

### *My message to women*

**Femininity is magic.** Believe in yourself. Build your self-esteem. Be all that you can be. It is wonderful to be a woman.

My admiration for women comes from knowing my mother. She was my role model, a beautiful, intelligent and courageous woman. She was also a singer and a true entrepreneur. Today, she is 75 years old and she will always be beautiful, energetic and full of life. Her beauty reflects the love she constantly gives, free of charge to those around her.

I was a very spirited and curious child, always wanting to know everything and go everywhere. I was open and confident, strong and yet sensible. I was sure that if you wanted something badly enough, it would happen.

When I was six years old, however, I learned that life is not always so simple. It was my first brush with injustice. My brother was a Boy Scout and I used to go with him to the meetings. It was exciting to be an 'honorary' Boy Scout and be able to join in the activities. Then one day, the new Scout leader told me that I could no longer participate because I was a girl. What a shock! I was good at the activities and had just received a special new knife to help with the 'survival' endeavors. But, none of that mattered to the new leader. I was out of the group and his decision was final.

Even today at 54, when I see injustice of any sort, my blood boils as it did when I was that little girl being turned away by the Scout leader. Perhaps this is why I am a non-conformist and have a rebellious nature. This incident helped shape my ardent commitment to the notion that women should be treated the same as men.

What I felt in those days was frustration at not being allowed to do what I wanted simply because I was a girl. I felt completely helpless. Even my parents could do nothing to change the situation. As a result I looked for "sisters" with the same passion in life. I began to follow the lives of women, first in my family and then in our small town, always listening to their experiences with interest and often admiration. I voraciously devoured books about strong women. I had an over-riding need to express my energy and my creativity. Even in school, I needed to defend the status of justice and women. One of my teachers used to call me "Don Quixote" because I was always defending one cause or another. True to my ideals, I corrected her by saying that I was indeed "Donna Quixote".

I was 7 years old when my father passed away. He was only 32. My mother was 28. It was an accident, and he never was able to say "goodbye". Even at that age, I knew he was proud of me. To live up to his expectations, I was determined to be a very reliable daughter and sister. By the time I had finished mandatory education at the age of 15, I left school to work in my mother's small shop. As the oldest of five children, I also wanted my sisters to have the opportunity to do what they dreamed of in life. My dreams were temporarily put on hold and I admit feeling somewhat discouraged. I had thought that I might become a doctor or an artist, or even a lawyer or a sculptor. There were so many possibilities...

We lived in a delightful small town in Switzerland that placed its origins in the Middle Ages. I loved it there. My mother's boutique was filled with jewelry, china and crystal. I undertook my job with a great deal of responsibility. This is where I learned how to run a business and to realize that it is a 7-day, 24-hour a day affair. The hours were long and the work was hard, but we found time for a certain *joie de vivre*. Whenever there was a seemingly insurmountable problem, my mother would always say, "Don't worry, we will find a solution." And, we always did. My self-confidence increased. I learned how to deal with clients and suppliers. I was in charge.

At 22, I fell in love and married. First came a son, then a daughter. With my husband's blessing, I decided to go back to school. I taught myself English and German and then, juggling textbooks and diapers, I studied at home to get my secondary degree so that I could attend the university. At first, I wanted to be a doctor, but with two small children, very little money and no help at home, that dream evaporated. My second passion was art so I studied sculpture, painting, art and art history. I quickly learned that the arts were dominated by men. Where were the women? I did find a few, such as Camille Claudel and ...

Still, things began to change for women. More and more talented, creative and courageous women were making names for themselves in all walks of life, all over the world. I knew that someday I would find a way to join this movement.

Whatever the century, whatever the country, whatever the culture, whatever the color of their skin, the main concerns of women are Life and Harmony, which come from peace and spirituality. Ancient Greek women used to go on strike to stop wars. What an effective and simple idea! Today, women all over the world demonstrate for Peace. As Charlotte Wolff (1904-1986) stated, "Women have always been the guardians of wisdom and humanity, which makes them natural but usually secret rulers. The time has come for them to rule openly, but together with and not against men."

When my own daughter was 7 years old, she announced to us that she wanted to be a ballet dancer. Beautiful, talented, mature and confident, she was, even at that tender age, ready to do what it took to succeed in her goal. Her passion at enchanted me. When I suggested that this was a difficult career, she answered, "If you can dream it, you can do it". I knew that the life of a dancer was one of sacrifice and very hard work, but I wanted to help my gifted young child reach her goal. Private dance lessons and all that goes with pursuing this dream were very expensive and I realized that it would not be long before the expenses would be more than we could afford. So, at the age of 32, I went back to school to get a degree that would provide more income than what I was earning with my art and sculpture. At the end of four more years, I was the first woman in Switzerland to earn an engineering degree in computer science.

After my daughter joined the Ballet Conservatory at the Paris Opera, she said that she appreciated the way that I had sacrificed my career for her and that she sincerely hoped that

one day, I would be able to do what I wanted.” I was very touched by this... as I was when my son presented me with a Mother Day’s day card that read, “Mom, I love you because you have made me, and you have made me very well!” It was clear that he was a young man with a healthy dose of self-esteem.

With the children on their way to becoming established in their careers, I now had time to pursue a career for myself. I began working for the Swatch Group, responsible for introducing the children’s Flik-Flak watch. Being in this industry and meeting many people, I realized that my destiny was calling. I wanted to create a watch for women, a watch that would express our shared values that would represent **life, harmony and spirituality**. I wanted to create a symbol for the excellence femininity in all fields. I started my own business and the result was the culmination of all my aspirations. It was the **DELANCE** watch, a timely piece of art representing the hopes and dreams of women. It is a jewel filled with energy, love, and spirituality. It is a kind of **TALISWOMAN**, if you will, to remind women everywhere that it is wonderful to be alive and to be a woman!

The road from inspiration to design to reality was not easy. I had to overcome many obstacles, meet many challenges and endure many hardships. During all this, I realized that there is no limit to creativity, no limit to what you can accomplish if you set your heart and mind to it.

As a measure of “Time”, the **DELANCE** watch is universal. It can be appreciated by women from all countries because it speaks the universal language of Time. It can be interpreted in all cultures as a symbol of femininity, life, harmony and spirituality. Sculpted in the form of a diamond, it is unlike any other timepiece in the world. It is provocative and evokes energy. It is recognized as a symbol of femininity the world of over.

Through **DELANCE**, I am able to express the harmony that I feel with myself and with others, the equilibrium between north and south, water and fire, masculine and feminine. The spiral at 12 o’clock represents north, water and femininity. The stone at 6 o’clock symbolizes south, sun and masculinity.

The endless curves of infinity unite men and women in eternal harmony.

The handcrafted **DELANCE** timepiece is generous, voluptuous, strong and soft, discreet and provocative, classic and modern. It is for all women...

When you look at a **DELANCE**, you can feel its creative energy. It is a constant reminder that you can achieve what you want in life. When people offer a **DELANCE**, they are telling their loved ones that they recognize her power, strength and femininity. They are affirming their confidence in her that she can be all that she desires to be.

To express the excellence of womanhood, only the most perfect materials and highest quality components have been used to create our timepieces. Made by women for women, the **DELANCE** features an 18K gold or stainless steel case,

sapphire crystal, shock resistance, water-resistance and a two-year guarantee.

Another unique advantage of **DELANCE** is that its wearer can customize it as she wishes. She can select the cabochon stones, bracelets and interchange them at will to match any outfit or any mood. She can have her watch set with diamonds or other precious stones. As an example, the **DELANCE** that I created for my mother is set with the birthstones of her children and grandchildren next to the times of their births. This type of watch is unique for each mother. Another example is the “Sweet Sixteen” model that is made with 16 high quality diamonds. There is a **DELANCE** for each of life’s important moments... wedding, birth of her children, anniversary, Valentine’s Day, or simply the occasion to tell someone that you love her.

The name **DELANCE** is taken from the name of my father. It also pays homage to his confidence and love for me. And, speaking of fathers, I would like to say to you that being a father is very important. It is crucial for you to show the love and respect your children need and to instill in them the necessary self-confidence. Their very future depends on it.

**DELANCE** is for all mothers and all daughters.

**DELANCE** is for all sisters.

**DELANCE** is for the woman who defines the world in her own terms.

**DELANCE** is an icon for all women to remind them that together they can make the world a better place.

**DELANCE** exists for all those who believe in harmony.

### *The empowerment of another woman is a reciprocal gift*

Recently, I was invited to Moscow to be one of the principal judges for “The premier award for women in jewelry art” competition that was created by a young reporter who felt that the world should recognize the contributions made by women from around the world in the field of jewelry. The winner was Ilina Rybkina, a jeweler who makes rings that express the Russian soul in a contemporary way. The award certainly fit the occasion. We are proud to announce that it was a **DELANCE** watch. Ilina was delighted with her prize and we shared her strong emotions as she indicated that the most important thing for her was to be finally officially recognized as an artist.

Each year, **DELANCE** gives an award to a woman who has made an outstanding contribution in the field of arts and crafts. In 1996, this honor went to Abab Farhan, a traditional weaver of Kuwait.

I believe that women need recognition. They also need role models. They need esteem as much as love. And, very importantly, women need empowerment. My dream is for **DELANCE** to become the sign of recognition for all women who want to make the world a better place, a lovely place by creating beauty and promoting harmony. *Giselle Rufer*