

*If You Combine Dr. Phil and Judge Judy - You Get Susan Elliott (M.Ed 1995)*

After leaving a life of life of abuse and abandonment, she became a successful therapist and lawyer, and now inspires others to reach for the stars.

She is both a trained therapist and an attorney, and her students say that Susan Elliott is a "shoot-straight-from-the-hip" cross between Dr. Phil and Judge Judy. Elliott considers Judge Judy one of her role models and is flattered by comparisons to her. Like Judge Judy, Elliott believes that taking responsibility for your own life is the key to finding happiness and leaving unnecessary drama behind. It is what she has done in her own life.

Elliott grew up struggling with poor self-image and feeling like a castoff as a foster child in the Bronx. As a teenager, she felt inept and incapable with no goals and no hope. She lived a life that was fast and dangerous, wishing, she says, "to get it over with quickly." After surviving one too many abusive relationships, Elliott realized she had spent too much time feeling sorry for herself and waiting for someone else to save her. "One day I was ready to check out of life under the mountain of emotional pain. Then it hit me that in order for my life to change, I had to change it. No one else was going to do it for me." She threw herself into finding people to talk to, books to read, seminars and support groups to attend, and courses to take.

Through hard work, perseverance and determination, Elliott pulled herself out of the chaos and misery, eventually becoming a therapist, a motivational speaker, a writer and an attorney. She holds a BA from Mount Holyoke College where she graduated with High Honors, magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa; an M.Ed. from Cambridge College; and, after being inspired by Judge Judy, went on to obtain a J.D. from the University of California at Berkeley. She now has a happy marriage, a great career, a peaceful life and wonderful relationships with her children who credit her with breaking the cycle of abuse in their family.

Now she teaches others how to succeed in a series of workshops, classes, and seminars in New York and Boston entitled "How to Get Past Your Past and Make Your Dreams Come True."

Even though law practice demands more than 60 hours a week from her, she still finds time to work with others. Her colleagues ask why she spends her precious free time speaking and teaching workshops. "I love my law practice, but I can't forget where I come from. I give back because people were there for me when I needed help. I feel I have to be there for others. That is how you show gratitude for what you were given," said Elliott who also values doing pro bono legal work in addition to working long hours for the litigation clients of her firm.

Her students are grateful for her help and her inspiration. They tell her that the seminars change their lives. She says, "I'm just there to tell them it's possible. They are doing the work by standing up and taking responsibility for themselves. It's hard to do, and you need people to cheer you on. I try to be there to do that."

In addition to teaching and speaking, Elliott is writing the book, "How to Get Past Your Past and Make Your Dreams Come True: The Seven Things You Need to Do To Find Happiness Now" as well as a memoir that details her early struggle and amazing triumph.