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3-4-2022

How Did You Do It?: A Review of Power Women

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Recommended Citation

Vanden Bosch, S. (2022). How Did You Do It?: A Review of Power Women. Retrieved from https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/faculty_work/1373

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How Did You Do It?: A Review of Power Women

Abstract

"It took a village... to help us raise our daughters."

Posting about the book *Power Women* from *In All Things* - an online journal for critical reflection on faith, culture, art, and every ordinary-yet-graced square inch of God's creation.

<https://inallthings.org/how-did-you-do-it-a-review-of-power-women/>

Keywords

In All Things, book review, Power Women, stories, motherhood, faith, academy, Nancy Wang Yuen, Deshonna Collier-Goubil

Disciplines

Christianity

Comments

In All Things is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service](#) at Dordt University.

How Did You Do It?: A Review of *Power Women*

Sandy Vanden Bosch

March 4, 2022

Title: *Power Women: Stories of Motherhood, Faith, and the Academy*

Editors: Nancy Wang Yuen, Deshonna Collier-Goubil

Publisher: IVP Academic

Publishing Date: October 5, 2021

Pages: 248 (Paperback)

ISBN: 978-0830853069

“How did you do it?”

A coworker posed that question to me during our semester break at our women’s faculty book discussion of *Power Women: Stories of Motherhood, Faith, and the Academy*. It has been bouncing around in my head ever since.

How did I do it?

My quick answer: I did it by the grace of God, with a wonderful partner husband, and surrounded by a church that embraced us. But I didn’t do it in a small community. And I didn’t do it in an academic environment. Thus, while my story differs from my current colleagues, our struggles are resoundingly similar. It is the challenge that many of us face as moms in the workforce.

What I did was raise two daughters as a working mother without the assistance of our family close by to lend a hand. Our families did help on occasional weekends or a week in the summer, but the nearest family was two hours away. My husband was a family practitioner delivering babies, and I was the controller of a growing hospitality firm that meant frequent travel.

How did I do it?

The most honest answer was that I did not do it. *We* did it. The community that was part of our life helped my husband and I raise our daughters. Our church family became our “in-town family” and assisted us: our teenage babysitter’s parents, our Bible study, the GEMS counselors, the people we sat by in church, my husband’s worship team, and countless others. The church was the hands and feet of Christ in helping a young couple who had no nearby family figure out

how to parent their first daughter while we were starting our careers. When our second daughter came along four years later, the structure already existed to support our growing family.

It did not happen overnight, and it was not intentional. But when we got in a bind, we asked for favors from people. It was hard to do, but someone at church (I no longer remember who) looked me straight in the eye and challenged my attitude of self-sufficiency: they told me that if I didn't allow people to help me when they offered, I denied them the opportunity to bless me with their gifts.

Wow! That got my attention. I love to bless others. I love to "treat" people. I love to do random acts of kindness. But how dare I not allow others to use the gifts given to them by God to bless me?

1 Corinthians 12 tells us of our many spiritual gifts and how we are all part of the body of Christ, His church. And we each have unique gifts by which to bless the church. Romans 12:3-8 also encourages us, as living sacrifices, to use our gifts in serving each other. So, the church blessed us: they encouraged us, prayed with and for us, helped us grow in our faith, and watched our girls when I had to travel when my husband was on call. They drove our daughters with their daughters to school events, hosted overnight playdates, and became the hands and feet of Christ to us. And even now, through a career change and five hours distance, they remain very dear to our daughters and us.

As I read the last section of *Power Women*, entitled "Navigating Support," I recalled and affirmed to my female colleagues the importance and truth of the chapter, "It Takes a Village." It took a village in my story to help us raise our daughters. But it also required me to extend grace to myself not to have to be a "perfect mom" and do it all by myself. And it takes us all, extending grace to each other, to ask how we can help.

When we baptize our children, it is not only the family that takes the vow to raise their children to know the Lord. The church vows to support each family to raise their children. When we say, "We do, God helping us," it means we are part of the village for that family.

We need to ask how we can help. Sometimes, we need to extend offers of help, even when help is not asked of us. We need to have open eyes to young parents that might need a night of free babysitting. We need to look for busy parents with active children who might need a helping hand in some way. We need to look for those with no nearby family that might need adoptive grandparents. Now that my daughters are raised, it is my role to look for ways to bless those around me.

How did I do it?

We did it. Our church family supported us in the roles God had set before us by using the roles God had put before them. I have revised the challenge posed to me into a question and gracious posture: “How can we better support each other, using the gifts God has blessed us with, to bless those trying to use their talents to make our world a better place?”