



Rebecca Armstrong launched her clothing business, called peace within, late last year. Right, her products include T-shirts and hats, found at several boutiques here.



## Finding 'peace within'

New business owner tackles fear of failure

BY INLAND NW HOMES & LIFESTYLES STAFF

"I am woman. Hear me roar," begins the Helen Reddy-Ray Burton song. That song and a ring left by a coffee cup were the inspirations for the fledgling Coeur d'Alene-based apparel business called peace within.

"The idea came on my 40th birthday" while she was in Las Vegas, says owner Rebecca Armstrong. "I think when we get to this age, we are becoming more of who we are, and it was just all about timing and being in a good place to face my fears."

Armstrong, who has been drawing since she was a child, noticed the ring her coffee cup made, which reminded her of a peace sign. So she sketched out ideas for designs embellishing the sign and later contracted with a Coeur d'Alene company to have them applied to T-shirts, sweatshirts, hats, and other items.

That initial idea has grown into a wholesale-retail business that's "taking

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—Rebecca Armstrong,  
peace within

off," Armstrong says.

She sells her products at trade shows, street fairs, and via the Internet. Several boutiques here also carry the apparel, including Tiffany Blue, Sweetpea, and the Velvet Hanger, in Coeur d'Alene; Cues, in Spokane; and Anew Start, in Hayden and Liberty Lake. She currently is seeking more wholesale opportunities and is negotiating with stores in Spokane and Missoula, Mont. Online, the T-shirts sell for \$23 each while hats are listed at \$25 apiece.

Armstrong lost much of her hearing at age 4, but growing up in a large blended family and having parents who treated

her just as they treated others made her independent.

The California native, who works part time for a major retailer, knew she wanted to start her own business although she wasn't certain what kind.

"I was going to do a dog-walking company, and then I thought, 'I don't want to walk everybody's dog,' she says.

Her dream was to open a business that she could run primarily using a laptop computer.

"I don't ever want a store because I don't want to have to manage a store," she says.

The company has become more than a business.

"Look at all that I'm learning," she says. "It does a lot for your self-esteem. It teaches you patience," she says.

For her, the company's name and symbol signify strength.

"Peace within' to me means getting over my fears," she says. "I've always been creative, and I am in a stage in life where I finally have given myself permission to be who I am."

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