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Mother and daughter a perfect complement



As psychologists, Dr Hanneljie van Zyl-Edeling and Dr Karin Steyn work together on projects, present workshops as a team, consult each other professionally, and share many a joint undertaking. They are colleagues and family. In fact, they are mother and daughter. In honour of Mother's Day, **LILLA FOURIE** asked them about their very special relationship. Photos Henco Schoeman

"It is not a question of me following blindly in my mother's footsteps," Karin is quick to explain. "On the contrary, I considered a career as a medical doctor, enrolled as a law student, and only then found that I was fascinated by Psychology and Philosophy rather

than law-related subjects. I changed to a degree in Psychology and have never looked back. I love what I do, and I love the fact that my mother and I can share a professional relationship."

Hanneljie started off as a dietician but found she had a need to understand

why people had eating disorders but that she lacked the know-how to motivate her patients to eat healthily. A knowledge of psychology helped her enormously.

"Best of all, as a psychologist in private practice I could work from home

and be with my children. The same concern made this career so attractive to Karin, for both of us put our family and children first," says Hanneltjie.

Spending quality time with your children, talking to them, respecting their individuality, teaching them respect for others, teaching them that boundaries are important, supporting them unreservedly, and making them feel special are values that Hanneltjie and Karin passionately share. They also believe that families should celebrate milestones, be it with a speech, a gift, a special ritual and of course with a cake.

Baking and decorating cakes are one of the mother/daughter's favourites among many shared interests. They laugh when they reminisce about the countless children's birthday specials they had to design and deliver - involving anything from angry birds, fairies and great white sharks to zombies - and then of course those romantic cakes for engagement and wedding celebrations, baby showers, christenings, and many more.

They have "forever" been sharing other artistic activities like mosaic and garden design and while Hanneltjie is the one who started painting at the age of 50, Karin is "not painting yet" but is an accomplished photographer.

Their work methods often differ, but they accommodate each other. "I am focused when I work and can ignore the chaos or dust around me while I concentrate on the project at hand. Not so Karin. Everything has to be clean and orderly around her before she can start working; the ambiance has to be perfect, and there should be

background music and aromatherapy candles," Hanneltjie smiles.

Doing things together

gives them all-important time to talk. Talking has been a valued part of their relationship ever since she can remember, says Karin. They make time for it. They plan long walks, they plan outings, activities, professional meetings, lunches, teas, holidays so that they may have the opportunity to talk - about life, food, work, relationships, children ...

"The arrival of my grandchildren created even more opportunities to talk, to share, to interact, to be involved," says Hanneltjie.

According to Karin, Hanneltjie was an involved grandparent even before the children were born and by the time her children arrived she knew that her mother was with her all the way - apart from the freezer being stocked to capacity and the house looking like a baby warehouse!

"My mother was supportive in every way. She shared her knowledge of parenting without ever criticising. She was ready with advice provided I asked for it and always gave positive feedback about what I did right.

When the children were older she even revamped her garden to accommodate them, creating a wonderland of wood with wind chimes, fairies, edible berries and nuts. I cannot imagine raising my children without their grandmother!" says Karin.

For quite a few years they had both their consulting rooms in the grandparents' house. They planned their therapy sessions in such a way



Hanneltjie with her daughter Karin and three of her six grandchildren

that one of them was available to look after the children when the other was in consultation.

Planning is crucial to their lives. If you plan you are prepared, and that not only goes for opportunities to talk but also for important events like marriage, child birth, a new job, retirement, death.

Helping other people to plan ahead is part of their professional lives. Karin is a hypnobirthing practitioner and a mindfulness trainer (among other things) and has a special interest in fertility, pregnancy, postnatal depression, and conscious parenting. She also has experience in entrepreneurship, career assessment, and marriage counselling. As such, she works mainly with younger people.

Complementing Karin's field of professional interest as well as her clientele, Hanneltjie is committed to positive psychology and particularly positive ageing. She consults with many older people and looks at preventive nutrition, stress and burnout prevention, eating disorders and spiritual living. She is also a hypnotherapist and has studied reiki, esoteric healing, kinesiology and transactional analysis. Both are popular public speakers and regularly appear on radio and television.

However, most important in their lives is giving and expressing unconditional love for each other and their families. ■



Hanneltjie and Karin love baking and decorating cakes for special occasions