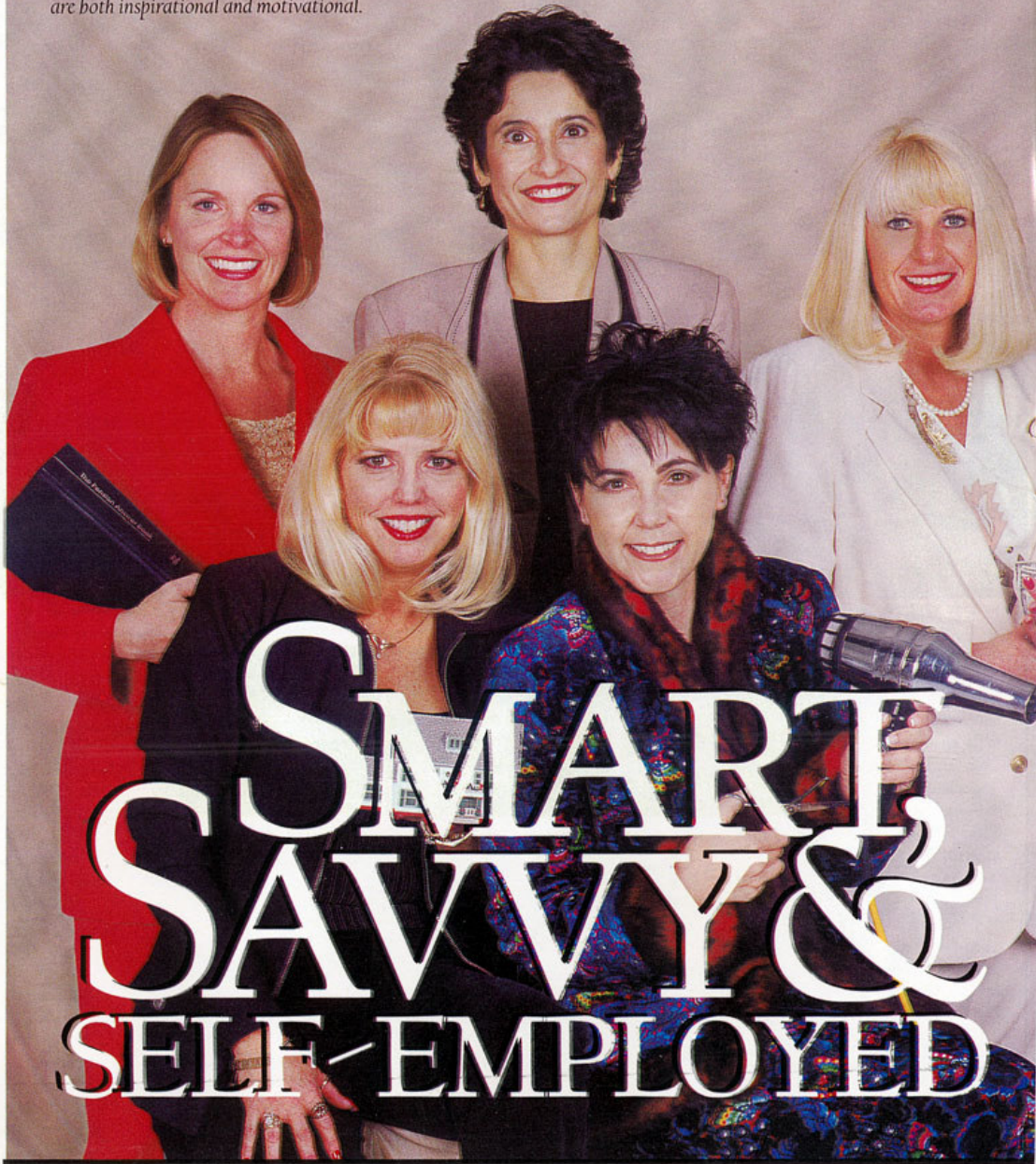


More and more women are joining the ranks of the self-employed. Why do they do it? What does it take? Despite the obstacles many successful women encounter along the way, every one of them say it was worth it— and that they'd never go back! Featured in this issue are five unique and talented women who each have a different story of success. Where they got their support, their determination and the guts to branch off on their own is as unique as the women themselves. Their stories are both inspirational and motivational.



Goesel Anson, M.D., F.A.C.S.

"I started out as an anthropology major in college," says Dr. Goesel Anson. "I went on to medical school because I was interested in human evolution and environmental medicine - how we adapt on a cultural, rather than evolutionary basis."

Some may consider cosmetic surgery as one of our modern-day adaptations to our culture - how we perceive ourselves and how we're perceived by society.

"Plastic surgery is very interesting," says Dr. Anson. "It's almost always an elective surgery, and it's done as a way of improving quality of life. Cosmetic surgery is becoming more and more accepted."

Dr. Anson herself is quite philosophical about her craft. Well respected for her exceptional technique, Dr. Anson refuses to compare herself to her competitors and is very matter-of-fact with her patients. "This is a very personal, intimate surgery, and I feel it's an art," says Dr. Anson, remembering her Austrian grandmother who would help a 5-year-old Goesel learn embroidery stitches. "There's a physical connection to the work being performed."

Dr. Anson attributes the rise in the cosmetic surgery trade to a youth-oriented culture. "Let's face it, none of us want to really go back to being 18, but in many ways we're products of our culture," says Dr. Anson. "We want our reflection in the mirror to match how we feel inside. As far as I'm concerned, that's the only reason to have plastic surgery - for yourself." Dr. Anson has turned away prospective patients after sensing they were asking for surgery for the wrong reason. "This is surgery. Don't do it because someone else thinks you should look different," advises Dr. Anson.

Taking a personal hands-on approach with all of her patients, Dr. Anson somehow manages to make people very comfortable while asking questions and analyzing options. "If it's important to you, it's important to you... it's not a question of vanity," says Dr. Anson. "I first find out what the person is trying to accomplish. We discuss what is and is not a realistic expectation and we try to find something that will work into the patient's life."

Dr. Anson herself had to take a realistic look at running a business when she opened her solo practice. Certainly not new to the field (Dr. Anson is board certified in both plastic surgery and general surgery, received her cosmetic surgery training at the prestigious New York University and served as an assistant professor at the University of

New Mexico, where she trained other plastic surgeons). "I never had to look at the business side of medicine before," explains Dr. Anson. "The reality is, there are employees to take care of, an office to run, bills to pay... And yet it's a wonderful thing. I'm glad I did it. Now I answer to no one and I can make sure my patients will always be my number one priority."

Like many other women business owners, Dr. Anson appreciates the opportunity she now has to arrange her schedule as she sees fit, which means more time with her 3-year-old daughter. "I've learned the reality is that you can blend work with home," explains Dr. Anson. "That realization has helped me in dealing with my employees too - I understand the need to be flexible and to look for ways of making all aspects of life work."

In a competitive industry, Dr. Anson is indeed finding ways to be flexible and open to meet all the possible needs of her patients. Facial rejuvenation, body contouring, liposuction and breast surgery are some of the more requested types of cosmetic surgery. Dr. Anson also performs the new mid-facelift. Dr. Anson's office is expanding to offer in-office skin care. "We provide the full range of cosmetic surgery services, including collagen, dermalogen and botox. I think it's important for people to not be intimidated by the scope of what is often perceived by the term 'plastic surgery,'" explains Dr. Anson. "It's important to help people understand what is possible. It's not a matter of walking out of the office looking like an entirely different person, but in coming up with something that's going to make you feel better about yourself." ■



Light Images by Susan Gomez