

Seeds of innovation

In each issue of *The Healing Arts Guide*, we feature inspirational stories that highlight the motivating and compelling experiences of entrepreneurs. Oftentimes, these personal accounts go unnoticed. However, we feel that the challenging and adventurous beginnings of these healing arts heavyweights are just as interesting as their well-deserved achievements.

SEEDS OF INNOVATION: Q&A with Eve St. John, certified fitness instructor and personal trainer

Eve St. John is a fitness instructor and personal trainer certified through the American Aerobic Association International Sports Medicine Association (AAAISMA) in many different disciplines including Yoga, Pilates, Tai Chi, Step, Kick Boxing, Core Training, Power Flex, Power Ball, Strength and Stability. Before entering the fitness field, she graduated from Baruch College CUNY with a degree in Business and was in the corporate world for many years.

In addition to her impressive clientele and work with popular gyms such as Parisi's and The Gym in Bergen County, New Jersey, Eve St. John is currently working on several different DVDs for all different levels of fitness that will be out before year's end. The DVDs include "Eve St. John's Power Yoga" (an athletic, hybrid form of yoga that incorporates classic yoga poses with challenging traditional strength and cardiovascular moves), "Eve St. John's Personal Training" (a total body workout for all fitness levels that provides all the benefits of a personal trainer at home, and "Eve St. John's Total Body Rejuvenation" (a workout geared toward people with bad backs, bad hips, or anyone who is not very flexible)—with an additional "10 Minute Express Rejuvenation" (an instant fix of flexibility along with inner peace and harmony) in all three DVDs.

What inspired you to begin your business?

Thirteen years ago my daughter Olivia was born and two years later, my son Cameron. I have always had a passion for fitness and being a new Mom, I became interested in

getting my pre-pregnancy shape back. This gave me an idea for a new career. My local gym was looking for instructors, so I decided to get certified and start teaching the occasional class. What started as one certification for one class turned each year into teaching more and getting certified in different areas of fitness such as Aerobics, Step, Power Flex, Core Training, Resist A Ball, Personal Training, Yoga, Pilates, Kick Boxing, and Tai Chi. Several years later my husband and I separated and what started as a fun, part-time job became a serious, full-time career. The success of my clients' progress and results, as well as their praise, inspired me to create my new DVD collection.

What was your initial vision for the company?

My initial vision 13 years ago was to have fun, stay fit, earn some extra money and get an occasional break from being a Mom. I had a huge passion for fitness so I started dreaming that someday that it would become my full time career.

What void were you hoping to fill in the wellness market?

I want to bring compassion, generosity, inspiration, and motivation. I don't want any of my students or clients to ever feel like they are just a number. A lot of the fitness classes I have attended through the years were based on almost a militaristic format. My approach is to provide a positive, caring and encouraging environment that makes students feel comfortable, no matter what fitness level they are at. I can challenge the most advanced fitness enthusiast and yet not intimidate the beginner.

What is the philosophy/mission behind your work?

To get results. To keep clients motivated, inspired, and to make them feel great from the inside out. Most people say they don't have time to workout and I agree, that is why I have designed the "10 minute Express Workout" in all of my DVDs. The Power Yoga and the Personal Trainer DVD section melts inches and stress off. Now there can be no excuses about time. I created this DVD also for my personal clients to take when they travel, for those who might not have trainers, and for those who want lean, gorgeous bodies.



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What were some of the early obstacles/sacrifices?

Learning how to teach a class and overcoming nerves. When you first start teaching you have 60 eyes staring at you, it can be quite overwhelming. And of course, it's hard to make money before you build up a personal training clientele and reputation. But the greatest challenge was establishing my company all by myself—trademarking, copywriting, directing, buying music rights, advertising, PR, setting up the website, choreographing—it's being done by me after finishing a full day of training, teaching classes and being a full time mom. I think the sacrifice in the beginning is not finding enough time to do it all, but because I am so passionate about it, I don't mind staying up to all hours of the night.

What sets your experience apart from others?

I came to this country from Turkey, at the age of 13. I did not know a word of English. Leaving all my relatives, family, and friends and putting all my belongings in one suitcase to start over—that was tough. My parents wanted me to have a better life and wanted me to go to college. No one in my immediate family had gone and they believed that if you had a college degree, that a bright future was possible. I did it for them not so much for me. We did not have the best of everything, but we had each other. I was brought up in a very giving, caring, and loving environment; and that is how I treat my clients and students. I care a great deal about them. I went into this field because of my passion and love for it. It gives me great pleasure to help them achieve their goals.

What innovation have you brought to the wellness market?

I have created an evolution of many practices and techniques. My technique is as much mental as physical. My workouts incorporate moves from Yoga, Pilates, Tai Chi, and Meditation; Kick Boxing, Cardio, Weight training as well as Core. So it's like nothing you've ever experienced. My program really works the inner and outer being. The mental part of the workout involves visualization. I incorporate breathing techniques and talk about the importance of how it can be used to heal. I myself experienced this healing process two years ago. I have a genetic disposition to issues with my back, and I had aggravated this condition by doing something as simple as getting in my car. I was determined to heal myself by doing gentle yoga and Tai Chi with breathing techniques and within a few weeks I was pain free and have been since. This inspired me to share this secret in helping others by designing the Eve St. John's Total Body Rejuvenation DVD.

What is the benefit for a professional & consumer to buy your product?

I hope that fitness professionals will be inspired to think outside the box and try some of my mental and physical methods with their students. The benefit to an individual is the introduction to a whole new mindset of fitness that incorporates various disciplines. The workouts are challenging to even the most advanced athletes, but is not intimidating to beginners.

What does the future hold for your company?

I love what I do. I want to keep doing what I am doing and help people achieve their fitness goals. I want people to understand the benefits of mental and physical fitness. I truly want to make a difference in the lives of my current and future students and give them the energy and motivation to achieve their dream body. My first step towards this is by creating my DVD series that will be coming out in the fall of 2007. I am in the process of creating my interactive website. After that who knows? As long as I'm doing what I love, I'll always be motivated to reach for the stars.

What advice would you give other hopeful entrepreneurs?

You must believe in your product, service, and its benefits. Results of your product are the key element to your success, but you must have passion, love, and the best of intentions in your heart—in that way, everyone succeeds.

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Healing Arts ^{Guide}

SPA & WELLNESS PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

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We believe strongly in showcasing innovative companies that are socially responsible, transparent and produce products and services that support their customer's well-being and the world we live in. Our philosophy of business is to be pro-active and a part of the solution to the environmental crisis the world faces.

