

A Fitting Career

How one woman made the leap from the corporate world to pursuing a life with horses.

By Katie Olean

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Have you ever dreamt of giving up the office job to spend more time with horses? While you may quickly dismiss the idea for all the reasons why it can't be done, Carmi Weininger proves it can.

In the 1990s, Weininger was living the corporate lifestyle. As a worldwide program manager, she was an international traveler, responsible for large projects and reporting directly to the company's president. Yet, through it all, she felt there was something missing. As her 35th birthday approached, she began to take that feeling seriously.

"It just seemed to me that there wasn't enough meaning in my life," Weininger says.

The day after she turned 35, Weininger gave the corporation she worked for a 30-day notice and started her own business training hunters and jumpers.

"I think people around me thought it was brave, but to me it felt compelling. The next step just seemed so clear. It was the right thing to do."

While Weininger may have been confident in her decision, it did not come without difficulties.

"I had never run a business before, so I had all the challenges that an entrepreneur faces," she says. "I call it the agony and ecstasy roller coaster. I wouldn't recommend it for the faint of heart."

And Weininger's business ventures didn't end there. After encountering a horse with back problems, she researched and developed an interest in saddle fit. In 2000, she purchased the ReactorPanel design and started the ReactorPanel Saddle Company.

Since then she has become an expert in the field of saddle fit, teaching college-level courses and seminars. On Jan. 12 of this year, she was featured on the CBS news program, "The Early Show," discussing her corporate sacrifice for a more fulfilling life. In looking back on her decisions, Weininger holds no regrets.

"I get up every day thinking: I get to go to work. And I've been able to reunite my background, which is business, with my lifelong passions, which are horses and people."