

Trying to keep up with Carrie Stevens is a bit like standing on a subway platform and attempting to grab onto the 8:05 express with your bare hands as it speeds past your stop. It's an ill-advised exercise and if you aren't prepared, you could wind up losing a vital organ or two. I recently had the opportunity to spend a couple of days with Carrie in the place she has called home for the last 20 years, Sherman Oaks, California; a cozy, upscale suburban neighborhood just north of downtown Los Angeles, where she resides with her son. I'm still trying to catch my breath.

Over the last couple of years, as I've gotten to know her, I have learned that you have to be prepared to move at 100 mph and change direction without warning if you want to hang with Carrie and not be jettisoned like excess baggage. I pride myself on being an active, energetic person, who routinely checks off numerous tasks from a daily "to do" list, but that's nothing compared to number of activities we tackled in those 2 days (and I'm sure it was a light couple of days for Carrie). Pilates, breakfast meetings, hiking the canyon trails (also served as scouting for the shoot later that day), test shots of a new face she discovered at a club the week before, working with a personal trainer and photo shoot at her house, location shooting for various articles after lunch, a little league game, grab some dinner, home for some quality time and homework, then a site review of Envi-Image.com and revisions to prepare for the Spring Issue launch... "Just go with it." She would say, repeatedly throughout the day. I'm a planner by nature so I was clearly not in my comfort zone. She could tell. "Does she even have a plan?" I thought to myself. (I may have even audibly mumbled it once or twice) Who knows? I think the odds are 50/50 on any given day, but you'd never know it. She always appears totally in control—like everything is going "according to plan" no matter what the outcome. Even today, as we attempt to review this article, bi-coastally, she has a phone to each ear—me on one and the other one is ringing non-stop. She's making final preparations for a shoot the next day. Meanwhile, I can also hear in the background "Mom, can I please have some popcorn?" This, of course is just a small glimpse into the life of Carrie Stevens and a pretty run-of-the-mill day at that. These days though, being busy isn't really all that unique or unusual for any of us in and of itself. It's more so the incredible poise, the grace and the serene nature with which she calmly handles the chaos (some of which, she will admit is self-inflicted) that I find most impressive.

Growing up on a 5-acre farm on a dead end, dirt road in Hardwick, Massachusetts, provided all the organic roots Carrie needed to grow up with the "green gene". Her family composted and grew their own fruit and vegetables. Her mom made their bread, milked the goats for home made goat cheese and they even ate eggs, fresh from the chicken coop. Carrie vividly recalls how her mother would stop by the side of the road to pick up discarded cigarette cartons in order to keep their little town beautiful and clear of litter and trash. After a couple of years studying journalism at Memphis State University, and at the tender age of just 19 years old, she left for the bright lights of L.A. and life in the fast lane on the arm of Eric Carr, who at the time was the drummer for the legendary rock band, KISS. A few years later, Carr passed away from complications arising from cancer and a heartbroken Stevens attempted

to escape the pain by getting involved in acting classes. Immersing herself in the theatrical arts proved to be a therapeutic exercise for Carrie and she eventually found a new source of happiness as a top model and successful actress.

Carrie has graced the pages of some very well regarded publications such as Cosmopolitan, Glamour, Allure and of course Playboy, where she was Miss June, 1997. Her television resume includes roles on hit shows like Two and a Half Men and Beverly Hills 90210. On the big screen, she appeared in Rock Star with Mark Wahlberg and Jennifer Aniston, and has starred in several independent films. Currently she is preparing for a breakout role in a Sci-fi thriller.

Her most important and life-altering role by far though, came about 7 years ago when she assumed the real-life role of single “Mom” to her son, Jaxon. It’s a role that she was obviously born to play and if they handed out Oscars for it, she would win, hands-down, year after year. Anyone who knows Carrie would certainly tell you the same. There hasn’t been a time I have spoken with Carrie that he isn’t part of the conversation, either as a subject matter or an active participant. They are as “peanut butter and jelly” as ever a parent and child could be, and Jaxon’s easy nature, his curiosity and joyful disposition are a testament to the qualities instilled in him by his loving and nurturing mother. “On one hand, being a single mother and trying to do it all by myself is a daily challenge—it’s hard. But, on the other, I have to consult with no one in regards to doing what I feel is best for my son and I can look at what an incredible kid he is and solely take credit it. My son is my whole heart and by far my greatest achievement.” Having kids of my own and also trying to balance a home and career, I have a healthy respect and admiration for what she accomplishes every day, single-handedly in an environment where it’s easy to lose sight of what’s real and what is important.

It is this very role that she fills so perfectly that inspired her to revisit her love for writing as a columnist for Hot Moms Club Magazine in 2005, and more recently establish her own online magazine, Envi-Image.com, where she acts as publisher, principal owner and Editor-In-Chief. “I wanted to do something that my son would be proud of. Something I could leave as my legacy for him to look back on and say ‘My mom made a real difference.’ So I took a look at what my strengths were... My passions.” As she talked, she started to get more animated, more “involved” in the conversation. You know, when you can tell that a person really feels strongly about what they are saying? She continued, “I’ve always been very good at connecting... Socially. Putting people together, putting photo shoots and entire productions together and, well—being social.” To this, I can surely attest as, while we were speaking, she was organizing an impromptu photo shoot at a 50,000 square foot mansion involving 2 different film crews, her still photographer, 3 other models, a spray tan service, hair and makeup artists, and all with just a few days notice. “But”, she said, “That doesn’t really translate well into anything meaningful that I wasn’t already doing. Then I dug deeper, and what I found was my desire to live a “greener” lifestyle.” Going back to her roots, in a sense and combining these two passions were

to be the foundation for Envi-Image. From her hybrid vehicle to her bamboo bikini to her non-toxic, preservative-free makeup, she set off to showcase her persona as a greener shade of starlet and enlist as many of her sexy friends along the way as she possibly could (including superstars like Victoria Silvstedt and Brande Roderick) to show people how to care for themselves and our planet. "I would never profess to be the greenest person on earth, but I really do make a daily effort to lessen my personal impact on the environment and inspire other people do the same."

As I hear another bell ring in the background (this time it's the door and not the phone) and Carrie is gently, semi-seriously cautioning Jaxon not to be an "eco-criminal" by leaving the TV on while he bathes, we decide to call it a night and try to reconnect in a couple of days when she resurfaces and can focus a bit better. She apologizes again and I laugh a bit at this and tell her not to worry, I have more than enough to get started, and after all, this is classic Carrie Stevens. Like a freight train, simultaneously traveling in 6 different directions, yet it always delivers its cargo on time and in pristine condition to its intended destination. I have no doubt she'll get us back on track, but unless you happen to be Superman; leaping tall buildings in a single bound, you would be wise to stay safely on the platform.