

**James Brady On Media
Norville Says 'Thanks'**

Television newsie Deborah Norville, two-time Emmy Award winner, mother of three, longtime anchor of the syndicated TV newsmagazine show *Inside Edition* and one of the busiest women in media, is due to be on *Good Morning America* this morning plugging her latest book, *Thank You Power*, subtitled "Making the science of gratitude work for you," from Thomas Nelson Publishers.

But is gratitude really a "science." Obviously it's good manners, and courtesy pays dividends, but beyond that?

Norville says, "This book is born of common sense. I know that my own life went better when I concentrated on what's going right instead of what's going wrong. I insisted on research there, not just blue sky. We delved into whether there's a quantifiable rating of when things are going well. It's called positive psychology and is now being taught in a number of colleges, including the University of Pennsylvania."

She also cites a study about how grateful people tend to be happier, conducted by a couple of psychologists from the University of California, Berkeley, and the University of Miami.

A brainy, blond Southerner out of Dalton, Ga., who in 1989, amid considerable gnashing of teeth, replaced Jane Pauley on the *Today* show, is already the author of three earlier books. One touched on her adventures on *Today*, and the other two were children's books, one of which sold 300,000 copies to become a best seller.

Chronicling the *Today* show's various anchors, Norville tends to be overshadowed by longer-tenured predecessors like Pauley and Barbara Walters, and by successor Katie Couric. But she was there two years (stunningly dumped while on maternity leave!), working opposite the sometimes difficult Bryant Gumbel. And two decades later she continues to be one of the more attractive and credible of TV performers and a hardworking, enduring and appealing presence.

Norville's two Emmys were awarded not for fluff but for serious stuff. The first, for NBC News, she earned covering an uprising in Romania, and the second, for *48 Hours* on CBS, was her coverage of the Mississippi River floods.

She'll be 50 next summer and looks 10 years younger. Her first professional television job was as a reporter and anchor at WAGA in Atlanta, then at WMAQ in Chicago, with her first national exposure in New York in 1987 on *NBC at Sunrise*. After a series of big jobs at *Today* and other TV and radio outfits, she signed on to *Inside Edition* 12 years ago, in 1995.

I called Norville the other day to talk about the new book and about television in general and newsmagazine shows in particular. There was plenty to talk about. That day Dan Rather had dropped his CBS lawsuit bombshell. Her guest on *Inside Edition* the night before had been Hillary Clinton, and rival newsmagazine show *The Insider With Pat O'Brien* had just moved, with plenty of hoop-la, to New York (until now *Inside Edition's* turf exclusively) from its previous Hollywood base.

Did she think that was *Insider's* acknowledgment of New York's media power or a confession of ratings weakness and badly needed hype? "Probably a bit of both," she said.

According to Norville, on the grid of the six competing daily syndicated magazine shows, *Inside Edition* ranks second only to category leader *Entertainment Tonight*. In third place, *Access Hollywood*, then *Insider*, followed by *Extra*, and finally the newcomer *TMZ*. Norville's show runs on nearly 200 stations and has 97% market coverage,

Was her interview with Hillary a notable "get" for *Inside Edition* or are the presidential candidates all lusting for air time? "We were after Hillary and the others for months. We aren't *GMA* or the *CBS Evening News*. So we're not on the candidates' radar screens, even though we have the audience they want to reach. We say, you rock 'n' roll with us, and we're here to rock 'n' roll with you. Clinton's people got that!"

She and her Swedish-born husband, Karl Wellner, have two sons and one daughter, ranging in age from 10 to 17. Their 17-year-old is now away at boarding school, and their youngest, the 10-year-old daughter, is already fretting about the notorious "book tour."

"Do you really have to go to all those places, Mommie?" The first "place" was easy, a book party Tuesday night at media hangout Michael's in Manhattan.

When la Norville isn't raising kids or interviewing Hillary or working a five-day week, she plies her carpentry avocation, once telling me, "I'm a regular at Metropolitan Lumber." These days, glamour puss Deb claims to be spending less time at carpentry than "with the sewing machine." Who says career women are obsessed by the job?