

Re‘VIV’ed at 50

DR. VIVIAN EBERT UNDERSTANDS
THE KEY TO STARTING OVER IS BALANCE.

Retirement at the age of 50 would be a dream come true for most people. For Vivian Ebert, it was a reality.

In 2008, when Ebert hit that magic number, her youngest of four sons was graduating from high school, and the time seemed right to sell her successful chiropractor practice and start checking off bucket list items. While she still had good health and high energy, she made copious plans for her next 20+ years.

Rather than sit home in an empty nest, she envisioned a motor home and cross-country adventures with her husband, Jon. She imagined breathing in the fresh mountain air of North Carolina and experiencing a full range of seasons. Living in a golfer’s paradise in Naples, she also anticipated endless rounds of golf.

She was raised in a family of golfers—her siblings played on the LPGA and PGA tours—and she co-founded the Naples Executive Women’s Golf Association. Many of her patients were athletes and golfers so she knew that she would continue to see them socially on the greens. Retiring in one of the golf capitals of the world, Ebert truly was living the dream.

THE STRUGGLE

But relinquishing her structured schedule was more difficult than she anticipated. Her entire adult life was dedicated to health care, however, when she finally had the time to plan meals and take care of her own fitness, she struggled. Instead of working out for two hours every day and getting into the best shape of her life, she became restless and worried about leaving the work force

prematurely, especially during a recession. She tried part-time work in nutrition and enrolled in postgraduate classes.

“Still, I would go to sleep anxious, thinking ‘what am I going to do tomorrow?’ I wasn’t prepared for this feeling of loss. I thought I would be exuberant and more carefree,” she says.

So she turned to self-help books, a life coach and even Dale Carnegie tapes. In writing down her goals, she realized how much she missed the hands-on nature of her job and the gratification that comes with quick results.

“Because I’ve worked as a chiropractor for 27 years, I’ve always had this reward system of patients saying thank you and hugging you. You get to know them and be a part of their lives,” Ebert says.

CROSSROAD

Two years after retiring, Ebert opened a new practice, “LivingWell Chiropractic,” on Coconut Road in the Estero/Bonita Springs area, outside of her non-compete boundaries.

“Self-doubt? Every night! I was concerned about my age. I’m in my 50’s, can I pull this off?” Ebert recalls.

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VIVIAN EBERT REKINDLES HER PASSION FOR HEALTH CARE IN HER BONITA SPRINGS/ESTERO CHIROPRACTIC PRACTICE.

The enormity of starting over, from cultural bias to the practical logistics of relocation, was a challenge that Ebert faced with a straightforward business strategy. She advertised and became a part of the community, joining both the Bonita Springs and the Estero Chambers of Commerce.

“The chambers helped turn the page for me,” says Ebert of the networking opportunities that resulted in a thriving new practice. She heads up charity golf tournaments, including the Estero Chamber Golf Tournament that provides scholarships for Estero High School students.

The Florida Chiropractic Association recently honored Ebert as the chiropractic physician of the year, and she continues to serve as president of the Collier County Chiropractic Society, which she cofounded.

Whether starting a new career or switching to a different market, Ebert recommends taking time for self-reflection. A decade ago, she would have described herself as “laid back” and “unscheduled,” but today she uses words like “driven” and “goal-oriented.”

“I want that feeling that I am the neighborhood chiropractor,” Ebert says. “I try to come back to what the practice is all about: patient care and education.”

Now, at the age of 58, Ebert has achieved balance. She is doing the work that she loves while still carving out time for her family and her extensive volunteer work.

“I’m at the other half of my career. I am not trying to be the busiest,” she says, “but I do still want to be one of the best.” ❁

PACE Center for Girls

The Southwest Florida Chapter of the Executive Women’s Golf Association (EWGA) hosts an annual tournament to benefit PACE Center for Girls. PACE understands the way girls learn and mature. In an environment designed for females, the participants develop strategies to stay in school and avoid juvenile delinquency, teen pregnancy, substance addiction and welfare dependency.

“Through education and counseling, PACE gets these girls back on track,” says Dr. Vivian Ebert, EWGA’s founding member. “It’s wonderful to hear them speak about their backgrounds and then talk about their futures with confidence.”



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