



By Nancy Thompson

## Dr. Elaine Dembe Author & Chiropractor

Success comes to us in many ways. For Dr. Elaine Dembe, it came from a lot of synchronicity with a good measure of chutzpah thrown in.

Dembe is a recognized Canadian inspirational speaker and author with two best selling books. These are not the only accomplishments by Dembe; she is also one of Canada's best-known chiropractors, treating patients such as Celine Dion, Paula Abdul and famous Toronto Blue Jays baseball players.

As a young girl growing up in Hamilton, Ontario, Dembe was always ambitious. If you asked her what she wanted to be, she would have told you her dream was to become an 'actress'.

**DEMBE FIRST EXPLORED HER ENTREPRENEURIAL TALENTS IN THE FASHION** business in 1970 by creating a fad, the revival of the Snood (a crochet bun cover for the hair). This successful home-based business employed 20 women. However, like all fads, it came to an end, so Dembe had to look for other opportunities.

**SHE ADMITS THAT BECOMING A CHIROPRACTOR WAS NOT HER IDEA.** A man she was dating, who was 19 years her senior, encouraged her to pursue a profession that had stability. And with a little serendipity, a friend gave her insights about the future of health care; chiropractic medicine.

**AT AGE 25, EXPLORING A PROFESSION IN CHIROPRACTIC MEDICINE** meant she would have to take a few steps back. If she wanted to gain access into the Chiropractic College, she'd have to return to high school and then onto university to study chemistry. Dembe

# Learn From the Best

recalls, "I had no idea what I was capable of, but with grit and determination I made up my mind this was going to be my path."

**AS A WOMAN MOVING INTO A MAN'S WORLD, DEMBE REMEMBERS,** "A lot of men didn't think I was strong enough. When I graduated in 1978 there were only 11 women in my graduating class. Chiropractic medicine was seen as not the norm for women." Reflecting back, she confirms, "There may have been resistance before for women - but not now."

**AFTER GRADUATING, AT AGE 29 SHE BECAME AN ASSOCIATE OF ANOTHER** chiropractor. However, her entrepreneur experience kicked in, Dembe recalls, "After six months I realized it was not a good fit, and I could do it - have my own practice. I didn't have a plan. I didn't know what a business plan was; the only thing I knew was I was an optimist, which gave me the courage to take risks, feel the fear, but do it anyway.

**"IT WAS NOT TOUGH STARTING UP MY OWN BUSINESS AS I STARTED** marketing myself during my internship at a clinic in my last year of college. I didn't have to sit and wait for clients as I'd already been lining them up."

**WHEN DEMBE GRADUATED FROM COLLEGE SHE BEGAN RUNNING.** What started to be a form of exercise quickly turned into a

passion. She ran seventeen marathons and ranked 11th in Canada in 1982. It was through her relationship with running and other runners that she opened the doors of the Toronto Runners Clinic. As Dembe recalls, "It was the first sports injury clinic for runners at a time when running was really starting to catch on."

**DEMBE'S RUNNING BACKGROUND, IN COMBINATION WITH HER** entrepreneurial experience and successful chiropractor practice, led to public speaking opportunities. "There were not a lot of women who were running so I was asked to speak a lot. Speaking was familiar as my parents sent me to the Hamilton Conservatory of Music. I was in every play right through high school. I was never afraid of being in front of an audience."

**DR. DEMBE IS LOOKING TO WRITE ANOTHER BOOK AND CONTINUES** to touch the lives of others in a positive way through her work both on stage and off.

**IF THERE IS ONE BUSINESSWOMAN WE CAN TAKE OUR LEAD** from it is Dr. Dembe. But don't forget to add a little chutzpah.

### LEARN FROM DR. ELAINE DEMBE:

#### REKINDLING

What makes us have a passion for what we do? We all have things we loved to do as a child, but then we became adults. If you go back and rekindle a passion from your childhood, it is life enhancing. This is why I am so passionate about public speaking.

#### LEARNING ABOUT LIFE

I learned about life through running. It taught me control, consistency, setting goals, adapting to change, discipline and the importance of putting one foot in front of the other.

#### COMMITMENT

You need to read Goethe about commitment. Until you make a final decision about anything, there is a tendency to draw back, you do a dance, should I or shouldn't I, but once you decide to

do it, then the universe mysteriously works with you. It's a case of "build it and they will come." The synchronicity is there.

#### CHUTZPAH

Toronto is a big city; you have to do outrageous things to get noticed. In 1980, 'Ernie Whitt a Toronto Blue Jay strained his back in spring training.' I began thinking; 'I would love to treat Ernie Whitt.' So, I made a cold call to the Blue Jays doctor, 'Dr.... I am Elaine Dembe, a chiropractor. I truly believe I can help Ernie Whitt.' But what I didn't know then was that someone, the day before I called, suggested to Ernie that a chiropractor could help him. The Blue Jays doctor asked for credentials, and asked if I could see Ernie Whitt. After treating him he was back on the field. Ask for what you want in life. I am told I have chutzpah, Yiddish for nerve.

#### COMPETITION

The other thing I have learned, with time, is that I am not a novelty any more; there are hundreds of chiropractors out there now. You constantly have to focus on being the best professional you can be and to make your clients feel valued and taken care of. For example: my patients do not have to wait for me, I work on time.

#### THE PURPOSE

This is my mission statement: My purpose in life is to touch others with my positive energy. I go home every day knowing I have helped someone. It may not be my chiropractic care that helps them. It may be, my life coaching that impacts them. I believe I have an angel. I believe we are all here to help each other.

#### CHANGES

Be curious. Be open to life's surprises and changes that you did not ask for. Chiropractors were de-listed in Ontario. We were very afraid we were going to lose our patients. So I decided to give patients more time and provide better service and charge accordingly. You have to be creative and innovative.

#### FOCUS ON THE GOOD

I choose good stories about my past life experiences. I have learned to remember the parts of my life that keep me happy and grateful. We can do that with memories. It's like sifting flour, the lumps that remain - I throw out.

#### BALANCE YOUR ENERGY

Living a balanced life is a myth. Focus on one thing at a time. Don't think about 10 things you have to do; this only creates stress. What we need is to balance our energy. In each day we need to be: physically energized, emotionally connected to others, mentally focused and spiritually aligned, balanced with energy renewal. Take time to nurture yourself.

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