

# Diana Kelly

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

By Judith A. Habert

Photo By Dawn Nicoli/Nicoli Productions



While traveling in Thailand, Diana Kelly came upon a quote that has stayed with her ever since. “You have to make choices to take chances, or your life will never change.” For Diana, this was a turning point and a concept that caused her to make some important changes in her life.

Diana was born in South America and moved to the United States at the age of 12. Upon settling in New York, she had to start learning En-

glish. Through her perseverance and determination, Diana conquered challenges related to language and adapting to a new environment. She credits her resilience and concentration to the guidance and inspiration of her grandmother. Diana successfully graduated from high school at the young age of 16 and secured a full scholarship for college, achieving this milestone with a sense of accomplishment.

Diana attended College and majored in psychology. She had always been interested in behavioral psychology and knew this was the career path she wanted to pursue. A dedication to this type of career takes many years to complete. Even after graduation, there are residency and training requirements; in Diana’s case, life got in the way. “I faced difficulties in my life when my mother fell seriously ill and had to be hospitalized. In order to support her, I had to start working three jobs while also attending school. Despite the challenges, I successfully completed my studies, but had to put my dream of becoming a doctor on hold and began searching for a full-time job to continue providing for my mother’s care.” Diana was presented with an opportunity to work at Home Depot, and she recognized that she required a job that could provide stability, which the company seemed to offer at this stage in her life.

Although it was not the plan at the time, Diana’s job at this multibillion-dollar company turned out to be a career and a very good one at that. “With my major being behavioral psychology, it turned out to be ideal for the position I held working with a lot of different personality types. This job was a complete change for me. At first, I thought it would offer me some good experience in a large work environment, but I soon found out that I was very good at personal relations. My education gave me a lot of insight into dealing with people, which helped to make me a strong leader. I quickly moved up in the company.”

Diana vowed to herself that once she achieved financial stability, she would invite her mom to live with her and provide her with lifelong support. “It has been 27 years since my mom moved into our home. She has been a tower of strength and was instrumental in helping me achieve higher levels of success. I was able to travel for work and fulfill the demands of my career as I progressed in the industry. Having her around in our house gave

me peace of mind, knowing that my son was being looked after while my husband and I worked on building our careers to ensure a stable future for our family, especially my son and mother.”

Diana’s various skills and attributes, including resilience, intelligence, courage, emotional intelligence, and determination, played a significant role in her achievement of an executive level position in the corporate sphere.

In addition to striving to become a successful executive and balancing the responsibilities of being a loving mother, wife, and daughter, she also had a personal aspiration. “One of the objectives I set for myself when I reached 20 was to achieve early retirement by the age of 50, and I successfully achieved this goal.”

Diana views her main accomplishment in life to be her son, “I’m just so, very proud of the man that he has become. I couldn’t be happier. The kindness, awareness, strength, and humbleness that he shows make me a very proud mother. He has such a kind heart and is always willing to help anybody and everybody. He left work one night and got home a little bit later. And then we started talking about why he was late, and he explained that when he left work, he spotted a homeless person sitting on the curb and asked him if he needed help. The gentlemen told him no; he was okay. Her son told the man, why don’t we do something? Let’s go to Walmart. So, he got him in his car, took him to Walmart, went shopping for toiletries and some non-perishable food, paid for everything, got him back in the car and dropped him off back at the same spot where he had met him. I almost panicked a bit when he relayed the story to me, as it was late at night and the man was a stranger, but he said Mom, I could tell this man had a good heart, and I needed to do something to help him out even in this small way.”

After retiring, Diana embraced a new chapter in her life, filled with purposeful and rewarding activities. She has dedicated herself to

Executive Coaching for the past four years, using her extensive expertise to empower others and drive meaningful change. She has also provided crucial support to patients through behavioral therapy and selflessly volunteered in multiple local organizations, including hospice care. Diana has treasured the deep connections formed while bonding with her son and found profound peace in the art of sailing. Although the transition from a demanding corporate career was initially uncertain, Diana has discovered immense fulfillment in passionately pursuing these diverse endeavors.

After hearing all that Diana does, I had to remind her that she technically is not retired, as she is probably doing more now than she ever did. Still, she reminded me that she feels fulfilled helping people and enjoys every minute of her volunteer experience.

Diana adds, "Life is a precious gift, and living it with purpose and intention is important. In a world filled with distractions and endless to-do lists, it can be easy to lose sight of what truly matters. Yet, to lead a fulfilling life, we must be determined to make meaningful plans, cherish quality time with our loved ones, and prioritize what brings us genuine joy. Living with purpose means setting goals that align with our deepest values and passions. It requires us to take deliberate steps toward achieving these goals, no matter how small they may seem. This determination fuels our journey, giving us a sense of direction and accomplishment. Equally important is the time we spend with the people who matter most to us. Quality moments with family and friends create memories that last a lifetime and strengthen our bonds. It's essential to be present in these moments, fully engaging with those around us. In today's digital age, it's all too easy to get lost in social media, spending hours scrolling through feeds and updates. While technology connects us in many ways, it can also create a barrier between us and the real-life connections right in front of

us. We must make a conscious effort to put down our devices and immerse ourselves in the company of our loved ones. These interactions are irreplaceable and enrich our lives in ways that no screen ever can. By focusing on these real connections, we nurture our emotional well-being and build a supportive network that helps us thrive. Prioritizing what brings us joy is another cornerstone of a purposeful life. Joy comes in many forms – from pursuing hobbies and interests, to exploring new places, to simply relaxing

and savoring the moment. It's about recognizing what makes our hearts sing and giving ourselves permission to indulge in these activities. Joyful moments are not just fleeting pleasures; they are essential for our mental and emotional health, recharging us and inspiring us to keep moving forward. By embracing these principles, we can lead a life that is not only successful but also deeply satisfying and enriched with love and happiness. I hope this resonates with you!"

And if you aren't doing these things or feel afraid to do so, take it from someone whose life is filled with a loving family, a wonderful profession, and endless hours spent volunteering, always spreading kindness to so many who yearn for it. If your life isn't full of these essential elements, then take note of the quote that Diana came upon in Thailand: "You have to make choices to take chances, or your life will never change."



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