

Mary Dorcey (left) and Nina Barr (right)
photo by Chris Fritchie



The Synergy of Women in Business

By Cynthia Howe

SYNERGY: The result of two or more forces that combine and have an effect that is greater than the sum of their individual effects.

My mentor once told me, “Iron sharpens iron.” Over the years those words have been proven right in my eyes time and time again. The energies that the nature of business creates, those of networking, communications, vision and creativity are compounding the success experienced by women in business

today.

The Center for Women’s Business Research has reported that female entrepreneurs employ over 18 million people and generate approximately \$2.3 trillion toward the United States economy. Some of the country’s greatest success stories are professional business women such as: Katherine Graham who successfully took over as CEO of the *Washington Post* after her husband died; Ruth Handler who started Mattel in her

garage to market her dream doll, Barbie; and Mary Kay Ash who became an inspiration to thousands of women who have now followed in her footsteps and started their businesses. These women faced hardships and challenges. They were motivated by powerful influences and girded by strong support networks.

As one of my orators once said, “Great opportunities are often disguised as impossible situations.” There have been times when women have faced a crisis and out of the ashes of change they have created a business that not only satisfied their economic needs but in doing so created possibilities for others as well. These women decided to embrace their passions and leave their pocketbooks to chance.

Although she typically runs on high rpms, there was a time when life dramatically slowed for DeAnna Jones. After giving birth to her youngest son she was challenged with ill-health. Her husband, knowing her buried passion, bought her a Canon Rebel camera. With what energy she had she took photos and pondered the results. “Looking at my work made me look at my life, my evolution as a mother, the flowers growing in the yard, the little routine moments.”

These photos inspired her to begin Cocorah Photography. Her vision centers on capturing the moments, the breadth, depth and glorified fractions of time. “I strive to capture the little things like story time, playing in the back yard or dancing with your daddy to the radio. I remember thinking of my favorite time with my sons preparing for naptime. My youngest plays with my hair and we sing a song. He starts one and I finish. He usually falls asleep with his hand balled up in my hair. I want to capture this, put it in a bottle, but instead I put other people’s moments on paper for them to treasure.”



Next Month in Frisco STYLE

IN ADDITION to being the month to celebrate Thanksgiving November also allows us time to honor those who have served our country in the military. In the November issue of *Frisco STYLE Magazine* we will visit the national memorials as well as the proposed Veterans Memorial for Collin County.

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Sue Groffie
photo by Chris Frutchie

Ms. Jones' success has been established by three major factors: An artistic spirit, keeping organized and, most of all, networking. Her gift is unique, an ability to capture the emotion, movement and light of a subject. While her artistic nature is the foundation of her business, it would be nothing if not for her husband.

"I'm married to an amazing man, an engineer who is all about working smart. He helps balance me," Ms. Jones explains. He helps keep her organized, grounded for the minutia that owning your own business demands. She is not your typical "stay-at-home" mom; she's rarely ever home.

Networking was not something she needed to research; it was something she did naturally within the scope of her children's lives. "I run a home-based business that has translated into play-dates, church groups, Mom's Night Out, not to mention the great friendships that happen at the local playground. As a result, I've run into other moms who work from home, we have in turn collaborated on some fabulous projects," she says.

Through the highs and lows she has developed a business that will continue to grow as she strives to delve deeper into her creative nature. In hind sight she shares a pearl of wisdom. "Rent until you can buy, and remember, less is truly more."

Successful business plans always include a great amount of energy toward networking and women, who are more verbal and relational by nature, are reaping the benefits. Shannon Proudfoot of Canwest News Service reported, "Female workers get by – and earn more – with a little help from their friends, a new study shows, but men don't enjoy the same boost from their social networks." Her article is based on a study done by Oregon State University.

There are two organizations in Frisco that facilitate the networking needs of Frisco women in business: the American Business Women's Association, (ABWA) and the Business and Professional



Women's organization, (BPW). These groups serve as a forum to create the synergy that develops as women come together from a myriad of professional industries, gifts and backgrounds. They provide opportunities to grow professionally as well as personally.

Nina Barr is the current president of the Business and Professional Women's Chapter in Frisco. They meet once a month at the Frisco Embassy Suites to discuss a variety of topics such as Tax Advice for the Self-employed and

Preparing a Business Emergency Plan. Ms. Barr has been a member of the BPW for the past 24 years. Since that time she has been employed as a certified public accountant, established her own business providing accounting and tax services for small businesses and is currently the Vice President of Finance for two home-based travel businesses she manages with her husband.

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Promotion and Services deals more widely with helping create specific international experiences for clients such as what ports they want to stop in, length of stay, etc,” Ms. Barr explains. When it comes to cruises there isn’t much they can’t accommodate and industry knowledge has played a major role in their success.

“Industry knowledge is priceless,” shares Ms. Barr. “My husband/business partner has been in the travel business for years. It’s best if you’re going to start a business that you go into an industry that you know about.” Another key factor to her success has been networking within the BPW.

“Having a network of people around you that you feel comfortable calling on has been instrumental. I can ask for advice, or share that I’m feeling overwhelmed, and there’s always someone there to give me counsel and wisdom. I also learned not to be afraid to ask questions.”

She has achieved some things the hard way but being persistent, trudging through the quagmire of learning experiences, has been necessary. Opening an e-commerce site has been her most recent educational experience while re-evaluating banking options was an earlier one.

Working from home has given Ms. Barr more life in her days and more energy for her life. “I like to work for myself because I thrive on the flexibility, the opportunities to multi-task and the fact that I can sit at home with my flip-flops on. When the kids were young I could run down to the school and watch their performances. I don’t think I could ever go to work for someone else again.”

Mary Dorcey is the current vice president of membership for the BPW. She serves as a Business Analyst with Heartland Payment Systems, a division of a credit card processing company located in Frisco. Mary describes herself as a down-to-earth gal that came from a humble hard-working family. That family instilled a strong work ethic, a desire to do a good job and taught her how to make things better.

Ms. Dorcey had so much to share about why she’s so excited to be a member of the Frisco BPW. “The BPW group is about empowering, supporting and encouraging women in pursuit of

whatever goal they may have. We are there to foster new networking contacts, provide speakers on topics of interest around women’s health, business and personal development. Much of our energy goes back to the community and no matter what we’re doing we have fun along the way.”

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Bonnie Bolin Peterson is the brain child of Intentions in Motion as well as a success coach, an Emotional Freedom Technique practitioner, corporate trainer, author and speaker. She is a charter member of the American Business Women’s Association of Frisco, established 2002. She was honored as the chapter’s Woman of the Year in 2005 and in 2007 received the Frisco Charter Chapter’s Woman of the Year of DACA, (Dallas Area Council of American Business Women’s Association), an umbrella for all the Dallas area ABWA local chapters and networks. When asked for advice she focuses on the personal needs of the member in a broad, yet significant way.

“I often tell members that it’s essential to be very clear about one’s intentions and hold that image in mind and heart as you move toward your goal. What you intensely focus on tends to become your reality.” She is motivated by a love to help other women realize that their long-held core beliefs may actually keep them from their dreams.

“By replacing their subconscious beliefs to reflect positive rather than negative energy, women can succeed in whatever they put their minds to. They really can have it all.” Her advice reflects the fundamental standards of a positive attitude, not only with others but of self.

Second to attitude comes hard work.

When Ms. Bolin Peterson started her company, an online business that provides self-development, self-help audio and e-books through her website, the learning curve was significantly steep. It was Kathy Erickson, an ABWA sister, who came alongside her with advice, encouragement and a gifted sense of website design.

Sue Groffie is the owner and operator of The Virginia Rose Inn, a beautiful bed and breakfast located in downtown McKinney. She has been a member of the ABWA since 2003. She worked for seven years at a number of local hotels until she could see her way clear to commit her financial independence on her own inn which she opened in March of 2008. The innkeeping industry is a passion of hers fueled by a personal gift of hospitality.

“It’s all about serving others and if it isn’t your passion, find another industry that is!” Ms. Groffie holds a degree from Collin College in Hospitality Management. One hardship she overcame was returning to a college campus at the age of 40. But as she shared, “Joyce Meyer always says, ‘If you want to walk on water, you must get out of the boat!’ So I got out! I also learned that to succeed you must be relentless in the pursuit of your dreams. Never, ever, ever give up!”

She has been grounded in preparation, passion and an endless amount of support. “I am blessed to have had the support of so many people, my professors at the College, the wonderful women of ABWA that have been cheering me on through my struggles, as well as my fiancé, Jim Gregg,” Ms. Groffie expressed.

Women in business create a significant synergy as they combine their relational abilities with the passions and driving forces that exist at their professional core. Groups that comprise your circle of influence such as schools, churches and hobby groups, as well as organizations such as the BPW and the ABWA, provide opportunities for women to come along side other women, where iron can sharpen iron and the end result is powerful, successful and beautifully feminine.

Cynthia Howe is a freelance writer now living in Aptos, CA. Web site references are also found on page 92.