

TOP DOG In Flight

Any day, somewhere in action on radio, TV, in a newspaper, a magazine, a seminar, or non-profit event you will meet Eileen Proctor. Eileen is a talented, exciting, rebellious, daring and often quixotic serial entrepreneur who founded IT'S A RUFF LIFE, a unique cage-free

doggie day care center in October 2000. She is an avid dog lover who turned her love of dogs into a business that pampers, respects and cares for your dog during the day while you work or can't be home to see to your canine family member's needs. She left a successful corporate executive career to build her own business.

I first met Eileen in 2003 when she won The Spirit of Enterprise Emerging Entrepreneur Award given by the center I founded at ASU in 1992. When she talks about her love of dogs, and her future plans, the ideas, dreams, projects, helping entrepreneurs succeed and the like, words tumble out in a romantic persuasive stream. When her ideas become a framed process with an inventive unique name already to present, she springs into action.

When I decided to write this book, Eileen seemed to me the obvious example of the category of serial entrepreneur. To capture her in flight took two formal interviews and one informal off the record interview session. She has not flinched at telling her story fraught with

problems, missteps, successes and failures. You will feel in her story energy, musing, wisdom, excitement, altruism worth the listening to. I've pulled a fair amount of nuggets you can take to the bank if you listen. Each of my questions was answered without hesitation.

Eileen, I can hardly pick up a paper, turn on the TV or radio without seeing you or hearing you. You seem to capture the interest of the media. Behind the public persona, how would you describe yourself?

I am a proactive person. I don't sit around waiting for someone to ask me to do things. I like to contribute where I see opportunity to make a difference. I'm a compassionate person who tries to see other sides of an issue before making a judgment. In some ways I'm kind of rebellious. If someone tells me I can't do something it's the surest way to encourage me to do it. I'm adventuresome and like challenge. Solving problems is fun. And, yes I'm curious and inquisitive and always want to know the why so I can improve whatever needs improvement. That leads to setting good examples. In my work with business people and clients being a role model is essential. Setting an example for employees is a part of the process of teaching them. From an emotional sense I'm a spiritual person as well.

When did you discover these facets of your personality or were you like this as a child?

That's hard to explain. I was the middle child always trying to get free. I guess the answer would be they were a part of me influenced by having to deal with an older sibling and manage the needs of and relations with a younger sibling. I just came to feel these traits were always a part of me and I honed them through my challenges as I got older and interacted with a wide variety of personalities.

You have an extraordinary ability to get press and media recognition. Is there a purpose to your actions in seeking notoriety? Is it for business or personal vindication?



HERE AT 6, EILEEN FLANKED BY HER BROTHER PHILL AND SISTER WENDY, SHOWS HER AFFECTION FOR THE FAMILY'S FIRST PET, TINY TIM.

