

Support Teams: Creating the Life You Want to Have



Wordcount: 603

by Kathie Hightower

In 1989 at Ft. Lewis, Washington, I decided to take a leap and start my own business — very scary! Someone heard what I was doing and said, "You should meet Reba Bruni — it sounds like you two have a lot in common." We met for a lunch that turned into one of those amazing connections. We talked non-stop for hours and came out of the restaurant full of ideas, energy and motivation. I told Reba, "We need to keep meeting."

That is how my first support team was born. We found four other women with dreams of their own and started meeting weekly to help each other with ideas, to nudge each other along, and to provide the support we each needed to keep going for what we wanted — and in many cases, to first figure out what exactly it was that we wanted!

Since then, with each move, I've created a new team. Once you've been part of one, you will always want to be part of one.

The group I started while living in Germany continues today as a Virtual Group over the Internet. With members in Germany, DC, Wisconsin, Oklahoma and Oregon, we brainstorm and support each other via email. But I'm also a member of a "live" group here. Email is great but it doesn't quite replace the immediacy and synergy of face-to-face interaction and brainstorming. And virtual hugs don't quite replace real ones.

These groups work so well for a number of reasons.

- **The accountability factor.** We have to admit each meeting whether or not we accomplished the mini-goals we each set the meeting before— which everyone wrote down! It's much easier to justify procrastination when you are only accountable to yourself. It is much harder to face four or five other people and say "I didn't do it — again!"
- **The expansion of resources, contacts and ideas.** You are only one person with one set of experiences and ideas. The group not only brings in all of their ideas to add to yours, but the synergy of the group in brainstorming creates completely new ideas. You might see only one way to accomplish what you want — and it may not be feasible based on your location or finances or experience level. The group will help come up with alternate paths that are feasible right now.
- **Courage.** The group provides a sounding board for your doubts and fears and supports you in pushing past them, in both practical and concrete ways, and at an emotional level. Sometimes group members physically go along to provide moral support during a challenging task.
- **Your own personal cheering squad.** When you succeed at something, your group helps you celebrate. When you are feeling down, it helps to be around "up" people who can remind you that you won't always feel this way.
- **Additional "antennae."** Since they all know your dream, they bring in resources, articles, contacts, and information for you that they happen to run across — information that you might never have run across yourself.
- **Possibility thinking.** As you see others move towards what they want and succeed, you get inspired and motivated to take action yourself.

Is this type of team only for people trying to run their own business? Not at all! It doesn't matter what your dreams or goals are — they can be personal, parenting, spiritual, physical, financial, educational, whatever! They can be small or large, short-term or long-term. The group is just a means to get — and keep — you moving towards something you want. And you have a lot of fun, laughter and great conversation in the process!

©1998, Kathie Hightower