



## **Maria Bello**

### *Topic Descriptions*

#### **You Serve Best by Doing the Thing You Love Most**

Maria Bello was studying international law at Villanova when she found her calling in an unlikely place: an acting elective. Stunned by the realization that acting was what she was meant to do, she looked to a personal friend—a priest—for guidance. His advice? “You serve best by doing the thing you love most.”

In this very personal keynote, Maria Bello shares the inspiring story of how she found her way to acting, and how that career path has afforded her a platform to become an agent for promoting global peace and social justice as co-founder of We Advance, an NGO advocating for Haitian women to have full political, economic, and social participation. Her inspiring, entertaining message—perfect for students, professional groups, or philanthropic associations—resonates with audiences who are looking to change the world by pursuing their passion.

#### **The Importance of Investing in Women**

Maria Bello began her career as a women’s activist while she was a student at Villanova University. Since then, she has worked with Save the Children, The Feminist Majority, Vital Voices, and Save Darfur, her main focus being the empowerment of women worldwide.

Now the co-founder of We Advance—an organization dedicated to advancing Haitian women’s health, safety, and well being—Bello shares her powerful message on the importance of investing in women in this informative, fascinating keynote. Perfect for women’s professional or philanthropic groups, Bello shares her insights—gleaned from her years working with and for disenfranchised women across the globe—into how investing in women can quite literally change the world.

#### **Caregiving: A Personal Perspective**

Actress and public speaker Maria Bello has a very personal perspective on caregiving. Bello’s mother was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma nearly thirty years ago and was told she only had months to live. Now, 28 years later, her mother is undergoing her third round of chemotherapy.

In this captivating keynote, Bello shares how she and her siblings share the responsibility of caring for their mom; they identify their individual strengths, then contribute to her caregiving in a way that draws on those strengths. Bello also stresses the importance of setting boundaries and focusing on self care as a caregiver.