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Q: Can you tell us a bit about your background and how it shaped who you are today?

A: I was born and raised in Baile Govora, a small resort town in Romania. Both of my parents were physicians—my father was a radiologist and my mother an internal medicine doctor. Growing up in a medical household, I was exposed early on to the hospital environment and the daily life of doctors. This upbringing instilled in me the values of service, compassion, and the importance of making a positive difference in people's lives.

After high school, I joined the Romanian Special Forces as a Green Beret, where I led mountain and sea rescue operations. Next attended medical school at the University of Craiova and completed my general surgery training.

In 1990, following the revolution in Romania, I immigrated to New York to continue my medical education. I completed my general surgery training at New York University and Mount Sinai Medical Center. Moving to Los Angeles, I joined the UCLA Medical Center as a cardiothoracic surgery fellow and later served as faculty. Today, I maintain a busy private practice and hold leadership positions at several hospitals in Los Angeles County.

Q: What advice would you give to younger generations who look up to you as a role model?

A: I offer this advice to the younger generations: pursue your passions with dedication and resilience. Whatever path you choose—be it medicine, the arts, or any other field—commit yourself fully and be prepared to work hard. Challenges and setbacks are inevitable, but they are also opportunities to learn and grow. Embrace them as part of your journey toward personal and professional development.

Remember that success isn't just measured by personal achievements but also by the impact you have on your community. Stay true to your values, remain humble, and be willing to lend a helping hand to those in need. By doing so, you'll not only achieve your goals but also inspire others along the way.



Q: What core values guide your decisions and actions in both your professional and personal life?

A: In my role as a cardiothoracic surgeon, the core values that guide me are precision, empathy, integrity, and continuous learning. Precision is essential in surgery; every movement and decision can have profound implications on a patient's life. I approach each procedure with meticulous attention to detail, understanding that the heart and lungs are vital organs requiring the utmost care.

Empathy is crucial when dealing with patients facing serious health challenges. I strive to connect with them on a personal level, listening to their concerns and ensuring they feel heard and supported.

Integrity governs all my professional actions. Upholding the highest ethical standards means being honest and transparent with patients about their conditions, treatment options, and potential risks.

Continuous learning is vital in a field that evolves rapidly with new technologies and medical advancements. I am committed to staying updated on the latest techniques and research in cardiothoracic surgery.

Lastly, resilience and a strong work ethic enable me to navigate the demanding nature of my profession. Surgery can be unpredictable and challenging, but perseverance ensures that I remain focused and deliver the best possible care under any circumstances.