

## PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH

# When was the Last Time *You* Went to the SPA?

BY ADA POLLA TRAY

*"I am a woman. I am invincible. I am tired"***Ada S. Polla Tray,**

MBA, is the eldest daughter of Luigi and Barbara Polla, owners of the two medical spas Forever Laser Institut in Geneva, Switzerland. She has worked with her parents in opening, running, and improving spa operations for a number of years. She also manages the development and distribution of her family's Alchimie Forever skin care line in North America.

She graduated in the top 5% of her MBA class at Georgetown University, and received her Magna cum Laude BA at Harvard University in art history. She has professional experience in consulting and product management of medical devices.

Ada is on the editorial board of PCI Magazine, a contributor to numerous trade magazines, and a frequent speaker at Georgetown University and industry tradeshows.

For more information on Forever Laser Institut or Alchimie Forever, please visit our website at [www.forever-beauty.com](http://www.forever-beauty.com), or call (703) 920-6800.

One of the particular characteristics of the beauty industry, whether considering spas, beauty boutiques, or product lines, is the fact that it is dominated by women. And still today, women in the workplace face some unique challenges, number one among them the combination of personal and professional responsibilities.

Indeed, while we may think that this was an issue faced mostly by our mothers, the balancing act between work and life continues to be just that to this day – a balancing act.

As the quote on my favorite coffee mug says: "I am a woman. I am invincible. I am tired." Invincible because if we want to, we can have it all, a fulfilling career and a family, a corner office and a toddler. Tired, exactly for the same reason – because we can do it all, and we indeed do it all.

Over the last couple of years, I have developed stress management strategies that I apply with as much discipline as I perform key professional tasks. These techniques help me prevent burn-out, stay rested, and successfully achieve both personal and professional goals.

### *Schedule free time*

I learned early that the only way for me to remember everything is to write things down. My whole life is in my paper day planner. Different things get written in different colors. Some tasks get highlighted in yellow, others in orange. Despite the color scheme, however, what gets scheduled and penciled in, gets done.



Thus, I have learned to schedule fun and free time, not only work meetings. I schedule my spa treatments. I block time out for dinner, for dates, for a run. Learning to schedule time into my days to do non-work related things has been essential to my work-life balance. If I leave my workout to the end of the day ("I'll go running when I'm done with my work..."), it won't happen (when am I ever done with my work?).

### *Practice what you preach: get spa treatments regularly*

I am in the business of recommending and selling beauty – whether spa treatments or skin care products. To best do my job, my skin needs to be flawless, and I need to be well put-together. Pimples and a bad haircut (because I have been too "busy" to go to the hairdresser) are not the image I want to portray.



How many spa owners and spa managers actually get regular massages and facials? I have learned to practice what I preach, and have incorporated a facial and 90 minute massage into my schedule. Once a month, at the beginning of the month when things seem more under control, and most importantly, every 30 days. Since I have implemented this self-care regimen, countless prospective clients have commented on how great I look. Can I link the monthly treatments to a direct increase in business? No. But I look better and feel better about myself.

#### *Ask for help and delegate*

Even though we are invincible, it never hurts to delegate and ask for some help when things become overwhelming. Surround yourself with the right team members, with people who have complementary strengths, and learn to give up a bit of the control to let others help you. Looking for, finding, and keeping the right team to help us is an affirmation of strength rather than a sign of weakness.

#### *Congratulate yourself often and celebrate the little victories*

As an entrepreneur, I find it easy to always think about the next problem. I might have solved five crises today, but I am already trying to figure out how the next three will be dealt with. I have had to learn to stop and congratulate myself when something good happens. I have had to learn to make sure I don't just worry about the bad things, but also enjoy the good things.

*No matter how busy we get, we need to take some time for ourselves for some essential pampering.*

So I make an explicit effort to spend some time every day thinking about what went well, and to congratulate myself and enjoy every (no matter how small) success. So let's congratulate ourselves, and let's do it often!

Similarly, I have learned to rejoice in the success of other women. More successes for women in the workplace don't mean less for me. On the contrary, the success of one woman helps other women. So let's also congratulate others, and let's do it as often as possible!

These four techniques have helped me balance work with the rest of my life in a way that is right for me, and I am grateful to be able to share these with you. In particular in an industry that sells pampering, rest and relaxation, and beauty, finding this balance is key to success. So let's be women. Let's choose to have both a rewarding career and a family. Let's be invincible. And let's make sure not to let ourselves get too tired. ■