

# JANINE DELANEY

## Fitness Guru On Empowerment And Priorities

BY BROOKE ALLEN



Physical exercise affects fitness enthusiast Janine Delaney's mentality so much that it can completely alter her mood. Exercise is "like meditation" to her. She said, "The one consistency in life that I've always had was physical fitness, and I could be in the worst mood — very stressed out — and I go to the gym, or I work out at home, and within that one to two hours, I'm a different person."

Delaney endures a constant motion of working a full-time job, raising a family, keeping a healthy marriage, exercising daily and managing 1.9 million followers on Instagram.

Delaney, "The Jump Rope Queen," is a 49-year-old fitness guru, psychologist and mother of two daughters. She is also a former professional ballerina and two-time National Physique Committee Figure Champion.

She first dove into social media two years ago and quickly grew a following with her inspiring fitness videos. With her energetic personality and inclusive advice, she became a role model for over a million people.

Delaney has many passions but providing others with proper exercise and nutrition information is one of her most important passions. She even personally responds to the comments and messages she receives. "I actually know a lot of people that have a large following, [but] they don't manage their pages — they have someone they hire who will. And I wouldn't do that. I actually go through even my direct messages, and I will respond to people because that's why I'm doing this— it's enjoyable to me."

Although she frequently gives advice to the people she interacts with on her social media, sometimes those followers even have tips and advice for her. She always remains open to new ideas when it comes to body and mind health. She said, "I never profess to be an expert — I try to learn from other people. Sometimes people have tips or advice [for me] and I just look at it like I'm like everybody else, and we're just a bunch of people who are trying to get to life and be as healthy as possible. So, I just I look at myself as [my followers] friend and we communicate and help each other out."

Before her 1.9 million followers, she didn't even have a Facebook page. She described herself as a very private person before her following. She said, "I didn't want anyone to know where I was going to eat or what I was doing, where I was stationed or [anything]."

As a private person, she never thought she would enjoy being so involved in the public's eye. She said, "When I got married, I didn't want to walk down the aisle in a white dress because I didn't want the attention on me — it was very embarrassing to me. I did a meetup last weekend in New York



City with a couple of my sponsors, and they brought people who came to meet with me, and it was so, so rewarding. These [were] people I had never met, but they knew me, they follow me [and] they told me their personal [weight loss] stories. They told me how I helped inspire them, and it's just, when you're having a bad day, and you get a message from somebody and they tell you you've made a difference, no matter how big or how small in their life, you just know you're doing the right thing."

Now that she is so involved with so many weight loss journeys, the stories she hears motivates her to keep her Instagram page alive and well. "Recently I've been getting so many transformational messages from people who have lost a significant amount of weight — men and women — and they find me, and because I guess of my age, and the fact that I'm a career mom, and I'm not like the typical fitness expert, I have all these other things they really relate to, and it makes everything so rewarding," Delaney said.

With a lack of time on her plate, she often has to "unplug" her life to find time with her family. "I make time to prioritize. So, there's days where my family knows I have to work, and then there's days where we put the phone down, we get away

from the computer and we spend quality time together.”

Balancing her time with her social media family and her immediate family was tough for her. “I’ve definitely learned to kind of create my own little space, especially when it comes to my family. I don’t ever want my family feeling like I’m ignoring them or giving [social media] priority. I do have to turn [the screen] off on occasion.”

An organized schedule is the key to her success with managing her priorities. “So, my advice to anybody who is really juggling multiple priorities is to — number one — make sure that what you have on your plate is what you truly want.

There’s a lot of people who get caught up in things that are really not meaningful to them. So, just take those off your plate — focus on what’s truly important,” she said. “Once you’ve identified what that is, then you do need to have some careful planning in place. You can’t really just wing it all the time because that makes it a little difficult to get everything done, so you do have to be organized and plan fully. And then the second thing is to really make sure that you are giving each area in your life the priority and quality time that it deserves.”

With her immediate family and her social media family, Delaney has a lot of people to keep up with. However, she always finds time to spend with her family because her and her daughters both love to exercise.

When raising her daughters, she “was never very strong handed” when it came to diet and exercise. “I kind of just let them live their life, and then they saw me engaging in certain activities,” Delaney said. “They saw how good it made me feel — how happy it made me, so as they became older, it’s really nice that — on their own — they want to do these things.”

She loves being able to work out with her daughters. “Sometimes my daughters will find certain workouts that they like on YouTube and we’ll try to do them together. And it’s nice that I have that to share now with my kids.”

As a fitness guru, Delaney is always searching for ways to strengthen her body, but as a psychologist, she also seeks ways to strengthen her mentality. Writing is a healing outlet for her. “I love to write. I never thought when I got into the fitness side of social media that it would give me an opportunity to write. So, it’s just it’s been such a godsend now that, aside from being able to share exercises and workouts, I get to contribute to high-quality magazines, and I get to share different topics and different things that are meaningful, and I think that’s one of my favorite parts about this.”

When she first discovered a fascination with the human body, she decided to major in pre-med. However, she found her true passion through her minor in psychology. Through learning psychology, she was fascinated with how the mind “has an impact on your physical well-being.” She said, “So, I switched my major to go into psychology, and that’s kind of been the premise of really my entire career — which is how, mentally, physical fitness [and] taking care of yourself in all aspects just leads you to a healthier lifestyle, longevity, and a better mentality.”

Exercise strongly affects Delaney’s state of mind, especially when she was a child. As a young girl, her father was terminally ill, and she lived in and out of hospitals. But, her father’s state of mind was so positive that he would not even park in a handicapped parking space. His healthy mental health helped Delaney get through the stress of worrying about her father.

“He went to work and showed up every day, and when he when he couldn’t work anymore, he started to paint and entered art shows. So, I saw him as somebody who, despite his physical failings, was able to mentally rise to the occasion,” she said. “And I really believe that is the main reason why I feel that the mind is so powerful. And being able to do ballet as a young girl while I was going through that was my escape. Mentally, it helped me to feel good, to get in my



zone. [It] empowered me to face all the difficult situations.”

While ballet provided her with empowerment during her adolescent years, the advice she gives her two daughters seeks to provide them with empowerment as well. She said, “The last thing I want is for them to think that it’s all about luck, and they have to look perfect. So, what I try to do is, I always focus on the well-being aspect of fitness. We never talked about like, ‘That person is fat,’ or ‘That person is skinny.’ We never focused on words like that. We would just focus on traits that were like, ‘You’re athletic,’ or ‘You’re creative.’ And so, they understood that physical appearance isn’t something that you should give top priority — you should give top priority to what makes you feel good.”

With advice surrounding physical fitness and mental well-being, Delaney’s common, empowering theme is acceptance.

“We’re all unique and we all have really super positive things about us. And we all have — they’re not flaws, per se — but they’re just unique character traits, and that’s what makes us special. I think a lot of people just get insecure because that’s how this world is today — everybody tries to make us feel less than. I feel like the more confident you feel, then the more you’re able to handle criticism.”

