

From The Stage To Teaching Stress Management: Deborah Gilboa Is A Media Voice In The Medical Profession

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Dr. Deborah Gilboa (aka "Dr. G") uses the media to teach how to handle stress and build resilience skills.

Askdoctorg.com

Naturally, content of a health-themed nature has a mass appeal audience on-air, in print and now online and across the board on social media. It has since the beginning of television, when audiences morphed from listening to broadcasters speak on radio about a variety of health topics (many in conjunction with the American Health Association), to watching on-air via the news and other informative entries. Think NBC's *Today* show and the other morning, daytime and eventual primetime, and syndicated news magazines and specials.

Now, in this era of COVID-19, health authorities continue to entrust the media with essential health information, which is then relayed to the public through a variety of these media outlets.

Of course, the medical field has been a mainstay from the early days of television as well in the form of scripted dramas (and, quite often, comedies), first peaking care of that kindly doctor who made house calls, Robert Young in ABC's *Marcus Welby, M.D.*, to NBC's *ER*, and the countless others before, in between, and after. The popularity of this style of TV series raised the usage of the format to deliver public health education to the American people.

"There remains an insatiable appetite, particularly now after COVID-19 surfaced, to be educated, informed, and be well prepared to handle any health crisis or mental challenge in the future," noted Robert Russo, President and CEO of RNR Media Consulting. "And much of what needs to be addressed in the medical world at present is the stress and tension of living through a pandemic. Physically and mentally, it has taken its toll."

Enter Deborah Gilboa as "Dr. G"

Deborah Gilboa ("Dr. G") is a frequent guest on NBC's "Today" show, among other informative-themed programs.

Amy Prenner

Do stress better. Be resilient. These words define the work of renowned youth development authority and family expert Deborah Gilboa, who as a drama major at Carnegie Mellon segued from an early career in stage management (and a brief run as a performer on stage, including in *Gilligan's Island: The Musical* and in the Second City improv group) to a media personality fondly known as "Dr. G." As a practicing physician; a resilience, parenting and youth development expert; an author; and a frequent on-air personality, Dr. G works with individuals, organizations, and businesses to identify the mindset and strategies to transform stress into a tool that builds mental health. And her road to this path was a bit unorthodox.

"After I graduated college, I became a stage manager at the Santa Monica Playhouse, and eventually an assistant stage manager at Marlee Matlin's theater company," noted Deborah Gilboa, who considers her latter experience a glimpse into her future path working alongside the deaf and hard of hearing community. "It opened my eyes for what it was like for someone who is deaf to navigate the world, and it only magnified my desire to want to help people and work with them."

"Moving forward, I became a stage manager at Second City, which I thought I could do for a couple of years. But what was next was my concern," she noted. "I had been a volunteer EMT when I was finishing college, so I called a couple of friends who were paramedics. When one of those people suggested I become a doctor instead of an EMT, I decided to forge ahead when I found out all I needed was a bachelor's degree to get into medical school. After taking one year of science requirements, I moved back to Pittsburgh and went to the University of Pittsburgh, where I honed my skills in sign language."

Working her way through medical school as an ASL interpreter and spending time in the emergency room, Gilboa shifted from her initial goal of being an emergency medicine doctor to preventative healthcare. "I realized I want to be a family doctor. I could see kids and adults, men and women, and I could do in-hospital and house calls," she said. "I incorporated my knowledge of sign language into it. And I began to do some speaking in the medical world after my residency and while I was working at a federally qualified health center."

"What I learned at the time was that most doctors were not necessarily good public speakers," noted Dr. G. "But I really felt comfortable doing it."

Flash to the present and Deborah Gilboa as Dr. G. remains a fixture on TV entries like the *Today* show, *Good Morning America*, *The View*, *The Doctors* and *Rachael Ray*; at her website askdoctor.com; and in print (in outlets like *Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *Huffington Post*, among others), teaching the masses on how to use stress to your advantage. Her recent book, *From Stressed to Resilient: The Guide to Handle More Stress and Feel it Less*, debunks the myth that the secret to managing stress is avoiding it.

Deborah Gilboa (aka "Dr. G") has been a regular guest over the years on health-themed daytime talker "The Doctors."

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"Stress comes from any situation where we experience change or discomfort or growth," explained Dr. G. "Change brings stress and every day brings change. But when you know how to build resilience you can handle anything with energy and confidence. Stress is a tool, and not a toxic, and it is to resilience as exercise is to body fitness. We exercise; we stress out bodies to strengthen them. Using that analogy, if you want to become more resilient in your mental health, someone who can overcome challenges or struggle or difficulty, you have to practice and strengthen those skills and those muscles."

"We don't just have to wait for hard things to happen to us, or our loved ones," she added. "We can build our resilience and mental health on purpose just like we build our physical fitness on purpose through exercise."

Stress is not only survivable, it can be the tool that gets you exactly what you want from life, in a life you actually want, according to this latest book by Dr. Deborah Gilboa.

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How to Harness the Power of Stress to Help Make People More Open to Change

Stress, of course, is something we all have to handle at some point and to some degree in all of our lives. You can't avoid it. In fact, according to the ranking of the 26 top topics in healthcare marketing by content intelligence platform Ceralytics in 2018, stress ranked ninth

overall. And that was pre-COVID-19, which is all the more reason to keep Deborah Gilboa as Dr. G. particularly busy.

“Using stressors intentionally, with coaching, support, sleep and/or nutrition and hydration that matches your priorities and feeds your goals and your priorities can be beneficial. The stresses you can’t avoid – a health diagnosis or being audited the IRS, for example – can be managed by using the eight skill sets I teach to build resilience. They are 1) managing discomfort; 2) building connections; 3) setting boundaries; 4) opening to different possibilities; 5) setting goals; 6) identifying options; 7) taking action; and 8) persevering.

“All change brings stress and every day brings change. It is a fact of life,” noted Dr. G. “But when you learn how to build resilience, and you recognize that stress can actually lead to a positive outcome, you can tackle anything that comes your way successfully.”

Given the recent departure of veteran medical-themed syndicated daytime talk show *Dr. Oz*, hosted by Dr. Mehmet Oz, and the pending exit of *The Doctors* (not to mention of rash of other soon-to-be departees in the talk show genre), the value and importance of the medical profession must continue to still be fulfilled on air and across all media. And Deborah Gilboa as “Dr. G.” is one of the imperative voices to do it.

Being a doctor with an improv background made all the difference.