

Afterglow Skin & Laser Centre

When Shehla Ebrahim immigrated to Canada from Pakistan in 1986 she faced many hurdles on the path to achieving her dreams. However, the ups and downs she experienced did not keep her from having a vision for her future and faith that anything was possible. It was this faith that drove her forward to become the reputable doctor and entrepreneur that she is today.

More than fifteen years ago Ebrahim achieved what she thought was the impossible; she successfully attained a very competitive internship at St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver and upon completing it, set up a private medical practice in North Vancouver. She has since developed a reputation for excellence in her community.

Despite her accomplishments in the medical field, Ebrahim had an even greater life goal in mind: to dedicate herself to humanitarian work. In 2002 she decided that in order to make this dream come true, she needed the flexibility that being an established entrepreneur offers.

"For me to be in control of my own destiny and to be able to travel and do humanitarian work, I needed to break away from my emotional attachments to my old job and old self. The only way to do this was to start my own business," acknowledges Ebrahim.

Not that becoming an entrepreneur was an easy decision for her, "There was definitely a distinct fear of failure! Starting my own business seemed like such a daunting task at the time, but deep down inside I believed in myself and knew that I could do it."

In 2002 Ebrahim opened the doors to Afterglow Skin & Laser Centre; a physician supervised clinic that offers a variety of services, including Botox, soft tissue fillers, laser rejuvenation microdermabrasion, chemical peels and laser skin resurfacing. With a great desire to learn everything she could about business, Ebrahim turned to the Women's Enterprise Centre.

"It was really Women's Enterprise that helped me get my business off the ground. I spoke one-to-one with someone who went through business planning information and market research with me," says Ebrahim. "I've taken their Focused Marketing course, which was also extremely beneficial. I really owe a lot of gratitude and thanks to Women's Enterprise Centre."

Now completing her third year in business, Ebrahim is already developing an expansion plan. "I'm excited about offering medical spa services to the male market. A lot of men feel a bit shy about coming into Afterglow because it's so feminine. I plan to take over more space and make it more gender neutral."

Being trained in both Western and Eastern medicine allows Ebrahim to bring two very different concepts of health and wellness together as one in at Afterglow. With her expansion, she also wants to focus on mental wellbeing as well as physical by bringing in counseling services for her clients.

With her business well underway, Ebrahim has had time to start on her other passion; giving back to others. Two years ago she climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro to raise \$50,000 for the Children's Hospital. She has also traveled to Tibet with a non-profit organization to provide free medical services to the nomads of Eastern Tibet. In the next two years she plans to take on Mt. Everest, also for charity.

Of everything that she has learned in life, and there have been many lessons, Ebrahim has one that stands out as most important above all others: "Don't be afraid to dream big as long as you have the right intentions and the right attitude. Treat your relationships as gifts and have humility in leadership."

Women's Enterprise Centre is the go-to place for BC women business owners for business loans, skills training, business advisory services, resources, publications and referrals. Call us at 1.800.643.7014 or email info@womensenterprise.ca from anywhere in BC.