



Day in the Life article from the [June / July 2001](#) Issue

A Way of Life

FOR ACN'S DEBBIE DAVIS, EVERY DAY UNFOLDS DIFFERENTLY

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A typical day in the life of Debbie Davis promises one thing: there will be nothing typical about it. Oh, sure--there are certain activities that any given week is likely to include ... but it's the variety and the freedom network marketing affords her that Debbie loves most about the business itself.

Debbie has been honored by her company, American Communications Network (ACN), for which she is an independent representative, as a member of its Circle of Champions, the top 16 producers and earners. After just three years in the business, she hit the top position of Regional Vice President (RVP). Today, with over eight years under her belt and 200,000 people in her downline, she's a company icon and a role model for reps throughout the company. At ease on stage in front of ten or 10,000, Debbie is most passionate when speaking about the realization she credits with her achievements: that success is the result of changing our thinking.

"It's not easy; it's not quick," she tells her listeners, "but anyone can do it. It's not a chance; it's simply a choice."

Goal One: Sunday Brunch



Before her networking career, Debbie's primary responsibility was caring for her three children. Her husband, Geoff, then an employee at Chrysler's headquarters near their home in Leonard, MI, supplied their income. Debbie was happy, but she wanted more.

"My kids were my main focus--always have been and still are," she says, "but I also wanted to earn some money on the side and have a life of my own. I loved being home, I never got bored one day in my whole life. At the same time, though I didn't realize it then, I needed something to give me a sense of accomplishment, something besides being a mother to my children."

She had tried her hand at a lot of other things (painting, wallpapering, selling hand-made crafts at arts fairs, Tupperware, even a few network marketing companies) without much genuine effort--or much success. These failed attempts hurt her confidence, but not her dreams--especially the long-time hope of building a dream home that she shared with Geoff.

"We had written down exactly what it would be like," recalls Debbie. "We wanted heated floors, thick, solid molding, big thick doors--a level of quality that we knew was going to be very expensive."

Without a college degree, she doubted she'd be able to earn much. When she started in ACN, she hoped she would achieve the kinds of high incomes everyone told her were possible. Frankly, though, she was afraid to set such lofty goals.

"Honestly, I just didn't want to fail any more," she explains. "My first goal was to earn \$50 a week so I could take my kids out to brunch every Sunday."

Not the loftiest networking ambition. But for Debbie, it represented a significant treat. It was a goal she felt relatively confident she could achieve and feel good about--and it proved to be the right way to get herself going. Before long, those brunches were chump change, and the reality of their dream house began to occupy her mind.

Changing Her Thinking

Looking back, says Debbie, it's easy to see her own evolution: starting as a mom whose highest comfortable goal was to earn a weekly Sunday brunch and growing to become the top leader she is today. During the years in which that evolution took place, however, she was too "in it" to recognize the process. In fact, it took Debbie two full years in ACN to really believe she could succeed at network marketing.

"There was a tremendous amount of personal growth that had to take place for me to be an RVP. I never actually said I didn't believe I could do it--it was a fear I was almost too afraid of to say out loud."

One day, after two years in the business, Debbie had a conversation with one of ACN's co-founders that proved to be a turning point. He told her, "Debbie, some day you're going to be one of the top people in this company." She responded, "Yeah, right," and laughed it off.

He stopped--and then he said, "Well, maybe you're right. Maybe you won't."

Debbie was taken aback. "I said, 'What are you talking about?!' He said, 'You keep saying you're not going to make it, and it just dawned on me that if you don't believe you will, then you won't.' It was like someone hitting me in the head. I got it."

That day, she resolved to change the way she thought.

"I made a conscious decision to stand guard at the door of my thoughts to make sure that every thought I had was one that would help me succeed. That decision turned everything around."

Massive Action, All-out Effort



Debbie and Geoff launched into a year of massive action on her business and their dream house simultaneously. Debbie jokes that during that year, their three kids essentially raised themselves.



"They were great about it," she says, "but it was really challenging." Geoff was spending every weekday at his job and every evening and weekends working on the house, which he built almost single-handedly. Debbie handled the general contracting and went all-out into building her business.

"I've heard people who quit network marketing say that the business can be too consuming and run your life. I have come to realize this is absolutely true--and there's nothing wrong with that. It's okay to be totally unbalanced for a short time in order to have an unbelievable balance and quality of life for the rest of your life. Our motto that year was, 'Don't think, just do.'"

Debbie stops short of suggesting others duplicate that damn-the-torpedoes approach. Still she says, there is immeasurable benefit to be gained by throwing oneself into the business with full force. For one thing, it gets momentum going--quickly. Indeed, she asserts, in the long run this approach is easier than a more cautiously drawn-out period of part-time effort.

"Your business is like a jet plane," Debbie explains. "Most of the fuel is used up in the take-off, not in the trip cross-country. I think it's something you have to eat, drink, sleep, live, day in, day out, until you're there. Doing it slowly prolongs the hardest part."

Reaping the Fruits of Her Efforts

As that crazy year wound to a close, it all came together: the family moved into the much-anticipated dream home, Geoff's schedule went back to normal, and Debbie was recognized as an RVP. Debbie renewed the intensity of her business-building efforts with a new goal: to retire Geoff from his job, which they achieved early in her fourth year. Geoff was prepared to leave his job before their move, but they couldn't qualify for a mortgage, so he stayed on.

She recalls the day she showed up at his office in the huge Chrysler headquarters to get a last-day tour. Debbie had much more than that planned to commemorate his retirement.

"It was hysterical. We picked him up in a big limo. He didn't know we were coming--a couple of our friends and partners and I surprised him. When they let us up to his office, his mouth was on the floor, he was so surprised. He took us on a tour around his office. To all of us, who had all been in network marketing for years, it was really different--so serious and quiet, so controlled ... and we were so uncontrollable. It was hilarious--and it gave us a powerful renewed sense of how fortunate we felt to not have to be in that kind of environment."

Since that day, Geoff has been enjoying his early retirement by pursuing interests he never had time for during his working past, such as coaching his youngest son's baseball team. Providing this opportunity for her husband is one of the achievements Debbie is most proud of. Now, she says, her biggest motivation is supporting those in her organization to reach their goals. "I have a lot of people who've helped me get where I am, and I feel a tremendous responsibility to do the same for them."



Whether it's doing presentations, advising on the phone, or setting up new systems to support her team more effectively, Debbie spends much of her time these days helping others hit momentum as she did. Though each day holds its own surprises, her telephone is almost always involved.

"One day there will be only a handful of calls; the next it seems I never even put the phone in the cradle or dial a number; the next, 80 percent of my phone time will be me placing calls. There's a common misconception that once you get to a certain level, you stop acquiring customers and prospecting, but that's not true. I like to spend a portion of my day with my own new people, and another portion supporting a group that's already in place." She makes calls on her cell phone while doing errands or while gardening (her favorite summer pastime), so these commitments never interfere with the variety and flexibility of schedule that drew her to the business in the first place.

For Debbie, travelling is another favorite perk. In addition to the company-paid incentive trips provided for leaders, she does regional training events for the company and travels to areas where a growing group needs the face-to-face support. No matter where she is, every road sign signifies someone she knows in that town. Two summers ago, Debbie and her family realized one of her dream vacations--a road trip west to see Mt. Rushmore and the mountains of Wyoming.

"I spent three summers of my high school years climbing mountains at a camp in Colorado, so I fell in love with the mountains at an early age. I always wanted to go back with Geoff and the kids when they were old enough to appreciate it. One of the best experiences I've ever had was getting in the car, knowing where we wanted to go, but having no idea exactly what we were going to do or how long we were going to stay. People asked when I was coming back--and I'd answer, 'I don't know!'"

A Way of Life

Debbie feels strongly that building a network marketing business does not have to be hard, nor time-consuming. Her business and her personal life are so fully integrated, she says, there's no "on" and "off" time, as there is in other careers. She can't say exactly how much she works--because a lot of what she does that technically counts as "work," simply doesn't feel like it.

"On the plane home from a vacation in Mexico recently," Debbie recalls, "the guy next to me started a conversation. We ended up exchanging numbers. What many people don't get is that the easiest and most effective way to do this is also the least time-consuming! You truly can do this business as you go through your day-to-day life. Here's the difference: people who set specific hours to work the business are not taking advantage of the opportunities right in front of them every day. The key is to keep the business in your thoughts all the time. You can do the business part-time, but you have to have full-time thinking. That way, it's always on the tip of your tongue. As long as you don't let fear cripple you, you won't miss those opportunities."

For Debbie, network marketing has become a way of life. From the relationships she's developed with others, to the financial freedom, to her increased confidence, network marketing has been a truly holistic experience. Ironically, many of the things she is most grateful for about the business are things she never could have anticipated and whose value she would not have understood even if someone had tried to explain them to her on Day One. It's just the nature of the process--and she's glad she stuck with it to find out.

"I am more in control of myself, thanks to this business," she says. "We always have room to grow, but I now know that things aren't just happening to me--I can make of my life what I want to. It's really opened me up to looking to the future and the choices I have. I can do whatever I want to do with this life, and I'm so convinced of that, that my question now is, 'What do I want to do with the rest of my life?'"



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