

Lifestyle

Raising STANDards

Stephenson offers seminar specifically designed for women

By Wendy Foster
Correspondent

Sean Stephenson is comfortably in touch with his feminine side. "Men and women both have masculine and feminine tendencies and energy. I feel that I'm well-balanced with both my masculine and feminine energy. I can step into feminine energy easily," he said. Stephenson is drawing on his anima, his feminine inner personality, as he prepares for "Raise Your STANDards Now!" his first public seminar designed specifically for women. "Raise Your STANDards Now!" will be held from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 11 at the Doubletree Hotel, 1909 Spring Road, Oak Brook.

Stephenson, who is 27, has at a young age amassed a formidable résumé which includes successful work as a public speaker, published author and psychotherapist. With a focus on motivational and inspirational messages, Stephenson has addressed groups including schools, Fortune 500 companies, the U.S. Senate, and the Federal Aviation Society. Stephenson recently opened his private practice for neuro-linguistic programming and clinical therapy in Oakbrook Terrace. His upcoming seminar will feature practical ideas to help women live the fullest possible lives. Stephenson reported that attendees will build the skills they need to ensure "amazing relationships, an exciting career, a close family, healthy body, clear mind and passionate spirit."

Much of Stephenson's message for the power of positive thinking and determination comes from personal experience. He was born with a rare, genetic connective tissue and bone disorder called Osteogenesis Imperfecta. Stephenson's serious form of the condition is characterized by bones that break easily from little if any apparent cause. He has suffered more than 200 bone fractures from the disorder that has significantly stunted his growth and confined him to a wheelchair. He was not expected by doctors to survive long after birth. Yet 27 years later, Stephenson uses his experiences and training to encourage people to overcome challenges to reach their highest possible potential in life. Stephenson launched his motivational speaking business when he was a student at DePaul University. After graduating with honors in 2000, he



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Staff photo by Dennis Sieron

La Grange resident Sean Stephenson will hold his first public seminar designed specifically for women.

kicked his career into high gear, devoting himself full time to inspiring others through his speaking, coaching, Internet magazine, fitness video and books. He is currently pursuing his doctorate in clinical hypnotherapy.

Despite being in touch with his feminine self, Stephenson is "the all around man," according to Brittney Baxter, a fan, friend and client. "He can be serious

and he's so smart and so intuitive and thoughtful. And then he can be downright silly and goofy. He finds his inner child and pulls it out as often as he can. He's everything. He's the epitome of a great guy, an all around guy," she said.

A women-oriented seminar has been a longtime dream of Stephenson's.

"Working with women is a phenomenal experience. They have this amazing

At a glance

"Raise Your STANDards Now!"
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Saturday, Nov. 11
Doubletree Hotel, 1909 Spring
Road, Oak Brook.
Registration for the "Raise Your
STANDards Now!" is avail-
able by calling Dawn Nelson
at (866) 294-1582, or visiting
www.raiseyourstandardsnow.
com The fee is \$95 and each
paying attendee is invited to
bring a friend free.
The first eleven registrations from
this Suburban Life article will be
free of charge.

ability to intuitively pick up on what's going on in their surroundings whereas men are a little more clueless. A man will feel an emotion and will pass it off, as say, indigestion. A woman steps into the emotion and plays it fully out. What I love is that women are extremely receptive. They know that there are a lot of similarities between myself and them. I've been discriminated against; I'm constantly stared at and judged by my appearance. I'm extremely compassionate and base my business and personal life around the fundamental of loving," Stephenson said.

Stephenson said that he has come to the realization that many women share a common problem.

"A lot of women live lives that are just comfortable enough. They maybe settle in their relationships, their careers, etc. They're not passionate about things. I thought about what it is that causes women to go through life with what's OK but not extraordinary. It came to me that if you don't have what you want in your life, your standards are too low. Standards to me mean not just what you're willing to tolerate in others, but what you're willing to tolerate in yourself," he said. "What I found is that you have to set your standards higher than your goals ... standards are what you work towards every day. Goals are something that once you achieve, you're done. Goals are good benchmarks ... but goals aren't as important as standards. Standards are what keep you on the path," he said.

Stephenson said that his seminar will help women identify "what is possible for them. Most people make problems

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