her efforts.

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