

Nava Ghalili-Wuorenma



Imagine moving over 9,000 miles away from home, to a new country where you don't know anyone. That's what happened to Nava Ghalili-Wuorenma at age nine, when her family moved from California, U.S., to Perth, Australia. She was excited at first, but the shock of living in a new culture was overwhelming. Everything was new: the people, the school, the speech, and the environment. It was hard, but learning to adapt turned out to be great preparation for Nava's career path. She earned a college degree in business and then studied broadcast journalism.

As a journalist, Nava created an Emmy-nominated news series. She wanted to help solve global problems, so she got a master's degree focused on analyzing conflict in the Middle East. Today, she draws on all of that experience in her work as a media consultant, helping human service organizations with their communication efforts. Nava and her husband, Blake, live in California.

Q: What is your favorite childhood memory?

A: I would grab . . . a fishing rod and go to the lake and fish or climb trees or play with my friends . . . I could dream . . . and imagine . . . what was considered to be impossible.

Q: What was the most challenging experience for you as a kid?

A: Culture shock [of moving to Australia] . . . [and] the bullying I received . . . My first day in class, the teacher made fun of my accent in front of everybody and laughed. And everybody laughed . . . [That] gave permission for everyone to make fun of me . . . But, you know, I think I became a more compassionate person because of it.



Left: Nava at age 6, attending kindergarten in California, U.S.

Right: At age 12, Nava enjoys horseback riding during a family trip to New Zealand.

Q: What's one of your favorite experiences from your career as a journalist?

A: It was the most humbling experience of my life . . . When you ask questions [of] people that are experiencing something that they will remember for the rest of their lives, you actually share that moment with them . . . I always tried to feel what . . . [they] were feeling . . .

Q: Have you ever encountered sexism or racism as a journalist?

A: Yes . . . I didn't always look like everybody else . . . Mostly . . . it was sexism . . . More attention was being paid to my appearance and what I was wearing than what I was . . . saying.

Questions and
Answers with an
Inspirational Bahá'í



Left: Nava visits Cambodia in 2014, to meet with families and speak to youth and junior youth. **Right:** Nava married Blake Wuorenma in New York, U.S., in September 2017.

Q: When you want to figure out if something is true, how do you do that?

A: One of the beautiful things that Bahá'u'lláh talks about is seeing through your own eyes and not through the eyes of others . . . I think that's the problem that . . . we're having right now . . . we're not using our own eyes and our own . . . capacity to investigate the truth . . . [When] I find myself getting into the habit of judging something based on appearances or the information that I'm given, I catch myself.

Q: What's your advice for kids who are interested in a career in journalism?

A: First, I would say, ask yourself why . . . If your intention is to investigate the truth or to convey truth or to serve your community . . . it's so very honorable. But be careful not to do it for reasons . . . other than that . . . Don't ever, ever, ever listen to anybody saying that you can't achieve something.

Q: What do you say when someone asks, "What's the Bahá'í Faith"?

A: I always say it's a faith that believes in the oneness of humanity, and its followers do whatever they can to serve humanity. And [we're] . . . led by principles like equality between men and women, universal education, science and religion should go hand in hand, and whatnot. And I think that in itself is enough for people to . . . grasp the essence of the love of the Bahá'í Faith . . . once that touches the hearts, then you can talk about the details . . .

Q: What do you do in your work as a media consultant?

A: I'm doing everything that I have taken from my media life and contributing in any way possible to any organization that I feel is doing worthy work in the field of service . . .

Q: What virtues are most important for you to practice in your work?

A: Truthfulness is very important . . . If you're not truthful, then the credibility of your work entirely is undermined. And I think people are able to trust you as a result of your truthfulness . . . Loyalty is important. And . . . you have to do everything with so much love . . . If you just have the love of God in your heart and your intentions are pure . . . then I think that will keep you going . . .

Q: If you had one wish for *Brilliant Star's* readers, what would it be?

A: I would wish for them that wish that I still have for myself . . . to be fearless, with a heart full of love . . . There's enough in this world that puts people down and prevents them from achieving their potential to the service of humanity. And I think it requires a lot of courage, so to have courage, to be fearless, and to have the love of humanity and God always in their hearts.