Lori Andersen

What's a husband and wife team of top-flight critical-care medical professionals who want out of the 50, 60, 70, 80 hour a week hospital rat race to do? Get into network marketing and add another 40+ hours to their work week! Remarkable.

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How did you first learn about and get involved with network marketing Lori?

We first learned about it through a really good product experience. My husband Wayne, had a good friend from medical school who he had kept in touch with over the years and she introduced it to us.

I had hurt my back and we had tried everything through medicine, since I'm a nurse and he's a doctor, and nothing helped. His friend thought she had something that would help me, so I tried it. It was fabulous! That's how we started in network marketing. It was an, "Oh, by the way, you can share this with other people too."

She gave us some tapes to watch and we thought, "Gosh, if they can do it we can do it." We had never heard of it before but after the results I got and looking at the information we said yes.

So you didn't have any negative stigmas about it?

None! We were in our thirty's but really, we didn't even know what

network marketing was! I think I had heard of Amway, but I didn't know what that was.

> ***We didn't know* anything *about it; we had never thought of residual income or side businesses or anything.***

We were just in our own little box, working at the hospital 100's of hours a month and not even thinking of doing anything else.

Because of how the products changed my life and seeing other people's examples of what they could do with this business, it inspired us.

What got your attention about it as a business?

That people had freedom! That people had time and control of their life! Because for us, I was working over 50 hours a week at the hospital, some weeks more, and Wayne, the only Critical Care Physician in the area, was there maybe 80 hours a week and a lot of nights he didn't come home.

We just felt like we had no control, we couldn't take vacations, our hours were wacky. We even had a sleep chamber at our house, because we had to sleep sometimes during the day after being up all night.

> ***So we saw people that had time, loved their lives and were helping people, but had freedom and were making money. That really turned us on.***

Did you have children at the time?

We got pregnant right in the first three months of starting the business so, yes. We had two children pretty quickly. In the first business that we built, it took us two years to get to the second to the top level, so we had reached the leadership level very fast.

We did that with a brand new baby, working full-time at the hospital and doing the business part time with the hours we had at home.

How did you do it—how did you succeed so quickly?

We were so driven! Both Wayne and I were top in our class, we were always that way, I don't want to say... we're workaholics but if there is something we want we are driven and will figure out a way to do it.

That's how we thought about it. We thought if those people can do it we can do it and we gave ourselves five years to get to the top. We had decided if we couldn't do it in five years, well, we'd given it a good go. And we made it in two and a half! That was just our drive.

> ***Any time we had outside of the hospital, we would call people to have meetings and we would just do what it took.***

We drove far away to trainings; we took weekends, baby in hand, to go to seminars and conventions.

We went to Hawaii for a Leadership convention. It was all people we didn't know, not our downline but crossline, but we flew out there when Savannah was five weeks old.

So, you say you were driven, does passionate work?

It really would. And because we knew nothing about network marketing or this new business that we were in, we really are the types that have to know everything about it. So we bought every book and we were reading all the time. We went to every training we could— about that trip to Hawaii that I mentioned.

We lived in Ohio at the time and flew to Hawaii because they were having this giant leadership event. All of the big leaders that have made all the money and knew what they were talking about were going to be there.

There were going to be training clinics where you could spend one-on-

one time with them. We thought it was important to go so we just took five-week old Savannah and went. It was great and that's really how we got going. We didn't wait for it to come to us, we went to it.

Were there any things in particular, Lori, that you and Wayne did that you would say were things that made you successful quickly?

We actually took everything that people told us worked for them and we did it. We made the list of 100 people. We actually wrote them all out. We worked with our upline. We worked crossline.

At the time, that business which was our start, there were a lot of different training materials. We bought them all! We went through them and took the things we really liked and we did those. We were on every call that was offered.

What were the things that you really liked?

Well, the thing that we *really* liked was the one-on-one, talking to people and sharing the products. Gathering testimonials from good results with the product and following up with people.

> ***I think because we were really good at following up, that made us successful.***

We didn't just offer something and then back away from checking up with people. We wanted them to know that we really cared about them. I think that makes a big difference.

I see people afraid to phone or send out mailings or some how check back with people once they've contacted them and we were really good at that.

What role did your medical training—even in terms of credibility—play in your ability to build your business?

In that first business I think it played in a lot. They were products that had to do with helping people with aches and pain and discomfort, and I think

that the credibility of us being a doctor and nurse really helped. Plus the fact that I had great results with the product, personally.

But yes, I think our background training helped because I was used to talking to people and teaching people about their diseases. So getting to know the person and taking the time to check up on them afterwards just came naturally.

As far as being great at a business—my personality of being driven to know everything and be the best I can be is just my personality.

So you achieved second to the top position in that company in two and a-half years, what did you do then?

We continued to grow in the company and build our leaders under us. When you go that fast you don't have a huge organization, so we continued to recruit and bring new people in. We got very busy traveling and doing trainings. For the next two years we did that and then we had the realization that this was a great learning experience... we were actually very successful, but we were having a difficult time getting everybody else as successful as us.

> ***That was our dream. We didn't want to bring our buddies into the business if they couldn't be sitting on the beaches of Tahiti with us or getting to quit their jobs and work from home with us.***

If they weren't getting there then it wasn't the right vehicle.

Were you and your husband there? Where you could quit your jobs?

Not if we wanted to maintain the lifestyle we were living. We had a giant home, a sailboat, two fancy cars, things like that. By that time we were making about $17,000 a month in the business, which was great money but it wasn't enough to sustain where we were, so we were pretty much

still slaving.

Were you still working your 80 and 50 hour weeks *and* doing the business with kids?

Yes! The kids went to daycare from 6am to 5pm. I'd pick them up and bring them home. I'd feed them dinner, and then it was bath time and bedtime. I would put them to bed and get on the phone to do the business.

We were probably on the phone every night until midnight or one o'clock. Wayne would often be up later than me, but in the early days I had to get up for infant feedings. And yes, we worked that hard for almost five years.

Did anyone ever say to you, "Get a life!"?

Oh, everybody did! They thought we were crazy. We look back now and say, "Hmmmm, no wonder people thought we were crazy. I guess we were kind of goofy", but at the time we didn't let anything anyone said get in our way.

> ***We knew where we were going and we didn't let anything else matter. Some of the physicians at work, or some of our friends, thought we were jumping off the deep end, but we didn't think we were.***

We knew *exactly* what we were doing and we loved it, it was rewarding, we could see progress. Until we just decided that it wasn't going to get us where we wanted to go.

Was there anything in particular that caused you to come to that decision?

Yes, our friends were working almost as hard as us, they were also physicians and they weren't making it. Their checks were not even close to ours. They were getting high up in the company, but they weren't

bringing it home.

We realized that what people were saying was going to happen, obviously wasn't going to happen even though it happened for us.

Was there a reason why it didn't happen for them?

I don't know. I can't really say. They had a lot of clients and they followed up the same way. I know that nobody traveled like us and nobody really worked it as hard as we did, but they worked pretty darn hard! And we just really didn't want to do it if we couldn't bring our buddies with us.

So, you walked away?

We did! We just resigned from the company. We told them it was a great time, we had a great experience, we loved the products, but that we had to move on.

And what did you move on to?

Well, we loved network marketing and we loved the idea of being able to work out of our home and not be strapped to the hospital with all the politics and stress working with anesthesia and critical care, so we actually resigned from our medical practices at the same time.

We sold our giant house and moved to a new area with some friends to start our own network marketing company and build a business. Because we loved it and we knew there were great things about it, we just felt like a few things were lacking and that we could make it better.

What were the things that were lacking, Lori?

That not everybody could win. That it wasn't truly available to everybody, you had to be a certain kind of person. And also the products were hard to sell. They weren't for everybody.

You know, the vehicle just wasn't for every body. The products weren't and once you got going you had to continue to work just as hard as ever, whereas in that business they kept saying, "Oh, once you get up where I am you can play golf all the time, you can go traveling and you'll hardly have to work", but it wasn't true.

We didn't want to instill that in anybody, because they instilled

that in us and it wasn't true and that wasn't fair.

So you decided to start your own network marketing company. So tell me what happened?

We moved out there with some acquaintances of ours from that first company and we all quit and decided that we knew how to do it better.

We started this new company. We rented a house out there and were living off of our credit cards. We had big dreams and were sure all this great stuff was going to happen. That business went under in a year—maybe a year and a half.

It didn't take off, maybe the wrong vehicle, obviously the wrong partners and Wayne wasn't in charge, which drove him crazy. It didn't work, was mismanaged, wrong partners and that business went bankrupt.

So, now we are living half way across the United States with no family, a few good friends, no viable business and no jobs.

Then Wayne had a great idea and he went for it! And that's where we are now.

He knew of a product that helped people get healthy. Weight was such an issue now in the United States that he went and talked with the CEO of the company and shared the idea of bringing that product, which was at that time only shared in doctor's offices, out to the public. Because it was a great product and people need to know about it. Wayne explained that the best way to let them know was really through word of mouth networks.

People are your* best *commercial and once they get results from this product other people notice,

so it becomes a natural way to share it and a natural way to build a business.

It took! The CEO was very excited. He and Wayne got together and that's how we got started.

How long have you been doing this now?

That really started January in 2002. Wayne had the conversation with the CEO in October of 2001. We had to get investors, because Brad didn't want to take it on until he saw how it worked.

So the first year we had investors that helped with the money for the website and for the call center, things like that. Wayne had invested his retirement to get the deal with Medifast closed. That was probably the last straw for our financial advisors!

We did so well that after about eight months, in fall of 2002, Medifast decided to buy the company. They bought it, paid off the investors that first started it and changed the name to Take Shape for Life.

This was such a perfect click for me from the beginning, because with the other program, although I had had a great product experience, so I could get up and talk about that, I never really felt comfortable talking about the business so I didn't like to do meetings. I would get up and tell my story, but then I wanted to sit down. I didn't want to explain anything else.

But with this product, to help people get healthy and lose weight, it was right up my alley! So, I took to it right away. We needed somebody to help our new Health Advisors understand everything, so I took that role as 'Support Nurse', so they could call me if they had any questions about their problems.

We developed a lot of training material as far as protocols for them to follow—things to do and not to do. What plans they should put people on, those all came from Wayne and me in the beginning.

And all of that was based on your experience in network marketing?

Well, the stuff that I really did was probably more based on my love to help people, I would say. I really got into seeing people get healthy. I mean, if you've ever helped somebody lose 25 pounds and drop three dress sizes or they fit in clothes they haven't worn for ten years and they're calling you up elated… it's the *best* feeling you've ever had. I can't explain it. It's wonderful!

> ***In fact it's kind of addicting I guess. You're just looking for more people to help as you're looking for that increased satisfaction you get when you help people.***

Lori, tell me what it is that you do now within the company, and how is it going?

My husband and I have a Health Advisorship for the distributorship.

So you're distributors in the company as well?

Oh yes, that's the only way we get paid. We decided that would work best for us. We wanted to get paid like anybody else, because, for one thing we didn't want to get stuck in another salaried job. We wanted to be our own boss and work out of our own house. We wanted everything we want for everyone else. So that's how we chose to get paid.

We're Health Advisors with the company. We do extra things for the company, but we don't get paid for them. I do support calls for the company every Monday and Wednesday night and have since the company began. I've probably only missed five calls out of the last four years. I do those calls for free because they're fun and a great way to meet people.

I always have different topics and sometimes guest speakers. It's a rewarding thing to do. Wayne does a doctors call on Wednesday night that he's always done. We do those just because we feel so strongly about what we're doing.

Our mission is to make America healthy. Then hopefully, the world.

I'm in charge of our marketing for our business, so I put ads into the papers; I talk to different health magazines I run a few ads with. I'm in charge of checking in with all of our customers, getting them started, putting them on the proper program, checking in with them daily in the beginning. Once they are into the program I check with them weekly and monthly after they are firmly established.

But I'm always checking in, at least sending emails making sure everyone is happy and in tune with what's going on.

For awhile I wasn't really working with any of our Health Advisors, except answering some support questions as needed. Wayne was doing all of the training and explaining the comp plan, because I'm not comfortable doing those kinds of things. We work as a really good team.

I have recently this year—because everything is getting so busy—started working with the Health Advisors, too. As far as training and teaching them how to use their back office and how to talk to customers.

That's been fun and now I'm kind of spreading out to where I'm not just doing the customer support and making sure all of our customers are happy and successful. I'm also now switching a lot of these customers over to Health Advisors and helping them to get going. Of course, with a lot of Wayne's help.

What do you think it's going to take to grow the business the way you want, Lori? What more are you going to need to do?

Just continue to do what we're doing and not give up! We really have to look for more and more Health Advisors. We have lots of customers now; we have really been pushing for customers, that's what we're really good at. We haven't recruited that many Health Advisors yet. Actually, the company is pretty new and overall we don't have that.

To grow the company and get where we want to go, getting all of America healthy and knowledgeable about Take Shape for Life and meal replacements and how this all works; how you can not only *get* healthy but *stay* healthy for life, that's going to take a lot of word of mouth! That will have to come by getting more and more Health Advisors, especially people that have lost the weight and now want to help other people get there too.

And how do you see going about that? Getting more Health Advisors?

I'm doing it by getting my customers healthy and getting them excited by it. We've tried advertising for people to start them off in the business right away, but it seems you really have to have that product experience to truly get into the program. There certainly are some people that see it right away but those are few and far between.

I think the way we are going to succeed best in getting Health Advisors is by having people know about our program, try it and see how much better they look and feel, and then have them looking around to see how many people they can help.

Really, there isn't one person out there who doesn't need something that we offer. Even if they don't need to lose weight they may have coronary problems, cholesterol problems, poor eating habits and this can really help them.

So you're banking it all on word of mouth marketing?

I really don't know any other way! What can I say? Our company is designed with the great parts of network marketing and the great parts of direct sales and what I like about it is that you really have to do your own work but anybody who does can succeed.

> ***You can't just ride on the back of somebody else's coattails. Maybe that's just my high work ethic but I never really look at people that just use others. I think it's***

important to be in there and do the work and still give and receive support.

This company just fulfils that. Not only do you get yourself healthy and build your esteem and feel good about yourself, it helps you get other people to do the same. And then financially you deserve everything you're getting. I think your self worth goes up.

I think one of the reasons Take Shape for Life is such a fabulous company is because it attracts people with high integrity who love helping people. Those are the kind of people we want to be around.

Is there a *best* thing about network marketing for you?

Freedom! To choose what I want to do everyday, who I want to talk to, where I want to go, when I want to take vacations and to be available to my kids whenever I want. I love being able to schedule my day *and* live in my dream house. I can look right out my window at the Chesapeake Bay! If one of my girls gets sick I can go right out and get her. If my husband wants to go out for lunch I don't have to think twice about it… we can just go out and jump on the boat. There's no stress on me any more and in anesthesia it was very stressful.

Network marketing gave me my life and it's giving me a great life!

Lori Andersen currently lives on the Chesapeake Bay in Annapolis, Maryland, with her husband Wayne and their two children, Savannah and Erica.