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International Women's Day- Dr. Caroline Mathen

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Dr. Caroline Mathen- Founder & CEO- OCT Therapies & Research



In 2011, Dr Caroline Mathen founded a biotech venture called OCT Therapies, that was born out of the intense desire to bring cutting-edge technology to the masses. This exciting start-up focuses on the use and application of adult stem cells to facilitate superior healing. The company boasts of the maximum number of regulatory approvals in the country, and is also registered with the National Apex Committee for Stem Cell Research and Therapy (NAC-SCRT).

On the occasion of International Women's Day, Dr Caroline Mathen shares her personal side with BioSpectrum-

My Daily Routine-

I usually wake up by 5.30 am and pack my children off to college/ school. A light breakfast does it for me, followed by a walk that helps me clear my mind and get organised for the day. I make a mental checklist – both personal and professional, where I plan all that needs to be achieved. I reach my lab by 9 am. I'm involved in every aspect of my lab's functioning, right down to the minutest details. This includes ordering the appropriate reagents and consumables, ensuring that the ongoing work proceeds smoothly, trouble-shooting, training staff, scheduling deliveries, collecting pending payments, marketing and networking for work or collaborations. Every day in its own right is an exciting and challenging one, given that the work I do is so unique. Thrice a week I work out with my personal fitness trainer. I reach home by 7.30-8 pm, get refreshed and wind down. I spend time with my family in prayer, and catch up on the day's events, and crash by 9.30 pm, falling asleep while reading a book.

My idea of fitness and nutrition-

For me it is a natural part of my lifestyle choices. I have always worked out as being fit features as one of my priorities. I believe that fitness, for women especially is the most important, facilitating good health of the family as well. Balanced nutrition goes hand in hand with fitness. Without the right diet, one cannot function well. I create my family's menu in such a way that it caters to the needs of not just my elderly mother-in-law, but also my growing children. I always stress on eating full meals at the right times. We recently had a new addition to our family - a Doberman pup, who demands his daily exercise - and I use that as an excuse to take a walk every day.

My favourite cuisine-

I am partial to Manglorean and Keralite vegetarian food. Being a Manglorean married to a Keralite, I get the best of both worlds.

My favourite holiday spot-

I love beaches. Being near the sea is relaxing and therapeutic. However, on my recent visit to Wales, I really enjoyed the wild mountains.

My idea of balance between personal and professional life-

Being an entrepreneur has its own set of challenges, and I must admit, achieving the perfect work-life balance was tough. The gruelling and intense R&D phase did eat away at a lot of my personal time. Work now is relaxed, and with the commencement of our early commercialisation phase, I'm beginning to enjoy the pay-offs.

My role model-

My mother continues to be my role model although I lost her to a bitterly fought battle with cancer two decades ago. She was the embodiment of everything that defined positivity, a never-say-die spirit, kindness and compassion. She has touched hundreds of lives over a remarkable teaching career, and loved to call herself 'a teacher who never stopped learning'. My love for academics and persistence against all odds, I attribute to her.