

Brigitta Toruño and Brigitta White | Modern Women - Metro DC

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It's obvious that they are related. There is something there that is similar, a connection. But they are not the same. Brigitta Toruño and Brigitta White are mother and daughter. Both were born in Northern Virginia yet maintain their diverse cultural backgrounds. And both are business owners. But if your idea of an entrepreneur is a frazzled, multi-tasking and stressed-out individual, you are wrong in both cases. They are successful, no doubt, but both have that enviable calm that comes from being in control while doing what you love.



Mothers and daughters often have special bonds and they are no different. But watching these two in action, you can't help but be awed by the amount of respect and admiration held for one another. "I am constantly amazed by my daughter," remarks mom Brigitta. "She has a unique combination of being incredibly strong-willed at the same time she is compassionate." Daughter Brigitta attributes a similar seemingly contradictory pair of adjectives for her mother, saying "I've always seen my mom as a powerful businesswoman who is so very humble."

Although Northern Virginia has always been home to the two, Toruño's parents came from Ecuador and Argentina and her grandparents are from Russia and Poland. Together with her Nicaraguan husband, she was determined to keep their cultures alive by passing them down to their children. "Growing up in a bilingual and multicultural

household really instilled in me a feeling of comfort and strength, being part of such a large and diverse family,” recalls daughter Brigitta.

the brigitta pair

STRONG WOMEN
STRONG BOND

This diversity led Toruño naturally to her profession. “I can clearly remember interpreting for my parents as they bought our first house,” she says. “I was only 9 years old at the time, but being able to help like that was really important for me.” Today she owns UNO Communications, a translation and interpretation firm offering services in over 70 different languages which she runs with her husband and son. Keeping up with the growth of the organization is a challenge, but a good challenge to have. The organization employs over 100 contractors for its language services, and Brigitta was recently recognized with Honorable Mention in the Enterprising Women of the Year awards for 2011.

The pair feels that business ownership is simply in their blood. Mom Brigitta was inspired by her aunt, who in the 1950s, opened her own automotive business in Argentina, a very rare thing for a woman to do in those days. Daughter Brigitta credits her mother, explaining, “Growing up, she told me over and over to reach for the stars.”

find something you love to do

Daughter Brigitta White runs WholeMe! Programs, an organization that focuses on the social- emotional development of young children through yoga and creative movement. She explains, “Academic and physical development are often measured as a child grows, but social and emotional development are just as important. The best way to nurture these needs is by getting children moving; helping them relate to themselves and

others.” This is not your average yoga class. As both a master's educated dance movement therapist and children's yoga teacher, White works to support healthy development in all kids. From infants in neonatal intensive care to children with special needs to personalized family classes, she feels that getting all children to move and find balance in their bodies is key. And despite the challenging nature of her work, Brigitta feels that she too has found her calling.

With hectic schedules, both women take time out for reading and meditation as a way to relax and become centered. The spiritual aspect seems equally important to the two, allowing them the opportunity to find peace, as well as the strength and focus necessary for busy entrepreneurs. They live in different counties, but family get-togethers are still an essential part not only of winding down, but also of gathering energy and support.

Their advice for other women starting their own businesses: find something you love doing, cultivate the inner strength and consciousness to get you through the entrepreneurial ups and downs and above all else, reach for the stars. And it always helps to have someone there holding the ladder.

***AIMEE TAYLOR** runs Market Alignment, a marketing agency for small businesses. Born in Alexandria, she has lived in both Russia and England but once again calls Northern Virginia home. She resides in Ashburn with her husband and daughter.*

aimee.taylor@marketalignment.com.

