



Lori Van Dusen

Managing Director Citi Smith Barney

*"Pain is temporary, quitting is forever."
Lance Armstrong*

Lori Van Dusen's turning points are many, and they are best described in her own words:

"There were many circumstances in my life that presented obstacles, but I tried to turn them all into positives."

Lori had a family life that she describes as being a very happy one, but in retrospect it is quite easy to see how in some ways it did estrange her from the common mindset of the time in which she grew up. But while others would have been alienated by these differences and dwelled upon them, Lori indeed turned them into strengths and capitalized upon them to become one of the pioneers in her field of investment.

To start at the beginning, Lori's first major source of inspiration was her grandfather. He was a successful man, despite having only an 8th grade education, and had a love for the stock market. In addition, he was a strong mentor and role model, and as a result Lori grew up without distinguishing very much at all between genders. For her, there were no distinctions between careers for men and careers for women. This enlightened viewpoint, however, wasn't one shared by many other people at the time.

Lori's ambition throughout the entirety of her childhood had been to be a singer. She had always dreamed of performing on Broadway and had been recognized for many years as a talented singer. When the time came for her to graduate high school, she prepared to apply to various music schools around the country. However, her vocal teacher stepped in at that point in time and asked her if she might want to reconsider. Lori did have quite a bit of talent, but as a soprano, the field was competitive. In other words, as her teacher put it, voices like hers were "a dime a dozen".

Lori was devastated. She had been told by someone that she highly respected that she simply wasn't good enough. But instead of dwelling on the negative aspects of this circumstance, Lori decided to take her teacher's criticism seriously and professionally, rather than personally. She applied to go to a liberal arts college where she could sample other disciplines and learn what else she liked before making up her mind about what career to embark upon.

It was upon first arriving at college that she experienced what can only be called culture shock. Lori realized that her family and the lifestyle she grew up in were far from the norm. Whereas Lori's grandfather had given her a sense of valuing the person without considering their gender or background, many others felt differently. Moreover, Lori had grown up with three parents. Her mother was divorced. This was embraced as normal within her extended family. But, Lori soon realized that coming from a "broken home" had a stigma attached to it. In spite of this difference that could have driven a wedge between her and others, Lori realized this made her unique. It was a difficult experience to be sure, but it only made her stronger and more persistent.

Her attitude was always a good one and she made a lot of friends. The continuation of her habit of turning negatives into positives would set her up for the next major stage in her life.

While getting her education, Lori realized that what she liked most of all was simply being around other people, talking to them, finding out what they liked and carrying on conversations. Appropriately, she decided that a position in business where she could capitalize on her people skills would be great for her and she resolved to become either a College President or to run a company. Eventually, Lori decided to follow in her grandfather's footsteps and enter the financial services field.

On her first day of work in the industry, she learned that she was the only financial advisor who was a woman in the entire office, as well as the youngest financial advisor. She worked hard to overcome the obstacles that were placed in front of her and to be taken seriously by the others. At times, it seemed as if the more successful she became, the more obstacles there were. Lori was meeting and exceeding objectives more rapidly than anyone had expected, and besides that she was doing some very pioneering work in her industry. All of this spawned quite a bit of jealousy.

Drawing upon her main strength of turning negatives into positives, Lori simply redoubled her efforts and used the jealousy and negative attention to "fuel the fire" of her ambitions. She continued to focus and began to establish clear goals within the field and meet them despite a very difficult work environment. Lori eventually became known within the industry for her pioneering wealth management model. The success stemming from that breakthrough has carried forward ever since, and today Lori is recognized as one of the top financial advisors in the nation.

When asked about the secrets to her success, Lori reflects on the numerous marathons that she has run. There are points in the race when she wanted to rip the tag off her jersey and quit. Runners call it "hitting the wall". For Lori, it's exhilarating and most rewarding when her mind overcomes the obstacle of pain, as she moves forward to complete the race. She relates this to the long journey that life and her business both present. Lori comments that her uncommon background has helped her to avoid the typical pitfalls that she's seen so many of her co-workers fall into. Rather than

fall down in front of an obstacle, Lori simply thinks about what will work and what won't, and approaches things from a quirky angle that is right in line with her upbringing. To put things simply, she is successful because she is consistent, she never gives up, and she's willing to put in the hard work necessary to turn unfavorable situations into favorable ones.