



Chad Triplett

Just a year out of massage school, Chad Triplett purchased Serene Lake Massage Therapy in Lynwood, Washington. Since then, the 38-year-old's bodywork business has expanded into three locations. His practice offers Swedish, pregnancy, heated stone and sports massage, along with injury rehabilitation and CranioSacral Therapy. Triplett lives in Edmonds, Washington, with his wife, Rachel, and children, Julynn, 10, and C.W., 9.

Q: How long have you been practicing massage?

A: For 10 years.

Q: How long have you owned your practice?

A: I took over Serene Lake Massage Therapy with Shannon Quenzer in 1997. In July 2002 we opened our second location, Serene View, in Mukilteo, Washington. A year ago we opened our third location, Serene Massage Therapy, in Lynwood, Washington.

Q: What was your training?

A: I graduated from Seattle Massage School in 1997. I interned at Children's Hospital, primarily giving the trauma staff seated massage. I focused my continuing education with The Upledger Institute in Florida. I've completed its core curriculum and been a teaching assistant for many of its courses.

Q: What is the best business decision you've made?

A: Purchasing the first building for our second clinic and

purchasing electric lift tables in all of our rooms for my staff.

Q: What was the worst?

A: I've lost a lot of money on bad advertising. You really have to know where your advertising dollars are best spent, know your target market and go after it. Also, keep track of all the responses you get from your marketing, so you know where to focus your efforts.

Q: Can you remember a time when things weren't going well in your business? What did you do to turn it around?

A: You really have to keep a positive attitude—spiritually, energetically and physically. In the industry we're in, your clients don't want to know the problems you're having financially, so don't share that with them. I tell myself and all my employees you always focus on a full schedule. I find that when you worry about not having enough appointments, your schedule meets that expectation.

Q: What do you like most about working for yourself?

A: Seeing the look on the faces of clients you and your staff have helped. Knowing that I have created that environment makes me beam with pride.

Q: What do you like the least?

A: Being the manager of employees. Having to reprimand or fire someone is a very hard thing to do.

Q: What advice would you give someone looking to start her own business?

A: You really need to figure out if you're a business owner or an employee. There are great opportunities for both, but you really need to know where you fit. Some of the most incredible practitioners have their practices fail because they don't know how to navigate the business world. I also recommend you develop incredible relationships with a C.P.A., a lawyer and a business banker who understand your needs. Also seek out a mentor in our field or the health-care industry.