

An entrepreneurial adventure in self-discovery



People
Behind the
Business

Elle
Andra-Warner

High school days, for many, bring back memories of career ambitions that did not materialize for a variety of reasons. Erika Maki is one of those people, but now through her new company "Adventures with Erika", she is making her early ambition come true.

After a successful ten years as an office administrator, Erika's opportunity to change careers came when her employer, Barrick Gold Mines operating at Muskeg Lake, started closing down the mine in 1996.

"The last six months there gave me time to think about what I wanted to do next. What retraining did I want to take? Back during high school, I had wanted to be a hairdresser and esthetician, but people discouraged me from that path and I listened to them." But this time, she listened to her inner voice and registered at the Academy of Esthetics School and found it was exactly what she wanted.

She identified a local need for esthetics,

exercise and relaxation techniques — total body makeovers from head to toe — and last summer, she launched her own company, "Adventures with Erika" to deliver those services.

As an independent, she works part-time with the Terra Nova Hari Salon & Esthetics and also provides esthetic services through workshops, manicure and home parties where clients learn about the colours they should be wearing, proper make-up, how to dress for body shape, hair tips, nutrition and exercise. She is currently organizing a exotic-country women's retreat (perhaps to Mexico) called "Boot Camp for Your Body" for a body, mind and soul makeover. Locally, a similar session will be held at Terra Nova starting at end of January.

Erika recognizes that her new chosen career has a certain stereotype and she is out to break it. "This field can change a person's image — for example, a good haircut can have an amazing impact, both personally and professionally. It was very hard work to get where I am now. And it is a scary path, beating to the beat of your own drum, but it is exactly where I want to be" says Erika, who is currently finishing her hairdressing apprenticeship (interrupted with the birth of her first child).

Erika is also a certified handwriting analyst and has been providing lectures and workshops in both signature and handwriting analysis for over 13 years. She and her husband, Edward, have

produced a video teaching handwriting analysis called 'An Adventure in Self-Discovery'.

When asked how she developed such an exciting company's name as "Adventures with Erika", she laughs, saying "I wanted to be first, hence the letter "A", and wanted the name to represent the positiveness, flexibility and diversity of my business."

Born to Slovenian immigrants, Erika was born in Fort William, the second of four children. Her mother Louise Rebernik worked at the Salvation Army, and her father, Peter, was a self-employed carpenter. Erika's first job was babysitting.

She relaxes by browsing in Chapters, enjoying a soothing bath, and socializing with friends. She reads non-fiction, primarily self-help books (Until Today is current read); watches Discovery and Learning Channels; likes romantic movies (Message in a Bottle); and, listens to foreign language music, especially cultural Spanish (Doneto Estaffano, Ricky Martin). She is a member of Soroptimist International, PARO, Thunder Bay Business Women's Network, and a volunteer with Multicultural Association of Northwestern Ontario.

Erika and Edward have been married for ten years and have a 13-month old daughter, Jasmine.

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