

Challenges of My New Career

So you want to know the biggest challenge of my new career as a massage therapist? In a single word, it would definitely be age. Gosh, that was difficult to admit. I am a 48 year old woman that is in good health but I am terrified of the demands on my body that this will bring. Being a person who has typically been a strong individual both mentally and physically and that is driven to be the best at wherever I set my mind to, this is going to be very challenging.

Having lived in a suburb of Chicago my entire life including buying a house just blocks away from my childhood home, I have lived a somewhat sheltered life. I was married at a young age in order to have children; because that is what you were “suppose to do”. Don’t get me wrong, I loved my life and I was a very good mom but it didn’t leave much room for my own dreams.

After the kids were in school, I decided it was time to get a job that I thought would give me that individuality I was in search of. Going to work part time at a veterinary hospital did just that. I loved caring for the animals. I excelled and became practice manager within the first year. Having thought that I had reached the highest I could go in the career I started to wonder what was next. Just then the opportunity to become a partner in a mobile veterinary service came my way. It was such a wonderful experience that I thought “this is it” for me. Running a business that I started from day one was an amazing experience and to top it off we were successful even though the economy was took a dive.

So you would think I would be satisfied enough to finish out my life as is, but NO. My husband and I had enough of the Chicago winters and I said goodbye to my career. That was the most difficult decision I would ever make. So that brings me to here

in my life. I decided it was time to take my focus off of animals and bring it to the humans in this world. I know I can connect to animals but can I connect the same way to people? And to also experience it in such a personal way through touch?

Being a massage therapy student, it is clear that physically this job will be demanding even for all the people entering that are younger than me; yes, that would be **all** the students not only in my class but in the entire program! How am I going to be the best with this challenge ahead of me? Especially when I have to use all my time in order to study everything there is to learn about the human body. I have never been a “work out” type of person although I am not overweight and I did wrestle animals for a living that sometimes weighed more than I did.

I have learned that body mechanics and stretching exercises are going to become my best friends in this field. In fact today I made copies of stretching exercises that will become part of my daily routine just like brushing my teeth in the morning. Otherwise, how can I tell people the importance of taking care of their own muscles by doing regular massages when I don’t take care of my own? And of course, body mechanics will just have to be a necessity of life. I have learned very quickly when my alignment is off during a massage I hurt.

I had once thought “I will never take a job that continuing education is a requirement” and yet I now realize that I just wasn’t focused in the right direction. It is so much fun to feel like a kid in a candy shop when I look at the further education available. The opportunities in this field are endless so I plan to once again become the best at what I do!

By Susan Schupp