

# DR. EVE EPSTEIN: Prescription for Persuasion

*This savvy "speech doctor" turns deal makers and diplomats into convincing communicators.*

by Charles Rathay

"Who is she?" That's the question people ask when Dr. Eve Epstein walks into a roomful of strangers. And some of those strangers might well be Henry Kissinger, Barbra Streisand, Abba Eban, David Rockefeller, the Queen of Thailand, George Soros or even the President of the United States.

"You decide," she teases, as she turns the tables on me. I should have known better than to tangle with a professional—after all, she prepares clients to "control the dialogue" and "get their story told their way" during just such media encounters.

Who is she?

She lays out the facts concisely.

She married her childhood sweetheart after a seven-year courtship and carried two jobs to support them both while he finished his medical studies and residency.

At 21, she was a faculty member in the Communications Department of Queens College. By the time she was 24, she had her Ph.D. in communications, was published in scholarly journals, was a Research Associate with the Speech Communication Association of America, and was editor of a local Jewish newspaper, all while she continued to teach college.

By the time she hit 30, she was the mother of two boys, a part-time professor and a full-time business manager and public relations agent for her physician-husband in one of the most successful specialty clinics in Queens. At the same time, she was Visiting Professor of Homiletics and Professional Skills in the Rabbinical School of The Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

Then, at 38, just as her efforts seemed about to bear fruit, her world collapsed. After twenty years of devotion and commitment to what she perceived as a "shared dream," she brutally discovered that her husband "wasn't the man I thought he was."

But Eve didn't allow the divorce to demoralize and degrade her. She mustered up her courage and moved on, determined to continue on her path to success.

Characteristically, Epstein puts a positive spin on the experience and quotes an 18th-century Chassidic Rabbi: "All the world's a narrow bridge and the main thing is not to be afraid."

"That's the most important lesson that we [she and sons Josh, 15 and Kenny, 13] have learned from this unfortunate episode. As one door closes, another opens. *Gam zoo le'tova* [all happens for the best]. One thing's for sure, if it hadn't been for the divorce, I wouldn't be where I am today. I feel that, in a strange way, G-d rescued me."

Epstein says her family legacy prepared her to deal with adversity. Her parents, Fania and Elias Epstein, and her maternal grandparents, Boris and Basia

Kagan, were Holocaust survivors. Her grandfather, who was a banker by profession, had *smicha* (Rabbinical ordination) from the Telshe Yeshiva in Lithuania, and after the war, served on the Supreme Court for the liberated Jews of Germany. He was also the founder and chairman of the Histadrut Tzionit Acheda—the first united Zionist coalition of Jews in postwar Germany—and helped create a free university in the Landsberg displaced-persons camp. A favorite family story describes how he worked with Ben-Gurion, who often ate Shabbos fish in the Kagan kitchen when he visited Europe.

Eve's father was orphaned in the Holocaust at the age of 15. Liberated from Buchenwald, he went to study medicine in Munich, Germany.

The family came to the U.S. in 1950 and, like thousands of other survivors who lost children, relatives and everything they had, started life anew.

With one year left to complete his medical studies and no money with which to do it, Eve's father took a job loading trucks for a diamond jewelry manufacturing firm for ninety cents an hour. Then he graduated to shipping clerk. Today, more than forty years later, he is an award-winning jewelry designer and vice president of the company. When William Helmreich, author of *Against All Odds: Holocaust Survivors*



Dr. Eve Epstein