

THE GROUP - ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Rebecca Carswell

A clinical hypnotherapist and professional speaker, Rebecca Carswell settled in Florida in 1998 to pursue her passion for skydiving. Born and raised in rural New Hampshire, she received a Bachelor of Science degree in Marketing from Plymouth State University, where she later completed graduate courses in psychology. Following graduation in 1989, Carswell spent a year backpacking solo through Greece, India, and Asia. An avid

participant in a range of outdoor sports, she learned how to fly small planes and took up parachuting in her early 20s. To date, Carswell has logged over 700 jumps, most of them in freefall formation.

A major turning point in her life came in 2002, when she broke her back in a near-fatal midair collision with the plane from which

she had just jumped out. Told by doctors that she would never fully recover, Carswell remembers thinking, "I felt like a victim, angry, sad, depressed, like there's no hope. And I began to realize that what I was thinking was actually creating my reality. So I began to focus on positive, empowering thoughts, like *Everything happens for a reason, I will find the gifts in this experience.*" As a result, she was ultimately able to resume a normal life, and even returned to skydiving.

Carswell subsequently became an ordained Interfaith Minister through the New Seminary Institute in New York, and also serves as a spiritual counselor. As a speaker, she helps businesses achieve a higher level of success through her own unique listening and communications techniques – now available through her new book, *Hey, Are You Listening To Me? Listening Your Way to Professional and Personal Success*. For more information: www.RebeccaCarswell.com



Carswell (R) skydiving with her sister

Mirja Heide

Florida entrepreneur Mirja Heide has been on the cutting-edge of information technology since the mid-1990s, when she created the information systems for her first company right out of college. Heide graduated from Florida Atlantic University with a Bachelor of Science degree in International Business



Heide hiking in Namibia, Africa

and an Environmental Studies certification. She also studied German at Colón Foreign Language Institute in Hamburg. Following graduation, she co-founded an international trading company that exported quality apparel and footwear to Africa and other foreign markets. It was while developing and managing the firm's information systems that Heide got the idea to make computers easier to use through customized step-by-step instruction geared to a person's

specific interests, and formed MH Computer Training & Designs. 2009 marks the 10th anniversary of her thriving business. For more information visit www.MHComputerTraining.com.

In 2007, she achieved a long-time dream of visiting Africa, and became a volunteer on the Earthwatch Desert-Dwelling Elephants of Namibia expedition. "You work side-by-side with the scientists, assisting them with their research. There are only two known places in the world where these elephants are found, so it was a dream come true for me to be able to contribute to the understanding of their behavior and biology, as well as an enormous opportunity to see them in their natural habitat."

Born in Denmark, Heide enjoys combining her zest for adventure with her passion for photography as she travels the world. She has white-water rafted in Zimbabwe and Costa Rica; hiked in Tobago, Tenerife, Namibia, Botswana and South Africa; and rock climbed in France. Also, during a visit to Machu Picchu, Peru, in 2005, she appeared in the filming of a Travel Channel episode on "The Lost City of the Incas."

Tiffany Kaharick

Tiffany Kaharick, who is expecting her first child in September, is a licensed massage therapist and graduate of the Space Coast Health Institute. She currently practices at the Positive Change Health Center in Sebastian, Florida. Kaharick previously spent five years on staff at Florida Hospital Orlando as a critical care registered respiratory therapist. After earning a Bachelors of Science degree in Cardio-Pulmonary Science from the University of Central Florida in 2000, she became a member of the elite Florida Flight 1 medical helicopter team for two years.

“Florida Hospital was one of only a few hospitals in the country that employed respiratory therapists on helicopters, so this was a once in a lifetime opportunity for me. I was one of two team members per shift working closely with the chief flight nurse, helping critically ill patients receive life-saving treatment.

Lifting off in the helicopter and flying over the tops of the skyscrapers in downtown Orlando was



Kaharick at the summit of Mt. Fuji in 2005

exhilarating. It didn't feel like work – more like an adventure,” Kaharick says.

Kaharick 's passion for extreme sports began as a teenager, when an aunt taught her how to surf, which later became such an obsession that she would hit the waves at dawn before heading off to class. “Even the coldest day in winter couldn't keep me out of the water, all of my fingers and toes would turn blue,” she

says with a laugh. “But it didn't matter – I loved it so much.” In 1999, Kaharick discovered an even greater thrill – skydiving – and has since logged over 300 jumps. “I was hooked from the minute I fell out of the plane.” Then, in 2005, came what she calls “the hardest thing I've ever done” – summiting the 12,388 ft. Mt. Fuji, an active volcano in Japan. “We were walking on just lava rock the whole time, and sometimes it's so steep that it's almost as if you're climbing a ladder. It's all switchbacks and treacherous. I couldn't walk for two days.”

Amy Mead

Amy Mead built a successful career in advertising and graphic design before starting a family in 2007. The Chicago native earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Connecticut College, then landed her first job at a small agency outside the Windy City. Over the next 12 years, Amy worked her way up to Senior Art Director for a large Chicago firm. She was living in the suburbs on a tranquil 20 acres overlooking two lakes when the long daily commutes and bitterly-cold winters began to take their toll.

“My boyfriend and I began dreaming about a radical change in our lives — the possibility of owning and living on a sailboat,” she says. “In spite of demanding jobs and limited time, we spent the next six months imagining and talking about what it would be like to follow this dream.”

In 2001, they boldly quit their jobs, put everything in storage, and moved to Florida. Within a week, the two had bought a 27-foot sailboat, despite knowing nothing about boats or sailing, and moved aboard. They spent the next six months making it seaworthy and learning how to live without refrigeration. The couple then set sail for a three-month cruise in the Bahamas, requiring them to cross the turbulent Gulf Stream in the middle of the night. The year-long adventure would change their lives as they weathered numerous storms and learned how to survive at sea. “There are so many memories wrapped up in that boat, there was no way we could sell it. We still have it today,” she says.



Mead and her boyfriend on their boat