



DAN CRONIN

Executive Director
Center for Natural Wellness
School of Massage Therapy

Success Magazine: How do you define success?

Dan Cronin: I define success as a balance of life. To be able to truly enjoy what you do for a living and to be rewarded enough so you can effortlessly enjoy time with family and friends.

“The school is a very special place. It is so rare to be able to go to work and be surrounded by like minded people.”

SM: When did you become interested in massage therapy?

DC: Three weeks before my wedding I received a massage. At that moment I realized there was something calling me to the profession.

SM: You graduated from Plattsburg State College with a BS in Business Management. Why did you then choose to go to the New Mexico Academy of Healing Arts?

DC: I graduated from Plattsburgh State in 1984 and went to work for my father in his real estate and property management company. I was there for fourteen years when my father was forced to retire due to health issues. I considered taking over the family business, but after talking with my wife, Twiggy, I decided to follow my passion. Once I made this decision, I immediately began looking around the country for a massage therapy program. The massage therapist that I had gone to just before my wedding suggested the New Mexico Academy of Healing Arts in Santa Fe. Everything fell together from there.

SM: How did your past education prepare you for a successful career?

DC: What I consider to be my most valuable education came from working with my father. He worked me hard and paid me little. At the time it bothered me, but today I am very thankful. I understand hard work and what it takes to get a job done. Working in a family business, you are responsible for every job, from providing great customer service to taking out the office trash.

SM: Who is your greatest role model?

DC: I have two- my father, for all he taught me about work and integrity and Dave Evans (owner of Re/Max Premier) who taught me that it's great to work hard but it is more important to have fun after work.

SM: Why was the Center for Natural Wellness School of Massage Therapy something that you believed in?

DC: The school is a very special place. It is so rare to be able to go to work and be surrounded by like minded people. Everyone that works at the school or attends the classes has a strong desire to help others. More often than not, people tell me that when they walk through the door of the school for the first time, they feel something very special... a feeling of peace. I also strongly believe in the benefits of massage therapy. I have seen it change lives- for both the person receiving the massage, and the person giving the massage.



SM: What makes CNWSMT unique?

DC: From a massage school perspective, we only teach massage therapy. There are other schools teaching computer technology,

paralegal studies, health aid, and massage therapy. We only focus on massage. My instructors are massage therapists that have been in the field practicing. From the perspective of a workplace, it is wonderful to be in one place with so many people that desire to help and support others.

SM: What programs do you offer through the school? Are there both full and part time options?

DC: We are a New York State licensing qualifying school. This allows our graduates to sit for the NYS massage therapy licensing exam. We run the same 1020 program in three formats; full-time (Monday through Thursday 9:00am to 4:30pm) morning part-time (Monday through Friday 9:00am to 12:30pm and one Saturday day a month) and evening part-time (Monday, Wednesday and Thursday and one Saturday a month). These options seem to fill the needs of each of our different students.

SM: How long do the programs typically take to complete?

DC: Our full-time program is nine months with vacations every 6-7 weeks, our part-time morning program is fourteen months with vacations every 6-7 weeks and our part-time evening program is twenty-two months with vacations every 6-7 weeks.

SM: Why was this region chosen as the location for your school?

DC: Our research showed that the Capital Region was ready to accept the emerging wellness trends. The closest massage schools were located in New York City and Syracuse. The team I was working with to put the school together (Anthony Joseph, Cindy Moorcroft, Michael Perman and John Pettinato) saw a

lot of pent up demand for massage therapy education. Fortunately we were correct.

SM: Are most of your students right out of high school? Or do you find that many people seek this education as part of a career change?

DC: In 1999 our median age was 34. A career in massage therapy fits many career niches. A majority of our students are second career students. We also have quite a few older students looking for a "retirement career." With the acceptance of massage therapy so wide spread today, we are seeing more and more students coming to massage school instead of traditional college.

SM: How do you ensure that you stay up to date on the most innovative practices?

DC: The basics of massage therapy have not changed for 1000 years, but there is new data showing that massage therapy can help many modern day ailments. Research has shown that massage therapy not only helps sore muscles, but can also be beneficial to patients with Parkinson disease, arthritis, some types of cancer, palliative care, etc... With all of this increasing awareness, the school is continually educating students on the different pathologies and how massage therapy can support patient care.

SM: Do you offer a financial aid package?

DC: The Center for Natural Wellness School of Massage Therapy now offers Title IV Funding. This includes PELL Grants and Stafford Loans to those who qualify. We also have partnered with other lending organizations to assist students with the cost of tuition and books.

SM: Are most of your students local, or do you get people who commute?

DC: My goal was to make our school a destination school like the one I attended in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Currently the majority of our students commute within a

90 mile radius, although in each program we are seeing more students relocating to Albany. Some students are coming from as far away as California.

SM: What are your goals for the school?

DC: My goal for the school is to make it the best it can be. We are always open to new ways to teach the program and support the students. I have amazing people around me; they all have a passion for massage therapy and are continually looking to make the school better.

SM: How has your center changed since you first opened? In what ways have you grown?

DC: When the school was first being designed, I was a part of a team of massage therapists, each bringing the best practices from our individual massage school experiences. The Center for Natural Wellness was a great blend of the three schools. Today, we are stronger as a community and an organization. We have definitely matured and grown.

SM: What have you learned about yourself in the process of starting the CNWSMT?

DC: I grew up in a small family owned business, and learned early that if you are going to run operations you have to wear many hats. Operating the massage school has stretched my abilities in many ways. The biggest lesson I have learned is that you must surround yourself with good people. I do not have all of the answers, and when I am open to input, there are more opportunities for growth.

SM: What advice would you give to someone thinking about joining your program?

DC: Follow your heart. I remember when I told my friends that I was going to massage school. They looked at me like I was crazy. Today massage therapy is far more widely accepted. There are so many more opportunities for massage therapists now (spa work, sports



massage, plastic surgery offices, chiropractic offices, hospitals) and the list goes on.

SM: What do you hope for the future of massage therapy, and where do you see the trends heading?

DC: The future of massage therapy is very bright. Over 11,000 people a day turn 50 years old. With the aging of our population and the continued acceptance of massage therapy by younger people, I see the current trend of 20% of the US population using massage getting greater every year.

Massage Therapy

Training for your new career!

**Full-time and Part-time Classes
Start Fall 2008!**

CENTER FOR NATURAL WELLNESS
SCHOOL OF MASSAGE THERAPY
ALBANY • NY



www.CNWSMT.com
518.489.4026