

Lorraine Toth

Chooses A Happy Day

COVER STORY

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And so begins Lorraine Toth's first book, *Run*. As with most people, Lorraine learned that life has its ups and downs but it's the choices you make for yourself that determine your total mind/body health and the path of your personal life journey.

A life-long resident of the Capital Region, Lorraine grew up in the Rotterdam/Guilderland area before moving to Clifton Park once she was married. Growing up, art was always her escape. She would lock herself in her room for hours to draw cartoons and work on her paintings. She joined the workforce right out of high school and became a Renaissance woman. In addition to her art, she was a licensed real estate broker, received her certification in Reiki and Reflexology, worked as a fitness consultant in Gold's Gym and a leasing consultant for Tri-City Rentals before settling into her roll that she is most famous for here in the Capital District – "Bettie" of Bettie's Cakes.

Opened in 2009, Bettie's Cakes quickly became a Capital Region favorite. Based in the heart of downtown Saratoga Springs, Lorraine knew that the 1950's-themed cupcake shop would thrive in this tourist destination. At the time, there were no other themed, dine-in cupcake shops in the area and there certainly were no bakeshops that had a pinup Bettie in their store! Lorraine quickly became a famous figure in the area and Bettie's traveling pink double decker bus was a staple as well. Even though they

"In life you will make wrong decisions and wrong turns. The important thing is that you get back on the path that feels good to you."

have now been closed for a while, Lorraine still has people coming up to her asking if she is Bettie. "It was my baby for five years and I still miss it to this day," Lorraine says.

Lorraine's journey has been bumpy along the way. Struggling with health, relationship and self-esteem issues, Lorraine had to find a way to pull herself out of a dark period in her life and into the life she had always wanted. She realized that the typical Western medicine treatment of symptoms with prescription drugs was not helping her. They were only masking the problem and not fixing the source of the problem itself. She started doing a little research on her own and found that many things can be cured through diet and natural remedies. She relieved her body of an excruciating bout of shingles with only two visits to an acupuncturist. She cured her life-long asthma by sticking to a gluten-free diet. She began regularly practicing meditation and has now subscribed to a completely holistic lifestyle – swearing by apple cider vinegar and probiotics along with a high daily water intake.

Once Lorraine began to get her health together, she removed herself from her toxic marriage, concentrated on her habit of running and focused on completing her first marathon. It was the fresh start she needed on her journey back to

her authentic self and a recurring theme in her book.

Ever the pioneer, Lorraine began to focus her entrepreneur energy on a new business she had created for herself a few years back, this time focusing on her photography skills instead of cupcakes. It had all started



Lorraine at a book signing.

with an idea for a present for her then husband. She wanted to do a pinup shoot but realized there were no pinup photographers in this area. They all seemed to be on the West Coast. She first hired professional photographer Dan Doyle for a couple of lessons on how to take photos. Then she practiced and taught herself the rest of her craft. Using her artistic eye, she has since created some truly stunning photographs both for her pinup/ boudoir clients as well as her recently added-on wedding clients. The pinup shoots have become a huge hit in our area, making fantastic gifts especially for Christmas and Valentine's Day. The best part? Pinup modeling experience is not required. Lorraine has been coaching first-time models for over 11 years, so the only requirement is to show up with a fresh face – no makeup. A professional makeup artist will apply your makeup when you get there. You change into your outfit, then Lorraine will walk you through your session and you can leave with a flash drive of photos that same day.

Since she has expanded into wedding photography, Lorraine has offered the Capital District unique, artistic wedding photos at extremely affordable prices. Her main advice for the bride and groom is to, "Make sure you ask your guests to not use cell



*Lorraine as a pinup model.
Pinup photo by Dino Petrocelli*

phones during the ceremony! Also, please ask family that thinks they are photographers to let us do the work. I have gotten so many shots where family is hanging out in the aisle with a cell phone or a family member is in back of the wedding cake as the couple cuts their cake. So my biggest advice is to let your guests know to just relax and be in the moment and leave photo taking to your photographer. Also, you can't airbrush emotion. Allow your emotions to flow that day – tears, smiles, all of that can't be retouched and it is genuine."

Lorraine's work has been on display at the Saratoga Automobile Museum as well as local coffee shops. While her photography has been her main thing these days, forever an entrepreneur, Lorraine hasn't stopped there. Always dreaming of writing and publishing a book, she finally accomplished her goal. Run is an empowering story of how she turned her life pain into power. Coming from a stifling background to finding her place of personal strength, Lorraine uses a combination of narrative and poetry to reach out to other women that may feel stuck in life – whether through relationships, careers or health – and inspires them to find their own inner power to reach their true potential in life.

Lorraine is passionate about helping to empower women. She feels her life experiences have led her to a place where she can reach out and help others. "I once was told by a former boss, 'Lorraine, we have too many chiefs and not enough Indians,' when I tried to suggest business ideas I had to him. I later in life realized that I am a bit too much for some people and some are just intimidated by my eagerness. Any roadblocks you encounter in life are just re-directing you onto the right path," she explains. "There are so many women who have potential to truly be happy but they are led by fear. Also, so many women who fail to realize how beautiful they are and that they are their own worst critics. I know I can help with both. I have been in their shoes. It is now my purpose, I believe, to help others."

Lorraine's book is currently available at The Book House of Stuyvesant Plaza and at Fifi's Frocks and Frills on Western Ave in Albany, as well as online. A short film based on the book has also been produced and is currently entered into film festivals and short film contests. In the meantime, Lorraine is working on her second book titled *Psychic Serendipity* – a romantic novel that ponders the



Lorraine in action photographing a wedding.

question of fate and if we are truly servants to it or do we create our own.

Her motto, "Choose A Happy Day," has led her to a new and empowered place in her life. Her daughter, Shawnee (21), graduated from Clarkson University this past May and is now working her first full-time job for an international company in Utica. Still living in Clifton Park with her younger son, Johnny (5), Lorraine is enjoying reliving the moments of childhood and hopes to pass on her learned experiences and life revelations to both her children as well as her readers. She has learned that if you want to make a change in your life – whether in starting a business or getting out of a current situation – to just do it! "Isn't it better to look back and think, 'Wow, I learned something from that,' even if you fail than to just sit stagnant in life? It is always better to think *I did that* rather than *I wish I did that* as you are on your deathbed. We only regret the chances we didn't take, as they say. I have had business failures but the thing is, I learn from each one and redirect the next time. I grow as an individual. I always get back up after I fall – that is the important piece – to get back up and try again!"

*For more information about Lorraine and her book, **Run**, visit www.chooseahappyday.com. ■*

Do you know a neighbor who has a story to share? Nominate your neighbor to be featured in one of our upcoming issues! Contact us at jcaputo@bestversionmedia.com.

Get to know Lorraine

CLIFTON PARK RESIDENT

– 11 years

FAVORITE SPOT(S) IN THE CAPITAL DISTRICT – SKATE Park in Clifton Park & attending live band shows

WHEN SHE WAS YOUNG – Had the nickname of "Hellen Keller" due to her lack of sports and eye/hand coordination abilities, but won multiple trophies for her sparring competitions for Okinawan Karate

PASSIONS – Art, Holistic Health, The 1950's Era, Empowering Women

WHAT SHE DOESN'T DO – Use emojis, chew gum, watch TV shows, watch Netflix, rely on traditional healthcare, read fiction

LOVES TO – Read and paint (most of her books are non-fiction entrepreneur or spiritual/inspirational books)

HOBBY – Running! Part of the local running club, "Got the Runs"

ON THE SCREEN – You can find Lorraine on her YouTube channel, @pinupmakeover. She has just added 2 new series – "The Glamorous Side of Baking," featuring Bettie giving baking and beauty tips and "Pinup Poetry," featuring Lorraine as a pinup reciting both original and classical poetry.

"DRUG" OF CHOICE – Meditation. "It has helped me to focus and become more mindful when making important life decisions."

PHOTOGRAPHY PACKAGES – There are still slots left for 2018 as well as discounted package options. Book her for weddings or pinup shoots at dollfacestudiosny.com