

Joan Lunden

Joan's summer camp for women... guilt-free, me time!

- April Daniels Hussar



Seven kids, nearly twenty years on *Good Morning America*, numerous best-selling books, dozens of awards and honors, countless speaking engagements.... and Joan Lunden is just getting started! The latest endeavor for this modern day superwoman? A summer camp just for women. Called **Camp Reveille**, it's the latest element in Joan's mission to inspire and educate women about their own health, wellness, and the importance of finding balance in this hectic modern world. After seeing Joan speak at the recent *It's My Turn Now* event, I had the chance to catch up with her about Camp Reveille, her kids, and her life - including some truly fabulous advice and insight (some passed on from her own mentor, **Barbara Walters**).

You have three daughters in their 20's and two sets of young twins (five-year-olds Kate and Max and three-year-olds Kim and Jack). How is the experience of raising your youngest different from your experience as a first time mom?

Most people would imagine that it's a lot harder and more exhausting. I find it's exactly the opposite. I find it much less daunting... you've done it, you've been there, you understand it, everything kind of rolls off your back. I have a lot more patience now. I always tell a story... when Kim and Jack were born we had a party at our house, and I invited a lot of my friends - a lot of them are high powered, Type A, New York City women. They came in the front door and saw 20-month old Kate and Max running around, and they kind of put their hands up to their heads and said, *oh I'm tired just looking at them! Aren't you going to be exhausted?!* My caterers for the party all came in the back door, they were all French, and they all looked at the same little babies, the same children running around, and they said to me, you will never grow old! Just stop and think about how two different sets of eyes looked at the same thing, and one set saw it as exhausting and one saw it as exhilarating!

You've had such an incredible life and career... what is something you learned that you'd like to share with our Betty readers?

Always look at the positive in something that might seem like a negative. When I first started at GMA I was co-host with David Hartman. He was a big star, and I was "the female." This was the '70s - to say I was second banana was the understatement of the year. I was making a tenth of what he made. There was an understanding that I would not get the big stars, the big politicians, the world leaders. I was "relegated" (and I say that in quotes) to all those "woman" stories - like education, health, parenting, managing your home, managing your children. And you know what? When you left your TV in the morning... those were the things that people really cared about... A lot of women wrote to me back then saying, how dare they "relegate" you to just the woman's stories?! Well quite honestly I think that *that*, in and of itself, was one of the biggest components of my success. I think that doing those interviews endeared me to the public and I think that I was reporting things to them that they really cared about.



It's helped me to understand that you have to get past what *seems* like a negative. It's important for women.

How did you manage to balance the demands of your Good Morning America career and being a mom?

I established my priorities - I went to my boss and said I'm here one hundred and FIFTY percent, I will be on the road with you and I will always be in, on time. But there are a few things that I will tell you up front that are incredibly important to me and are nonnegotiable. I won't miss... really important things in my child's life. And that's going to be healthy for both you and me.

Bosses are incredibly thankful when you're forthright with them. They're used to men... men say what they want, they say what they need, and they say what they'll give ya. You have to figure out a way to be honest with your boss... *and* you have to be honest with your husband, or your mate, and say, "we're both working, we need a plan." It'll never be equitable, the kids will always run to us when they fall down and skin their knees, but there has to be some equitable distribution. And if women don't do that, they'll just continue to be overwhelmed and everyone else in their home will just think that they're an irritable grump.

What's some of the best advice you've ever gotten?

Barbara Walters came in when I first started and she gave me a piece of advice that I've never forgotten. She said, if you fight for equality and buck the system and fight to get the big interviews right now, you're going to end up where your predecessor did - right out the door. But if you take all the small stories and you make them SHINE - you make them little gems, you will sustain, you will rise to the top. And once you do - don't wait for them to give you the big stories, go out and get them yourself. I have followed her advice, and it has proven incredibly successful. She also gave me the advice to send thank you notes. And not *just* thank you notes - If she sees that someone just opened on Broadway or has a new movie out, she sends them a letter saying congratulations. It's not just waiting to react to things, it's always looking at that big picture and saying, what is my end goal? What are the things I can do to reach that end goal? And what are some of the smaller things I might take on that someone else might say, why is she doing that? But I know why I'm doing it! Because it all helps me reach my end goal.

What do you see as one of the most important issues facing women today?

It's hard for women today - we have more choice but it also means we have more responsibility. In the 80's we were out there campaigning for more roles, more choice, more freedom. And in the 90's we got them! But we got them *added* to all of our old roles. Now the challenge is to figure out how do we do it all without feeling overwhelmed or guilty or inadequate. That is the dilemma of the modern woman.

Women have to consider themselves, their own health, and their own mental state important. They nurture everyone except themselves. If we don't take care of ourselves we are not going to be healthy, happy and competent as parents, as employees, as mates, as friends. If you're healthy, you're better in all of those roles. But women don't tend to nurture themselves. The weight creeps on, they start worrying about their health, women start getting undressed in the closet because they don't want to get undressed in front of their husbands, pretty soon they don't have sex with their husbands, and it just spirals down.

And it starts early.

Yes, it does. For many women it starts in the 20's, 30's. When I was 38 turning 39 I said, you can't go down that road... I went through one of those AHA moments. I said I've really got to commit to my own health if I want to be the kind of active, healthy person I want to be - I want to be a role model for my daughters. 20, 30 years from now I want to still be running in the race! I don't want to be sitting on the sidelines watching. So I made a huge commitment to my personal health... and literally changed my life. I wrote a book about it called [Healthy Cooking](#).

I learned so much - it was almost like I jumped in the pool and started saying to everyone, come on in the water's fine! I knew I had an opportunity to make a difference in other women's lives, to inspire others. 15 years ago or so I decided to act on that opportunity by writing books and speaking all around the country. A central message is creating balance: now that we *have* it all, how do we *do* it all? And the importance of committing to your health and happiness - helping [women] understand that their destiny is in their hands. All the studies show that your physical well-being is maybe 30% hereditary. The rest is *in your hands*. So if you want to be active, out playing tennis, or at least bending over and tying your own shoes when you're 70... you have to be doing something TODAY. How you're going to feel 20, 30 years from now is absolutely your call.



Camp Reveille sounds fabulous - what was the impetus behind starting it?

With all the running around, and doing all this speaking and writing about women's wellness... every summer I'd be up at this magnificent summer camp [run by my husband] - **Camp Takajo** in Naples Maine. All the campers go home in the beginning of August, and I said, you know something, women need a time out! I want to start a program where I can give women an opportunity to take a time out, guilt-free. I didn't want to make it any kind of boot camp. No expectations. I didn't want it to be too scheduled. Women live and die by their schedules. I wanted to make it all about choice. LOTS of choice.

My ultimate goal is to have women reconnect with their sense of play and reconnect to their commitment to themselves and their health. I felt if I could bring women together, everyone would share - because women are sharers - they would learn from each other, they would get support from each other. A big problem with women today is a sense of isolation. By coming together and sharing stories, it's my hope that that sense of isolation might be broken down. And, that in this very encouraging, safe environment, they will try new things, maybe challenge themselves a little. And I found that to be the case - out of 110 women, 71 women climbed the 50-foot climbing wall! I would never have predicted that!

How was the inaugural session last summer?

It was an amazing, fun time. At the end of the camp instead of doing some dumb survey, I handed out camp stationery, and had them write a letter home... it was the best thing I could have ever done. These letters were amazing. I learned so much from them. We had women ranging from 25 to 75. Many of the young women said they really learned a lot from listening to the older women. And many of the older women said to me that they were re-energized from being around the exuberance of the younger ones!

What's new this year?

We're adding more arts and crafts (jewelry-making was standing room only). Also - I have a skincare line with Dr. Howard Murad called **Resurgence**, which is being rolled out nationally this month. Together we are going to offer a Murad health spa at Camp this summer. That's going to be an amazing addition.

Rapid Fire Questions

1. When you were 10 years old, what did you want to be when you grew up?

A doctor. My dad was a doctor. Right after I graduated from high school I worked in the hospital that he founded and I discovered I wasn't cut out for blood and stitches. But I still feel like I affect people's health in a positive way.

2. What type of kids did you hang out with in high school?

That's a hard one... not shy kids. We were the ones out doing things all the time. Doers, achievers.

3. What women do you most identify with?

Barbara Walters has always been one of my role models. I identify with **Oprah** because we're both women committed to helping other women. At one time I was thinking of going into politics, and I've always greatly admired a number of different Congresswomen whom I've worked with - **Pat Schroeder** and **Geraldine Ferraro** - women who are making a difference in people's lives.

4. What's your workout?

I work out with a personal trainer - 8am three days a week. During the summer everything changes. I make my base in Maine, and my trainer comes 5 days a week. I incorporate all the other women at the camp - we climb mountains together, we go horseback riding, we create competitions. I enjoy hiking and being out in nature and I love tennis! I always say, you have to find that workout that you LIKE - because if you don't like it you're never gonna stick with it. And it's always fun if you can do it with someone. It really helps.

5. Cat or dog?

As a parent you always end up with your children's animals, so we have a little Yorkie named Stella right now. But I'm a pet lover and I've always had cats and dogs.

6. What do you do when you want to completely tune out?

Read magazines. I'm a magazine junkie. Also a self-help junkie.

7. What book is sitting on your shelf waiting to be read?

I'm in the middle of reading Suze Ormon's book, **Women and Money**. And I'm just finishing up Bob Greene's book, **The Best Life Diet**.

8. If you could have dinner with any two people, who would they be?

Hmmm.... Probably **Bill Gates** and **Warren Buffet**.

9. What is the one thing you do or do not want the next generation of girls to encounter?

Hopefully, infertility. That's the other dilemma of this generation.

10. If there were one thing you could change in your life, what would it be?

Nothing. I would change nothing about my life.

Come to Camp with Joan! This summer's session is August 21-24th - four days and three nights. For more information and to register, visit www.campreveille.com.