



# Karen Lederman

Karen Lederman is the passionate and knowledgeable founder of Laser Skin & Wellness in Palm Beach Gardens and Lake Worth. Although she considers herself a businesswoman first, Lederman is a realistic but passionate cheerleader for women taking charge of their aging and wellness strategy, and in turn, becoming their best version of themselves.

A former gemologist who designed high-end jewelry, Lederman appreciates (much like the gems she has styled and appraised), the inner value of women and what confidence can add to outer beauty. She shares about her business journey and her pride in her work, helping women with everything from skin care, to weight loss to stress management and health. More about her business can be found at [LaserSkinSolutions.com](http://LaserSkinSolutions.com).

## **WHEN DID YOU COME TO FLORIDA AND WHAT LED YOU HERE?**

I was born in New Jersey but moved to Columbus, Ohio when I was one year old. I grew up in the Midwest and graduated from The Ohio State University with a BFA in jewelry and metalsmithing. I left there to attend gemology school in New York City. I graduated from the Gemological Institute of America. I had initially planned to work there for a while. But the weather was tough. I loved New York City from June to December, but from January to June, the weather was miserable. We worked in the dark. I left for the office in the dark, worked in the dark, came home and it was dark. After six months, I didn't realize I was depressed but I was. I think I had light deprivation. My parents lived in Sarasota, but I knew I wanted to live in a big city. I had a cousin who lived in Miami, so I moved there. As soon as I got to Florida, in the summer of 1988, I was fine again. I just needed to get out of the cold, dreary weather.

## **WHAT SOLIDIFIED YOUR CHOICE TO STAY?**

I first worked for a jewelry designer in Boca. And I met my husband here. He's an OB/GYN. We later got married and lived in West Palm Beach. We've been in the same house for 25 years. We have two grown daughters in college. I love it here. It was a great fit.

What was the thing that led you to leaving your first profession and becoming a business owner?

When I was in the jewelry business, it was fun. I knew what I was doing. I knew how to sell and loved the whole marketing side of it. But I didn't love what I did. I went to work every day but I didn't feel like I was in the right place. Around that time, I had tried laser hair removal once. I came home and said to my husband, 'we have to do this. This is the greatest thing!' I said 'all of your patents will want this. You can actually remove hair permanently!' So we bought the laser and that is how we started. I did the marketing of the business, and very quickly we grew out of his office and moved next door. And I began with this full-time. Every year, we'd add a

new service – veins, IPL for sun damage, dermal fillers and Botox. We got into the laser business very early on. In 2003, the company we purchased our laser from said you've got a good business. Can you help other practices to set up their own esthetic business? And so I traveled and consulted for a while. This is our 20th anniversary. We've got two locations. It's super exciting. I came out of this knowing -- this is my calling. I definitely feel like I have this entrepreneurship ability. I like the idea of owning my own company. I'm lucky enough that I had a husband who believed in me and supported me and gave me the ability to start this.

#### **HOW DID YOU COME TO CREATE YOUR BUSINESS MODEL AND TO OFFER SO MANY SERVICES?**

My husband's business partner, Dr. Gloria Hakkarainen, also had a wellness practice that included weight loss and hormone replacement therapy. So we just expanded on that. And now we do everything, from esthetics, to hair removal, to injectables, IV therapy, stem cell treatments. People say that we are a one-stop shop. We've been able to merge so many things beautifully. If you think about it like this, everyone needs an OB-GYN. But not everyone has a dermatologist or plastic surgeon. We have such synergy between our offices. It's just become an incredible space where you can get just about anything done that a woman might need or want. About 15 percent of our patients are men. We have two centers, one in Lake Worth (where there is a research center) and another in Palm Beach Gardens.

#### **WHAT HAS BEEN THE FEEDBACK FROM YOUR CUSTOMERS?**

There is this synergy between the practice that we kind of refer within. And I think patients are just really happy to have found that – they love it. It's kind of like a concierge practice where we really do everything for them. We try to have the best pricing all year round. We always have specials but I always put myself in the patient's position. I can afford the procedures, but would the result be of value? We try to ensure that our patients are educated with the results being equal to the prices they paid. We have a Beauty Club. A monthly fee with two plans -- \$200 or

\$360 – and if they join, they get one procedure each month and they also get 10 percent off all services. We must have 40 or 50 people in our Beauty Club who have found it's a great way to get your beauty maintenance at deeply discounted prices.

#### **TO WHAT DO YOU ATTRIBUTE YOUR SUCCESS?**

I work really hard. A lot of hours. When I'm on vacation, I often spent a couple of hours each day working. I am determined. I remember when I was first starting the business. I was struggling. My husband was like you can just close it. You don't have to do this. I said to him that failure is not an option. And now, 20 years later, it's still in business, it's still happening. Besides my children and my marriage, it's my best accomplishment, that I have this business still thriving. We try to be good people and take good care of our staff. I definitely feel much more fulfilled in this business than I ever did in the jewelry business. I love going to work every day. I love the patients and I love the employees. I also work right next door to my husband.

#### **ANY LIFE HACKS YOU'D SHARE?**

Take more vacations. Spend more time with people you love. I'm very close with my girls, who are both off to college. After they left, my husband and I, we've gotten into this new rhythm of being together again like before we had kids. I think also my mantra would be to try to have less stress in your life. To manage that. In our life, we love to travel. We love to spend as much time with our girls as possible. And we try not to worry too much about everything else. We are very fortunate in that all of our parents are living. All four in their 80s. We love to spend time with family.

**WHAT GUIDANCE WOULD YOU GIVE TO PEOPLE WHO ARE NEW TO YOUR PRACTICE OR WHO MIGHT BE CONSIDERING YOUR SERVICES?**

I encourage baby steps. See what works. That's why our Beauty Club is so great. They can get treatments that will stimulate collagen and make them feel better. It's a start. It's not Botox or fillers. Whenever it's an injectable, people get nervous about taking the plunge. That's why I think people should get to know a place and to like it. We offer a free consultation. I say 'come in for a visit. Talk with us. Trust us and let us educate you on what the options are.' Then make a decision. High pressure sales are the worst. If you know and trust the employees, you feel like you are hanging out with friends. Your friends are not going to steer you wrong. That is the feeling we try to give our patients. No pressure, come in, get to know us, you make the decision that is right and comfortable for you.

**WHAT WOULD YOU TELL WOMEN ABOUT LIFE, WELLNESS AND BEAUTY?**

Look for some balance. I have tried to create a life where I could work, but I could be at my kids' events and build a business at the same time. I hope more people can do that. For me it was important. I feel like this business was my baby. I grew this thing. People have to have a leap of faith, you know, to try. I think we all want strength and determination. Half of beauty is confidence. You can take someone who is not beautiful conventionally, but they radiate that strength and ultimately, their real beauty comes from the inside. You see that. I think a few minor changes, doing things that make you feel good about yourself, can give you confidence. And confidence is key. Confidence is more than 50 percent of the way there – to beauty. That's half the battle. I want that for all women. To feel that good about themselves, inside and out.