

BUSINESS

Holistic therapist left sales, found her calling

BY JACKIE PILOSSOPH
For Sun-Times Media

"I'm not looking for a diagnosis, I'm not looking for their brokenness, I'm looking for their strengths and their best version, and then I'm looking for the obstacles that are getting in their way."

That's what well-being consultant, Maureen Kebo said differentiates her from a traditional therapist.

Kebo, who holds a master's degree in community counseling, and who is a former therapist, started B-Well, her Wilmette-based wellness consulting practice three months ago.

"I really feel like this is who I am and who I have always been," Kebo said. "I make people feel safe because that is so fundamental in any kind of healing, and I have a certain level of vulnerability that makes people feel more connected and more trusting."

Kebo spent three years working at a community center as an individual and group therapist for adolescents, young adults and adults. She left her position for a career in technology sales, a move she said she made based on finances.

After seven years in sales, Kebo became a stay at home mom for several years. Her twins are now 12, and when she decided to go back to work, Kebo said she knew this was the perfect fit for her lifestyle and her passion.

"I missed therapy desperately," said Kebo, who has lived in Wilmette for 10 years with her husband, Collin and their kids. "I missed using my core gifts of helping clients."

B-Well, which is based out of Kebo's home, offers consultations – not therapy – to a clientele that Kebo said is mainly women in their 30's, 40's and 50's.

With her clients, Kebo looks at all dimensions of wellness, including emotional, mental, physical, environment, social and spiritual.

"For example, I will ask about connectedness," said Kebo. "People who are connected to others in satisfying ways have a significantly better chance of feeling well. When I ask about spiritual, it can be anything that brings one a sense of inner



Maureen Kebo (shown here in her home office) started her wellness consultation practice, B-Well three months ago, and looks at all dimensions of wellness with her Clients. | JACKIE PILOSSOPH/FOR SUN-TIMES MEDIA

peace, such as yoga, mediation, nature or God."

Kebo said the one-hour sessions usually include homework assignments, like doing three things that are good for you, leaving work on time, saying no when you need to and setting boundaries with someone, if needed.

"Women are conditioned to give of themselves and we think it's wonderful to give, give, give, but if you don't fill your cup, there's nothing left to give," Kebo said. "To be in a state of well being, you need an equal input and output of energy, so I stress self care a lot."

Lila Leff, who formerly ran an employ-

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ment program for the economically struggling youth, referred clients to Kebo for two years, when Kebo was a therapist.

"Over and over again, I'd get feedback that Maureen was unbelievably compassionate, very perceptive and willing to push people to their best selves," said Leff, who is now an educational consultant and the founder of Umoja, a Chicago-based student development corporation.

Kebo charges \$85 per hour for her consultations, but will work with clients on flexible rates for special circumstances.

Jennifer Beacom is a close friend of Kebo's, and encouraged Kebo to start her practice.

"When she said she was thinking of doing this, it was almost a sigh of relief, like 'finally,'" said Beacom. "This is her calling. She is somebody who if you have any type of problem, she's phenomenal at helping you come to a place of peace and clarity."

"This is a perfect fit for Maureen," Leff said. "She is truly an exceptional person who is able to relate and able to help people set and meet their aspirational goals."