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AUTHENTIC WOMAN PROFILE: DR. LORI STEVIC-RUST, BOARD CERTIFIED CLINICAL HEALTH PSYCHOLOGIST

CINDY CRAWFORD MAY 10, 2013 0



Dr. Lori Stevic-Rust is a woman of great accomplishments: Board Certified Clinical Psychologist who sits on the boards of the Lake County Council on Aging, the Geauga County Homebound Seniors, and the Cleveland Business Connection Magazine; a member of the National Association for Women Business Owners, National Association of Female Executives, American Psychological Association, and the American Board of Professional Psychologists; owner of Stevic-Rust & Assoc., LLC., where she has provided psychological services for over 22 years; Director of Senior Services at Lake Health Systems, and a nationally renowned speaker, author, and media contributor.

Her journey began over 20 years ago in college. She enjoyed the health and psychology fields and decided to merge the two, earning a Doctoral degree in psychology and a Master's degree in counseling. Upon successful completion of her college studies, she completed an internship at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, Michigan, with specialty training in clinical psychology.

Influential Role Models

Throughout her life, Dr. Stevic-Rust has met and fostered relationships with incredible women role models who have left an indelible mark of influence in her life. One woman is Deborah L. Plummer, Ph.D. and Vice Chancellor, Human Resources, Diversity & Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. "She showed me a different side of what women could accomplish. She has character and strength and a sense of humor. We connect on so many levels—on psychology, and as women and mentors and human beings."

Dr. Stevic-Rust remembers when she gave a talk one night at Kent State University. Unknown to her, Dr. Plummer was in the audience. "At the end of my talk, Debbie stood up and quipped, 'I'll take a little credit ... it was me who exposed her to psychology,'" Dr. Stevic-Rust recalls fondly.

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Susan V. Juris, President, University Hospital, Ahuja Medical Center in Cleveland, Ohio is another mentor. She hired Dr. Stevic-Rust as a consultant eight years ago. "Susan is an authentic, committed leader. I learned about business, management, and how to lead by watching her. She is incredibly bright."

Fortunate to have incredible mentors in her life, Dr. Stevic-Rust pays it forward by mentoring young women who have been victims of violence and deal with issues of low self-esteem as a result. "I have had great women role models in my life from my mother to my grandmother to female colleagues. We must do for each other . . . pass on the knowledge, skills and support that were given to us."



Without question, one of the most influential mentors in Dr. Stevic-Rust's life is her 101-year-old Nana Emily Serian, a Polish immigrant who grew up on a farm in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. She was 1 of 17 children who grew up poor and with a limited education, having only completed the eighth grade. In spite of many hardships, she maintained a positive and inspirational attitude that helped her become a self-taught business woman.

Dr. Stevic-Rust remembers her Nana being very generous to people in the community. When she attended college in Akron, Ohio, she lived in an apartment above her grandmother's house for five years. They spent a lot of time together, and it was during that time Dr. Stevic-Rust became intimately familiar with what it means to be a caregiver. "If someone was in need, she never hesitated to help. Nana was very generous to the people on the farm and in the community. She paid people's mortgage bills and bought kids shoes. If someone didn't have enough money for a meal, she would pay half. She taught the importance of giving back by example. She believes that everyone has a purpose in life, and it is each person's responsibility to find out what their purpose is. Her advice to me is to never settle and to always seek my purpose."

Nana is a pillar of strength in her community. Recently, she celebrated her 101st birthday. She is still active and has accompanied Dr. Stevic-Rust on book signings. On her 100th birthday, she threw the first pitch at a Cleveland Indians baseball game.

Surrounded by so much love, encouragement, and inspiration, it's no wonder Dr. Stevic-Rust lives life to the fullest and aptly carries the torch to blaze trails in her own life.

When she isn't working, Dr. Stevic-Rust enjoys outdoor activities like golf, which she picked up two years ago, and gardening and vacation getaways with her family once or twice a year. And of course, she reads.

"I can't fathom what I would be doing if I didn't work in healthcare. Maybe I would be on a beach somewhere or maybe write a little bit more, speak to organizations more. A possible career transition would be moving away from direct patient care to more education, speaking for organizations and training. I love that piece of it."

it was hard to remove her clinical hat at first

In terms of writing more, her latest book *Greedy for Life: A Memoir on Aging with Gratitude*, is a dedication to the valuable life lessons her Nana gave her through the years, and for which she is the motivation for, like the importance of absorbing and treasuring moments in life; to be grateful for our mistakes and flops as they often teach us more than our successes; to always share more, and that our purpose is often revealed in our most vulnerable times.

Greedy for Life is full of stories about Nana and the wisdom she imparts. Sharing the stories would mean that people would be able to put a face to them and that was a very personal, scary, and difficult decision for Dr. Stevic-Rust to make; she felt vulnerable. Privacy is important to her. People didn't know about her personal life, but now they would.

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When she wrote the book, it was hard to remove her clinical hat at first. She decided to leave the Ph.D. designation off the book's cover. She did not want people to think it was a clinical book. To her surprise, readers left messages saying the book inspired them. One reader lost her husband and had not begun to grieve properly until she read *Greedy for Life*. "I didn't know who my readers would be. I am surprised that it has had the impact that it has on people."

Dr. Stevic-Rust never set out to become a published author. She began writing as part of an education program at the VA Hospital where she developed training materials on topics such as weight loss, heart health, and smoking cessation. The goal was to reach a larger audience with this information, and it eventually morphed into a workbook. Since then, Dr. Stevic-Rust has co-authored three health-related books: *The Stop Smoking Workbook: Your Guide to Healthy Quitting*; *Treating Depression in the Medically Ill* and *Heart Therapy: Regaining Your Cardiac Health*. (Endorsed by Larry King of the Larry King Live Show). Her books are published in Poland and India.

Being greedy for life holds boundless possibilities for Dr. Stevic-Rust. She is "walking in her big girl shoes," metaphorically speaking. She understands how women can lack confidence and listen to the quiet voice inside that says we are not capable. Instead, we need to know and appreciate the value of women for holding onto relationships; remember the hardships that paved the way that we were able to sail through. "Most important, we need to feel connected. Biologically or communally, family is critical for our evolution and well-being. We should be transparent and connect with our strengths and flaws and be willing to put it all out there. Embrace the stages of struggles and say, *here I am*."

For more information about Stevic-Rust & Assoc. LLC visit www.doctorlori.net.

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About the author **Cindy Crawford**

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Cindy is a writer and an advocate of personal growth and development who delights in self-discovery and helping others realize their personal power. She is a member of Homewood Writers Group and Toastmasters International. Cindy resides in Chicago.

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