



**Client:** Moonview Sanctuary

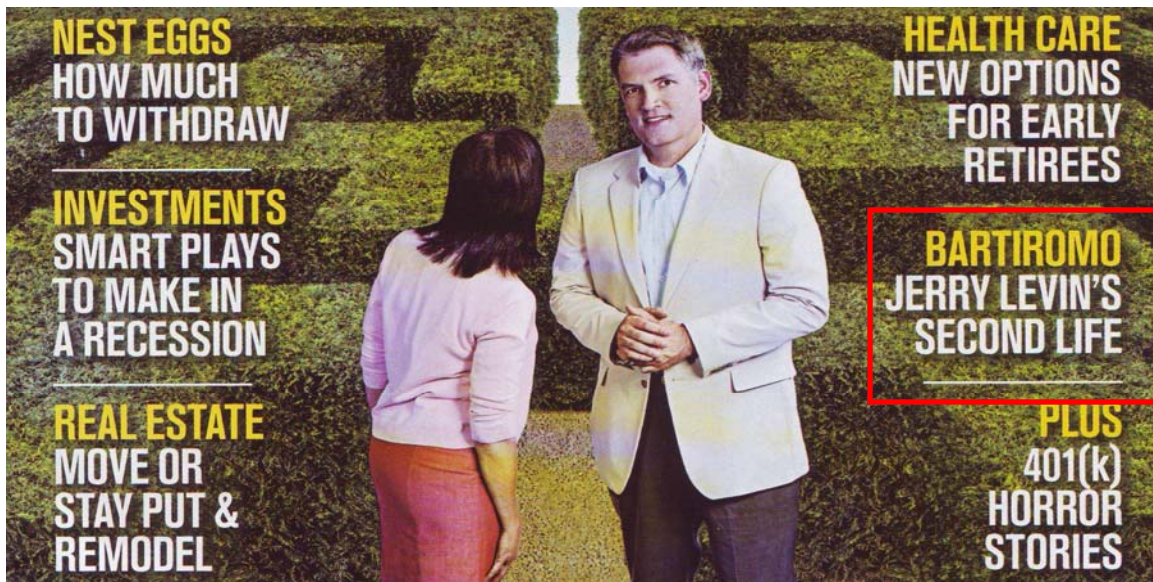
**Publication:** BusinessWeek

**Date:** July 14 & 21, 2008

**Circulation:** 933,566

**SPECIAL ISSUE**  
**BusinessWeek**

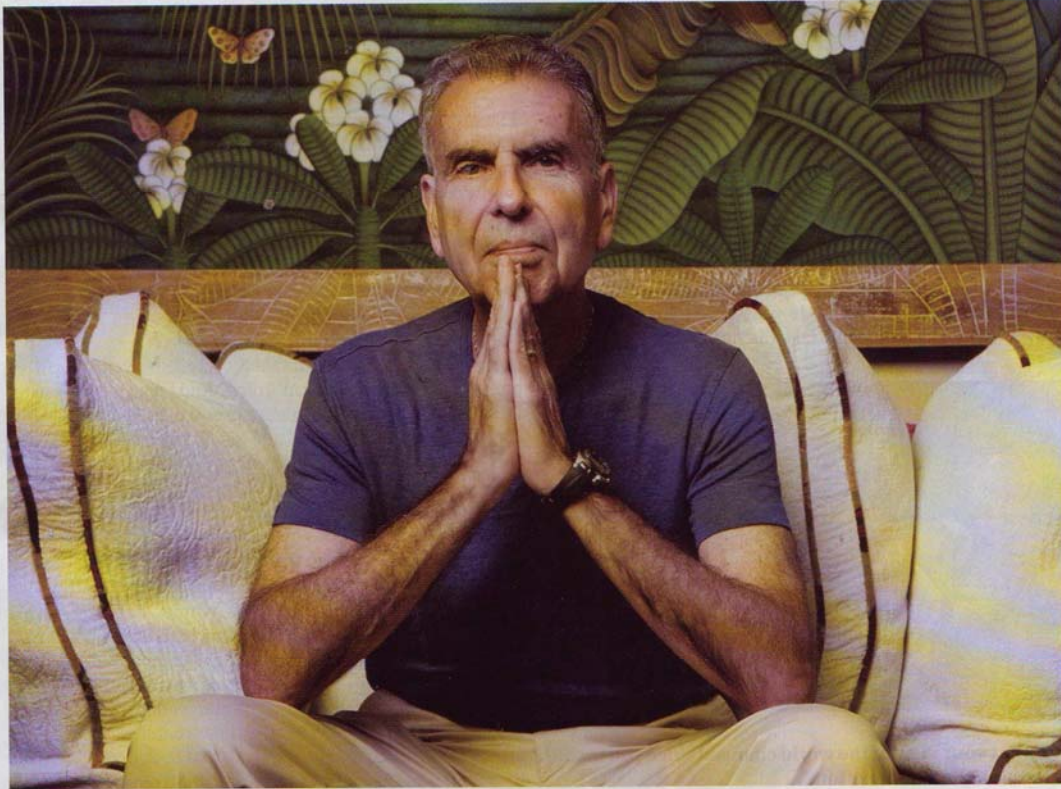
**RETIREMENT**  
STRATEGIES FOR TOUGH TIMES



# FACETIME

MARIA BARTIROMO

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## JERRY LEVIN ON WHAT HE'S LEARNED IN HIS SECOND LIFE

into retirement after 10 years as one of the most powerful media executives on the planet. But that professional implosion was nothing compared with the tragedy he experienced in 1997 when his son Jonathan, a young teacher in a New York public school, was robbed and killed by a former student and an accomplice. Not many executives at any level suffer such a personal trauma or see their careers unravel so fast. And few have changed the direction of their lives so radically. Levin and his wife, onetime Hollywood agent Laurie Ann Levin, run Moonview Sanctuary in Santa Monica, Calif., an exclusive center dedicated to mental well-being.

In the annals of CEO pummelings, few have taken as brutal a beating as former Time Warner chieftain Jerry Levin. In the wake of a catastrophic \$106 billion merger with AOL in 2000, Levin was publicly castigated

**MARIA BARTIROMO**

You retired more than six years ago after reaching the pinnacle of Corporate America. How difficult is the transition from the corner office?

**GERALD LEVIN**

In the beginning it is difficult because there's a loud silence and everything seems to change. All the touch points of your identity have dissolved. That's the initial feeling. But then there's an exhilaration that comes from maybe establishing your true identity and finding your real purpose.

**What have you learned in the past half-dozen years that you didn't in all those years climbing to the top?**

First of all, I think I realize now that there was a rather parochial zone of interest where all of my relationships—maybe even my relationship with myself—were based on Time Warner's destiny. If something didn't touch on any

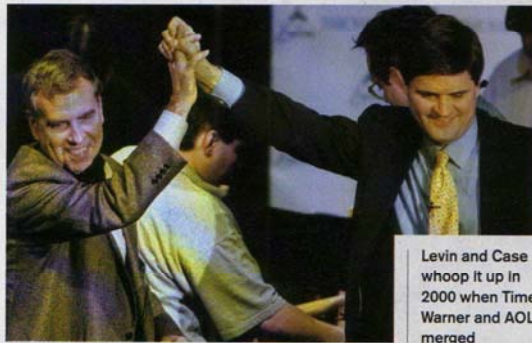
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of the businesses of Time Warner, then I didn't have any interest. The other thing is: There wasn't a sufficient understanding that it's O.K. to be open and vulnerable, to ask for help. To state it in different terms, it's probably helpful to invoke the feminine principle and be compassionate, empathetic, understanding, give respect to everybody, don't get deluded by the natural hierarchy. And don't get too self-satisfied that you have all the answers.

**And you could not have possibly realized all of this while you were focusing only on Time Warner.**

I believe in the importance of the capitalist system, the way it's been structured. But there is such a focus on delivering those returns almost without any understanding that there are deeper issues that management is also about—humanism and respect for people in the company; serving the public interest; higher obligations to yourself and to the world. Very few mission statements take that into account.



Levin and Case whoop it up in 2000 when Time Warner and AOL merged

**How has your view of the world changed since you made a dramatic shift in direction?**

Fortunately, I'm in the business of mental health, which is all about healing and trying to understand the pressures people have; giving them the safety and the confidence to understand who they are and what their purpose is. There's something beautiful when you enter a human soul. The mission statement of Moonview is: "Entrance to the human soul is a sacred honor." I finally realized that the intensity of what I was doing, even though in a sense it seemed to be an all-powerful position, was taking a terrible toll on my own soul.

**Let's say someone is still in the thick of a very busy professional life. How often should they be meditating and sort of having their quiet time?**

My strong advice would be to find a calm, meditative state every day. With the tempo of executive life, that seems almost impossible, but it's probably the most important thing that you can do. I know I tried to find peace by just going in the screening room and watching a movie or going in the

## "I FINALLY REALIZED THAT THE INTENSITY OF WHAT I WAS DOING ... WAS TAKING A TERRIBLE TOLL ON MY OWN SOUL"

Frick Museum and sitting in front of the little waterfall. It's just as important as preparing for an analyst meeting.

**The Moonview experience is not cheap. The figure that I've seen is \$175,000 a year.**

In fact, we have many customized programs, and they're totally customized from a pricing point of view. A half day is \$2,500, a full day is \$5,000. And the only minimum is \$15,000. We have three-day programs, weekly programs, monthly programs, yearly programs. It's totally flexible. So there's no one price point.

**Do you miss the excitement of business?**

I can't say that I miss the intensity. I do, however, still get box-office numbers every morning. And I read with great interest what's happening not only in the financial world but also in the political world. And I send whatever energy I can to those who can make a difference in this world.

**Some of your critics have complained that you never apologized for what has been described as the AOL Time Warner debacle. Do you think you need to do that and make peace with those who still harbor hard feelings?**

I don't know whether an apology is in order, but just maybe a feeling or a statement that I tried my hardest to do what I thought was best for everybody in the company at the sacrifice of my own well-being. There was and still is an enormously significant idea in the merger of Time Warner and AOL. It did not deliver at the time what it was meant to, I think because of the cultural clash that took place. But the importance of the Internet and the digital transformation of Time Warner continues to this day. For those who experienced financial difficulty, of course, I do [apologize]. I'm sorry about that. I really am.

**Do you have any regrets in terms of the way you lived your life in Corporate America?**

I think I'm the poster child for not paying attention to the most important thing in the world. The death of my son was probably the pivotal experience of my life. To not understand that, to not deal with it, to just return and work even harder—I hope people can understand and learn from that because I just put an iron curtain in front of my emotions. And our business culture actually encourages that: Your ability to negotiate and succeed comes not from being emotionally vulnerable, it comes from being almost a testosterone superman. What a terrible failing on my part not to have taken that tragedy and tried to understand. **| BW |**

*Maria Bartiromo is the anchor of CNBC's Closing Bell.*