

Vicky Karr

Vicky Karr (lmt-success.com) has been a licensed massage therapist since 1997. She runs Spa Success LLC and offers her training experience and knowledge as a National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork-approved continuing education provider.



“If you want your massage therapy business to grow, you must grow with it. I honestly would not be where I am today if I had held myself back.”

By Hannah Fell

Early in the morning, or sometimes in the late afternoon, you can find Vicky Karr at Santa Rosa Beach. It sits on the Emerald Coast between Laguna Beach and Destin in Florida. She lives just around the corner of this peninsula, and to get there, she crosses the Choctawatchee Bay.

Once she sees the ocean, she feels her body relax. “It’s the energy from the water,” she explained.

Although now she is a continuing education provider as well as a massage therapist specializing in cupping therapy, like many massage therapists, massage therapy wasn’t her first career. She started out in social work.

“The average career life of the particular social services I was in is like five years before burnout,” she said. “I was determined to not allow that to happen to me.”

Karr started getting regular massage as a form of self-care. When she was getting a massage, something clicked. She could picture herself giving massages, working in the massage field, and she knew that she wanted to be a massage therapist. After some soul-searching, she decided to quit

social work and went back to school.

“The people I worked with had gone insane,” she said. “I think the reverse is true for me; I think I just found my sanity.”

In massage school, Eastern modalities resonated with her. They were the ones that intrigued her and where she excelled. “It was like my language,” she said. Karr has worked quite broadly in the massage field, and she also spent more than 10 years working at The Ritz-Carlton. Now she works at an acupuncture clinic where she focuses on cupping therapy.

Although cupping therapy has gained attention within the past few years, the practice has been around for centuries. Cupping therapy aids in decompressing tissue and relieving fascial tightness, thus providing the client with improved mobility, Karr said.

Because cupping therapy works inverse of massage therapy, using this technique in conjunction with massage can be more effective for the client because it can be less labor intensive than a deep tissue massage and provide relief to the same symptoms, she added.

“If the person has chronic pain in an area, the cupping can possibly help

by encouraging fresh blood to the area, aiding in circulation, and in stimulating lymph flow,” she said, adding that this process is what relieves pain.

It can be challenging to decide what area you want to specialize in as a massage therapist. But you’ll never know if something will be a good fit until you try it, Karr said.

“I had an instructor in massage therapy school, and she used to speak negatively about spas,” she said. “When I got out of school it was a bit of a challenge because her voice played in my head.” Follow your gut, Karr suggested, but at the same time don’t pass up an opportunity.

As with everything, especially massage therapy, you never stop learning. Karr suggested choosing CE courses that are meaningful and that will help you reach your professional goals.

“If you want your massage therapy business to grow, you must grow with it,” she said. “I honestly would not be where I am today if I had held myself back.”

Hannah Fell is *MESSAGE Magazine’s* associate editor.