

Retreat to victory



Jane Pollak unleashes the success within

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The future, long the realm of turbaned mystics and fortune cookies, has taken on a distinctly businesslike tenor devoid of next week's winning lottery numbers.

Jane Pollak of Jane Pollak Inc. last week offered a soothsayerless preview of her new entrepreneurial women's retreat, Create Your Own Future.

"What I do when I take people away on retreat is have them forget about everything that's in their day-to-day life so that they can focus on their future, which is something people don't give themselves permission to do on a regular basis," said Pollak, a businesswoman, public speaker and business coach.

The retreat scheduled for mid-August at Canyon Ranch Resort in Lenox, Mass., is a place whose atmosphere, she says, should allow her clients to be fully present in the here and now.

Pollak, who lives and works in Westport, includes a maximum 12 women on each retreat and has had women from all over the country participate in her programs.

Pollak's retreats are female exclusive.

"In mixed company, I think that sometimes women feel that they shouldn't be too bold," said Pollak. "I ask them questions like 'what do you really want?' which nobody ever asks anybody. It gives them a chance to actually have some time to sit and think and give voice to these wishes."

According to Pollak, her retreats are holistic and even involve sessions with an organic coach in order to give people ideas on how and what to eat.

"I believe we are what we eat and the thoughts that we think," said Pollak.

According to Pollak, the retreat also provides sessions with a yoga instructor who teaches methods like breathing techniques that can be used in and out of the office.

The majority of her clients are small business owners and entrepreneurs who are looking for insights on how to take the next step with their companies.

Pollak said a popular theme of her program is to be more conscious of what is going on in your life.

"It's so easy to go into catastrophe mode," said Pollak. She advises clients to acknowledge "it's a beautiful day, I'm healthy, and I have a thriving business. It allows them to really stay with themselves."

Pollak uses techniques to compartmentalize portions of a client's life and examine specific aspects of each one in terms of percentage.

"To isolate an area allows people to see that there are things they can do," she said. "Rather than being global, let's look at one small area."

According to Pollak, there is an advantage and contagious nature of having a group of people with you.

"It's the belief in each other," said Pollak. "All of us have this imposter voice in our head who questions what we're able to do."

One exercise that Pollak utilizes is called a "come as you'll be party" – a role-playing activity in which a gala is held and each participant must act out for the entire evening the person she wants to become.

Working with Pollak will be Ken Nelson, a healing arts therapist who inspired her to advance from single motivational sessions and day long programs to retreats several years ago.

Pollak, originally an artist, studied at Columbia University Teachers College for art education. She began teaching at Westhill High School in Stamford and while there learned the craft of Ukrainian Easter Eggs, called pysanky. She went on to create a successful business out of the specialized art for 30 years.

Pollak also became the mother of three during this time.

It was when people began asking questions about how she created a business out of the eggs that she began giving lectures.

"I became Jane the artist, and Jane the speaker," said Pollak. "When I was speaking a lot people would ask to call me, or their aunt to call me or if they could just pick my brain. I realized I was consulting and coaching."

As Pollak found her time more and more stretched, she let go of her artistic career four years ago and became a fulltime consultant and speaker. She now does one-on-one coaching, hosts a monthly goal-orientated group, organizes retreats and speaks around the country on the subject of small business success.

"I feel like I'm living my ideal life, which is why I feel in a position to teach people," said Pollak. "I decided I'm not waiting for the phone to ring, this is how much money I want to make and these are the people I want to serve."

Pollak will be holding another retreat in January 2009.

In 2002, the Small Business Administration named Pollak its 2002 Home-Based Business Advocate for all of New England.

"I am building a business that sustains me in my life and that I plan to do for the rest of my life," said Pollak.

“Those are the people I’m interested in serving, people who are developing their passion into a thriving business and want to do that for the rest of their lives.”

Pollak has been invited to the White House and has appeared on NBC’s “Today Show.” She is a member of the American Society of Interior Designers, the Craft and Hobby Association, the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce and the National Speakers Association.



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