

● Celebrity Profile



Life with Purpose

AFTER OVERCOMING CAREER TROUBLES AND A BOUT WITH DEPRESSION, **DEBORAH NORVILLE** IS BACK ON TRACK AND HAPPIER THAN EVER

In many ways, TV

journalist

Deborah Norville leads the typical life of most suburban

working moms. Happily

married to businessman

Karl Wellner for 17 years,

Deborah has three children,

Niki, 14, Kyle, 10, and Mikaela, 8, and lives outside New York City.

On most weekday mornings, she drops off the kids at school before heading to work in Manhattan, and on weekends she spends most of her time at home, "chasing kids,

BY **BONNIE SIEGLER**

gardening and biking," she says.

But Deborah's life is far from typical. She's won two Emmy Awards for her television reports, a Gracie Award from American Women in Radio and Television and an award from the National Women's Political Caucus for her firsthand account of prison life in a North Carolina jail. And she's written several books, including her semiautobiographical best seller, *Back on Track: How to Straighten Out Your Life When It Throws You a Curve*. "I've had a few of those," says Deborah.

Starting Out

She began her career at WAGA-TV in Atlanta while a student at the University of Georgia, and later gained national attention as

host of a syndicated radio program. But it was landing her dream job as coanchor of NBC's *Today Show* that nearly derailed her career for good, after she was accused of ousting popular host Jane Pauley from the show.

Deborah left NBC in 1991, fearing she'd never work in TV again. "I thought my career was over. Except for nursing my son, Niki, I went into total shutdown mode," she says. "I didn't get out of my nightgown and robe for weeks. Actually, there were two months I couldn't function at all. I was paralyzed by depression. And I was fat. I couldn't lose the weight that I had gained during my pregnancy with Niki."

Fortunately, she says, "when I reached bottom, I looked inside and

At Her Own Pace

Deborah brings her trademark down-to-earth approach to her exercise routine and doesn't berate herself if she misses a day at the gym. "I used to watch a lot of fitness videos, but I've stopped obsessing over perfection of any kind, including my weight," she says. "If I have time for exercise I do it, but I don't fixate on numbers like weight or waist size. Numbers don't work for me."



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found the strength within myself to get back on track. The steps may seem simple, but taking them is not.” Since then, her career has flourished. She’s celebrated her tenth anniversary as anchor of *Inside Edition*, a syndicated newsmagazine TV show. She was also the host of *Tonight*—a cable program, on MSNBC, that focused on people and issues making the news.

Today, Deborah travels across the country giving motivational talks to help other women rebuild their self-esteem and self-confidence after experiencing a personal tragedy. “If you’ve had a setback, get in touch with what motivates you, get in touch with what inspires you, get in touch

with what disgusts you,” she advises. “You need a good, clear sense of who you are and where you come from. Using that knowledge, you can choose goals or a life vision that is right for you. Your choices will be better the more in tune you are with your true self. Similarly, the more you know about yourself, the more you will trust your gut instincts.”

Moving On

Deborah has a newfound commitment to take better care of herself. After battling weight problems, she understands that “you have to know what your weakness is, and mine is snacking. I can down a bag of chips in a matter of seconds—it looks like the locusts have come through,” she says. “I know I should stay away from salty and sweet foods, but the key is to know your limits, and that applies to everything in your life.”

Despite Deborah’s earlier struggles, the future is looking bright. “Life is pretty wonderful. And I found the purpose in my struggles,” she says. “Yes, you can fall apart and tough times can happen, but you don’t have to be defeated by them. I think I’m a stronger person because of what happened to me.” ●