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Television Host, Actress, Spokeswoman

DANIELLE DEMSKI

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By: Elizabeth Price

Native to Arizona, Danielle Demski worked hard to achieve success. First as a model with FORD talent agency, then Miss Arizona USA, NFL Cardinals cheerleader, and now, host and entertainer in Hollywood. As a graduate from Arizona State University Danielle has put her degree in Broadcast Journalism to use as she hosts for various news and entertainment stations. With a career based heavily on dance and a professional athlete for a father, Danielle continues her passion for exercise and sports as she hosts for ESPN and Tennis Channel's new series Fit to Hit. With true passion for her work, the excitement from Danielle is contagious!

FMM: Your career started off as a Miss Arizona winner and Miss USA semi-finalist. What advice do you have for young women who are looking to compete, or are currently competing?

DD: I think pageants can be a great training ground and springboard for a career, plus it can

be such a fun experience. Pageants can refine your interviewing skills, give you confidence in public speaking, bring awareness to fitness, and provide a platform to important issues. My advice would be to not take yourself or a pageant too seriously. When I won Miss Arizona USA, it was not the only thing I was focusing on at the time. I was finishing up with my Broadcast Journalism degree at ASU, interning at a news station, cheering for the NFL, and doing a lot of volunteer work. I think diversifying yourself and not just concentrating on competing is helpful and makes you a more well-rounded and relatable contestant.

FMM: Dance had a significant presence in your life and contributed greatly to the beginning of your career. What advice would you have for parents with children interested in dance?

DD: I started dancing when I was five years old and was immediately hooked! When I was five, it was more about the glittery costumes and bouncing around to loud music. It became a huge part of my life through my teen years and later when I became an NFL cheerleader for the Arizona Cardinals. It gave me confidence, stage presence, and I met some of my best friends through dancing, so I would highly recommend it for any

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Russell Baer
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child that's interested. I would also advise parents not to push their kids too hard...make it fun and they'll enjoy it for a lifetime!

FMM: How much of your current fitness training involves, or is related to dancing?

DD: I'm constantly switching up my fitness routine because I get bored doing the same thing every day, so taking a dance class is a great way to break it up. I'll occasionally take a class at the Edge studio in Hollywood, a Zumba class at my gym, or I'll pop into a ballet class every once in a while. Now I'm just waiting on a call from Dancing With The Stars!

FMM: As the daughter of a professional athlete has your parent impacted your fitness goals or career interests?

DD: Playing sports, competing, and working out was just a way of life in my house growing up. I attribute a lot of this to my dad's background as an athlete and a coach. I grew up playing softball, volleyball, tennis, and dancing competitively, so sports and fitness continue to be a big part of my life today.

FMM: As a literacy advocate, and writer/producer of the education video for literacy and learning disabilities, "A Journey of Gifts", how do you think our nation could comprehensively eliminate the literacy problems we have today?

DD: There are a couple things from my experience that I think would make a big impact. First of all, education funding, cutbacks to education are wreaking havoc on school systems and children in the United States. The education a child will receive in one school system is vastly different from another all based on funding. Every child deserves a good education and a hopeful future, so we need to put more emphasis on education in the U.S. and stop cutting programs that help students excel. Second, we need to value our teachers more so we don't lose them to more

lucrative careers. And third, I think parental involvement is huge! Being aware of your child's progress in school and taking action if a child is struggling is extremely important. There are after hours study groups and special education available in most schools to assist a parent.

FMM: You were a member of a professional USO Dance Team. What are some of your best experiences or memories from the time you've spent performing for our troops?

DD: I traveled and performed with the USO for three years, which was such an incredible opportunity. I got the chance to visit military bases all over the country and overseas as well to give back to our American soldiers. I have so many amazing memories from my time with the USO from getting to know our soldiers, to learning how to shoot a grenade launcher, to riding around in a Chinook helicopter over friendly fire (didn't sound very "friendly" to me ha-ha). But one memory that stands out in my mind is when I traveled to Bosnia shortly after the September 11th terrorist attacks. Security was VERY tight and everyone was on edge at the airport, so some of my friends and family tried to talk me out of going on this tour because they were worried about my safety. But I felt an overwhelming need to go and be there for our troops in some small way at this time. On the last night of this trip my group performed at a military base for several hundred soldiers and at the end of an hour-long show we concluded our performance dancing to "God Bless The USA". It was such an emotional moment that I found myself almost in tears while performing on stage and when I looked into the crowd of soldiers, their eyes were filled with tears as well. This trip and experience made my love for my country and my admiration for our military even stronger and I will always remember that moment.

FMM: From correspondent work on “The World Series of Poker” and “Extra”, hosting work on “AXS Live” and “Let’s Make a Deal”, coverage on “Universal Sports”, and roles on hit television series such as “CSI: Miami” and “Bold and the Beautiful”, you are extremely busy, engaged, and on-the-go. How do you manage diet and exercise during these busy times?

DD: I love being on the go and always having my hand in a new project, but it can make it more difficult to maintain an exercise routine and eat healthy, especially when I’m traveling! I have to admit that every once in a while when I’ve been running around like crazy, and I’m starving, I’ll make a fast food pit stop...Taco Bell is one of my favorites, he-he. But usually I try to keep some almonds, a protein bar, or a banana with me at all times. When it comes to my exercise routine, when I’m at home in LA I like to take classes! Being in a group environment motivates me, and I like having an instructor to check my form. But when I’m traveling, I still like to stay active and it’s a great time to try out a class in a new environment, check out the city by jogging, or find the local tennis court.

FMM: You have been in front of the camera since the age of fifteen. Have you ever felt pressure to look a certain way or received negative comments from outsiders? How do you handle this?

DD: I signed with the FORD modeling agency when I was 15 and started working in fashion and runway. Modeling was an awesome experience and a great way for a teenager to make money, but can also put a lot of pressure on a young girl to look a certain way. Modeling was never my priority; I was very interested in playing sports, dancing, and going to school at the time. I think having other interests that weren’t based on my physical appearance helped. I’m sure anyone who’s been in the public eye has received negative

comments or criticism from outsiders at one time or another...it’s almost impossible to escape. You have to develop a thick skin and an immense amount of confidence in yourself, but negative comments can still be very hurtful. I just try to remind myself that the only opinion that matters is how I feel about myself and how my loved ones view me. And I’m never shy about using the “block” button on Twitter, ha-ha!

FMM: You’ve worked with and interviewed some pretty famous personalities. Are there any surprising or unexpected bloopers that you could share from any of them?

DD: Over the years, I’ve been lucky enough to interview a lot of very interesting celebrities from George Clooney, who is so sweet and disarming, to Kerry Washington, who is as beautiful as she is funny. By the way, I have a girl crush on Kerry! One “interesting” interview I conducted was early in my career in the Phoenix Suns locker room with one of the players (I won’t mention names). Myself, along with the rest of the press, had just been let in for post-game interviews. We were all getting a breakdown of the game from one of the star players when suddenly he decided to drop his towel and continue our conversation fully nude! Apparently everyone else was used to this and didn’t bat an eye, but I was pretty much in shock. I had to try my hardest to keep it together and continue an intelligent, serious conversation with a naked man...so uncomfortable! Looking back it was pretty hilarious, but now I’m ready for any future naked interviews that come my way, ha-ha!

FMM: You were the host of the 15th, 19th, 20th, and 21st SAG Awards Red Carpet Pre-Show. That is an amazing opportunity, how did you get involved with the production? What were your favorite moments from the Red Carpet?

DD: I’ve worked as a host for many TBS and TNT shows over the years and have loved working with them. I also love hosting live TV, so when the





producers of the SAG's decided to do their own live, two hour, red carpet pre-show they came to me, and it's been a great fit. The SAG Awards is one of my favorite award shows because it has such a fun and casual atmosphere, and I love that the awards are voted on by other actors. There have been so many fun red carpet moments, but one of my favorites was when I asked Michael Douglas what designer he was wearing and he began taking off layers of clothing to try and find a tag! He's such a nice guy and so genuine. Another great moment was hearing Matthew McConaughey's story of the long road to getting the film *Dallas Buyers Club* made. Did you know the script was turned down 137 times!

FMM: What are your responsibilities as the host of the new season of *Fit to Hit* for the Tennis Channel? Can you please describe your experiences getting tips from pros, trainers, and traveling to tennis hotspots?

DD: Fit To Hit has been such a fun and interesting show to work on! Over the last few months I've traveled to New York, Florida, Palm Springs, and other locations to meet with tennis greats, trainers, nutritionists, brain health experts, and best-selling authors to find out the secrets to staying fit mentally and physically while improving your tennis game. The best part of the show is that anybody can use this info to improve their fitness level and their tennis game. There's something for everybody, from your weekend warrior to a pro tennis player. It's also been exciting to meet, interview, and train with some of the biggest names in tennis like John Isner, Tim Smyczek, and Ryan Sweeting. But I can't give away everything, you'll have to watch the show for that!

FMM: When you are beginning a new project, how much of a presence does diet and exercise have in planning of your schedule?

DD: While shooting *Fit To Hit*, I was conscious of my diet and exercise routine because it's a very

physically demanding show. I had to make sure I was in good shape and healthy to keep up with all the intense activities. But, in general, I always feel better and have more energy when I'm watching my diet and working out regularly, so I try to incorporate it into my schedule no matter how busy I get or what I'm working on.

FMM: Can you describe your workout routine? Do you find that it varies or stays relatively consistent?

DD: I like to change up my routine, so I don't get bored and so my body doesn't get used to doing the same thing. I'll usually switch off between boot camp/cardio classes, yoga, and weight training. And I'll throw in a dance class, beach volleyball, or tennis when I have time.

FMM: As an Arizona native, you must miss something from your home state. What are some of your favorite things you look forward to when you go back?

DD: I'm a huge Arizona Cardinals fan! And since LA doesn't have an NFL team I love going back to Arizona to watch the Cardinals play. I was a cheerleader for the Cardinals for four years so I got the best "seat" in the house standing right on the sidelines, but now it's fun to sit back, relax and watch the game in the stands with a hot dog and a beer. I also miss the sunsets; Arizona has the most beautiful sunsets!

FMM: What are your favorite comfort foods that you can't live without?

DD: Cheese! I love a cheese plate, a cheese pizza, or cheese curds...cheese in any form is amazing!

FMM: When you travel, what is the short list of items you must bring with you?

DD: First, comfort is a must when I'm traveling, especially internationally, so I've got to have a big cozy sweater and a pair of socks. Second, I love to read, and having hours of free time on a plane

is the perfect time and place for a good book. And finally, I'm not overly enthusiastic about airplane food, so having a yummy snack in my bag is essential. Butterfinger anyone?

FMM: When you have “down time” away from the hustle and bustle of your career, what are some of your favorite activities?

DD: I'm a self-professed foodie, and I love wine, so one of my favorite past times is checking out new restaurants. I'm lucky because LA has such an incredible variety from the world's top chefs! I also love to travel. A few months ago I visited Brazil and before that I spent a couple weeks in Italy. I love exploring new places, hitting all the cheesy tourist hot spots and, of course, trying the local food!

FMM: What is your motto or advice you live by?

DD: Carpe Diem...seize the day! We only get one life to live so live it to the fullest! I may not always succeed in everything I do, but I ALWAYS try new experiences and go for what I want, so I never look back with regret.

FMM: What are your plans for the future? Personally and professionally?

DD: I've been working hard for the last few months on Fit To Hit so I'm excited to see it premier on July 26th! In addition to my on-camera work that I love, I'm looking forward to doing more producing, writing, and working on the other side of the camera. I love the creative process of building a project from the ground up! On the personal front, I've been married for a couple years now so I'm still enjoying being a “newly wed” and doing life with my partner in crime, Ethan Erickson. And I love being a doggy mommy to my Brittany Spaniel, Zoey. We rescued her from a shelter a couple years ago and she's amazing. Life is pretty good right now, but I'm excited for all the new adventures to come!



FMM: Is there anything you would like MOST readers to know about you?

DD: I love interacting with fans on social media so please connect with me on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and my website: www.Danielle-Demski.com

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