



A portrait of Dr. Karim El Sobky, a man with dark hair and a slight smile, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt. He is standing outdoors with a blurred background of green foliage and a white fence. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

DR. KARIM EL SOBKY

# IS SUCCESS A CHOICE?

DATE OF BIRTH: FEBRUARY 2ND 1971

STAR SIGN: AQUARIUS

By HT Staff



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SUCCESS IS DEFINED AS THE SATISFACTORY COMPLETION OF A PARTICULAR GOAL. THE QUESTION IS HOW DO WE RATE SUCCESS, HOW DO WE MANAGE IT, AND WHETHER IT'S A CHOICE OR NOT?

KARIM EL SOBKY IS A SUCCESSFUL AND PASSIONATE PRACTISING DENTIST WHILE ALSO CONTINUING AS A SHOW JUMPER. RIDING A HORSE IS LIKE FLIRTING WITH DANGER WHICH CAN BE THE ELEMENT OF ATTRACTION, JUST AS BEING A DENTIST WHERE THE ZEAL OF LAUGHTER SHOWING THE WHITENESS OF TEETH, CAN BE THE PASSION WHICH DRAWS HIM.

KARIM RUNS A FULL TIME CLINIC AND SIMULTANEOUSLY COMPETES FOR EGYPT BOTH LOCALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY. HE IS ONE OF THOSE INDIVIDUALS WHO IS VERY CONSISTENT WITH HIS WAY OF LIFE; HE TRAINS DAILY AND PRACTISES HIS STUDIED PASSION. APART FROM THAT, HE IS AN EVERYDAY PERSON WHO SPENDS TIME WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS WHO ARE AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN HIS LIFE, AS WELL AS TRAVELLING FOR PLEASURE. HE IS NOT A PERFECTIONIST, BUT SEEKS TO BECOME BETTER AS A RIDER AND AS A DENTIST. HOW HAS HE MANAGED TO CONTINUE BEING A SUCCESSFUL SHOW JUMPER AS WELL AS A SUCCESSFUL DENTIST?



▲ Karim & Udana aspire for more success, they train at the cairo stadium everyday

When it comes to management between both practices, Karim divulges, "Certainly, it is not an easy task. I ride for the Army Club and I have to ride 6 horses a day. I give up a lot of facets in life in order to maintain management between my 2 careers. I do organise myself mostly by being punctual, living close to my clinic, close to the Army Club and Cairo Stadium where I train, and I try my best not to spend time in the car. Time is very essential to me and so maintaining that is key". Unlike many I have interviewed, Karim was exactly on time for the interview! He continues, "Unfortunately, I also have to give up on many pleasures of life. Additionally, in the summertime I try to slow down the riding a little bit as to be able to take a holiday; yes, I still ride everyday during the summer however I do not participate at summer shows like other riders do. As for Dentistry, it is a marvel to me...I love it, and I think I am good at it. I am not happy with the elements I am reluctantly forced to give up, but I have to."

Karim has recently been focusing on competing locally, but is missing out on many of the electrifying Arab League events that bring about many achievements and glory. Does he have any regrets? He says, "I wish I had more time to give for riding internationally...I

can compete at maybe 1 or 2 shows from the Arab League, but nothing in Europe; I am afraid that will require full time dedication. My equation seems to be stable as is at the moment."

Being decisive and content with the decisions made may be one of the keys to success. He continues, "Well, I have been a Dentist for a while! When I graduated from the School of Dentistry 15 years ago, I worked with my mentor Dr. Hani Habashi who was an inspiration and whom I owe a lot to; from there on, I moved up on my own. I do not think I would have given up my riding for Dentistry or vice versa; they are both very important to me."

Karim's long time love 'Floring Haft' and currently 19 year old 'Petite Donna' are the most important horses in his life he says. "The best horses in my career are 'Floring Haft', 'Attraction', 'Petite Donna' and 'Colando'. Winning the National Egyptian Championships riding 'Colando' during the 2000/2001 season, and the A, B, and C Classes during the 2006/2007 season, were the best local career wins I have had due to my having those horses at the time. 'Petite Donna', 'Beltone Legend', and 'Mahrous' won the 3 classes and 'Attraction' was placed at 4th place in the B Class. 2007 was a very good year for me....I really wish I had those 4 horses with me now..."

On sponsorship, Karim adds, "I am not sponsored at the time being, but I have 3 private horses owned by the Chef de Keep of the Egyptian team Samir Abdelfatah, the Head of Asset Management of Beltone Wael El Mahgary, and the owner of El Alouka, Dr. Khalid Al Jeraisy. Samir Abdelfatah has been an inspiration to many riders and certainly to me as well as he continuously shows good spirit. Beltone was my sponsor until 2008 however with the financial crisis, matters have frozen until 2010 - I received plenty of help from them; during the 2007 Arab League season they helped us with tickets, transportation, and with the horses themselves. On the other hand, the Army Club is the best sponsor in Egypt, they do provide us with the training and the horses which are the major elements, but they do not sponsor us with other aspects such as expenses of the sport as a whole."

A combination of a good horse with a good rider is one of the elements of the formula to success. Is it a rider with talent, good coaching and discipline? Or a suitable horse at the right stage of one's career? Or is it the management of a riding career and luck coming into the equation? Karim states, "All of the above even add the luck part! Not luck in terms of being superstitious, but in



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Continuing on with future plans, Karim adds, "I currently have good horses but not experienced enough to compete at big shows, so I am working on their training. If I have the chance to compete at a couple of Arab League tournaments, I will not let it slip by. I am also trying to continue my studies with Implant Dentistry, so I am also trying to invest time in that." **HT**

#### **1995/1996 - National Championships**

A Class – 5th place

B Class – 1st place

#### **1996/1997 - National Championships**

A Class – 4th place

#### **1997/1998 - National Championships**

A Class – 1st place (Cup)

A1 Class – 6th place

#### **1998/1999 - National Championships**

A1 Class – 2nd place

B Class – 1st place

#### **1999/2000 - National Championships**

A2 Class – 3rd place

A2 Class – 4th place

#### **2000 – International Championships in Alexandria**

Team Competition - 1st place

#### **2001/2002 - National Championships**

A1 Class – 5th place

C Class - 2nd place

#### **2002/2003 - National Championships**

A2 Class - 1st place

A1 Class - 3rd place

Big Class - 1st place

#### **Arab League International Championships**

Day 1/ 1st place

Grand Prix / 6th place

#### **2005/2006 - National Championships**

B Class - 5th place

#### **2006/2007 – National Championships**

A1 Class - 1st place

B Class – 1st place

C Class – 1st place

B Class – 4th place

#### **2007/2008 – National Championships**

A2 Class – 3rd place

#### **2008/2009 – CSI\*\*\* Sharm El Sheikh Arab League International Championships**

Day 1/ 1st place Medium Tour

Day 1/ 3rd place Small Tour

Day 3/ 4th place Small Tour

Day 4/ 2nd place Silver Class

▲ From 1995 until present, Karim has been consistently winning & if not, then at least comes in the top 5 - except for the 2004/2005 season when he unfortunately did not compete due to 2 injuries!

terms of "what is meant to be and what is not meant to be". You have to work hard, you have to have talent, and you have to have a good horse. Eventually, success is a belief; you have to have faith in your goal, faith in your plan, and faith in the effort you put in – then you will succeed. So yes, all the above are part of the equation! 'Petite Donna' was a very good horse during the 2008 season and was 18 years old at the time. If we look at her results, we could see that she was leading the qualifications at local shows even though she did not make it to the final because she got sick, although she was very consistent throughout because I was selective in which shows I made her jump. I make such decisions through being pragmatic, through knowing her well, and through putting a plan at the start of the season."

Love, support and good parenting play

a huge role in Karim's life. "If I had to rate my family support on a scale from 1 to 10, I would give it a 15. My family has been very supportive to me for as far back as I can remember. As a youngster, they took me to tennis classes but I skipped them to go to see the horses; I was addicted! Once they found out, they were very understanding to my passion and took me for riding classes. They also supported me as an athlete; I had my ups and downs but they were still there. I am very lucky to have such parents; my father was a Military Officer who rode for fun and inspired me to ride, and my mother is a Dentist who also inspired me to study Dentistry. At first I was meant to study Engineering, but continued with Dentistry. Two years studying that and I stopped! Do not know why! I took a year off from university but then continued. Nevertheless, they also supported me."