

Ann Kaplan: A combination of grace, beauty, and wisdom

WENDY BROAD

Ann Kaplan is more than just a glamorous beauty. As founder and CEO of Medicard, she won the Woman Entrepreneur of the year Award (2000) and has developed a multi-million-dollar business serving thousands of physicians and tens of thousands of patients across Canada.

Most recently, Kaplan was named one of Canada's top 100 Women Entrepreneurs by Profit magazine and is once again organizing North America's largest Cosmetic Enhancement Anti-Aging show for the consumer this year. It features Canada's finest physicians, surgeons, cosmetic dentists, dermatologists, and the latest in beauty techniques, products and information.

Born on the Prairies, Kaplan has also lived in New Zealand and Victoria, B.C. She laughs when she explains that she is no longer shy about her age (45) and is open about having her Scottish and Hawaiian attributes "held together with hyaluronic acid and botulism." Always finding the humorous side to life, Kaplan is not what one expects to meet in a hard-core financial type. She has a quick wit and the ability to think fast, delegate, and organize many different events with a style that is extremely impressive. She is quick to demonstrate a sentimental and funny outlook to balance her more serious business acumen in an industry that she knows extremely well.

Kaplan first got her idea for Medicard in 1995 when the government cut back its funding on elective surgeries. Upset about the government's decision, she

decided to start a company that finances medical surgeries. In less than two years she generated three million dollars worth of business. Similarly, the inception of her newest venture, The New You Show, came from understanding the need that consumers have for answers to cosmetic enhancement questions.

Kaplan states: "We [Medicard] were a finance company and didn't feel qualified to give answers to the hundreds of consumer questions we were being inundated with. Our company was already attending a lot of trade shows for the industry and I realized we were learning a lot about cosmetic enhancement and thought: Why not bring the trade show knowledge to the consumer in an educational atmosphere." Hence the birth and implementation of North American's largest cosmetic enhancement show, situated here in Toronto.

Kaplan is driven to succeed, but believes that concentrating on home life,



Ann Kaplan. Photo: www.yanka.ca

with her husband and their six children, as well as working to build her business, allows her to make a healthy and positive contribution to the world. Kaplan received her MBA from the Joseph Rotman School of business last year. Not sparing a moment, she has already begun studies towards a PHD in organizational behaviour.

After a failed marriage

that left her struggling to care for her two sons, she suffered the loss of her father to cancer, but

despite the emotional hardships she was able to face life with her arms wide open. And what she created was a new life with a wonderful husband, six great kids and a successful career.

One of Kaplan's most charming qualities is her ability to juggle so many activities in her life with skill and grace. Over a half-hour meeting I had with her she not only discussed her plans for The New You Anti-Aging show with me, but re-worked her kid's schedules with her nanny, made advertising plans for her business, created a strategy for a discussion panel, and suggesting excellent child-care opportunities available for working mothers. As I type, she is off to Germany for an international tap-danc-

ing competition with two of her children. I've no doubt she'll be working on plans for the New You Show while they sleep.

Kaplan provides new insight into what it means to be a business woman. While she is extremely feminine she is exact, strongly principled, hard working, with compassion for everyone from customers to her employees and colleagues. She is always the juggler, so it is hard to pinpoint one characteristic that makes her successful; she combines grace with strength, discipline with compassion, integrity with tenacity. She faces challenges head on and glides her way through the storms in her life coming out the other side of them like a delicate butterfly.

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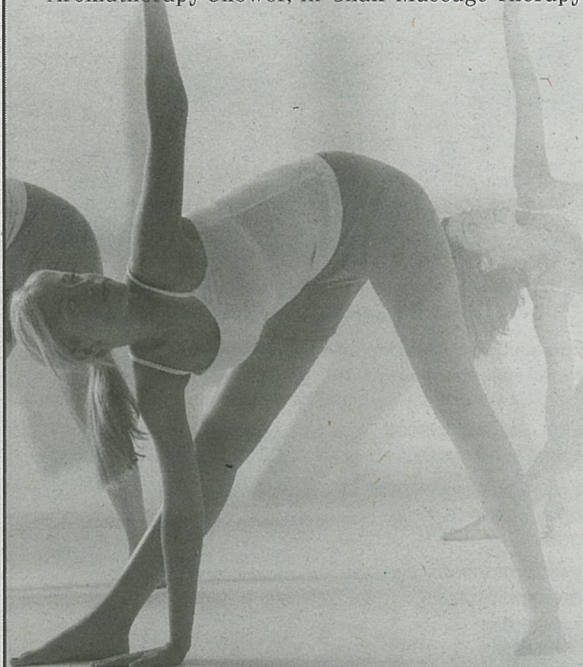
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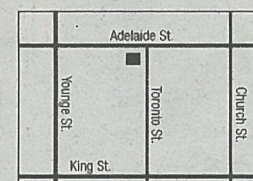
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