

News Tips
Letters to Editor
Subscriptions
Classified Ads
Contact Info



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Energy and flow

These women will show you how to transform the stresses of change into positive energy

Photo by Christian Knight

Dr. Sherene Suchy and Pamela Wolter discuss the concepts they will be teaming up to teach throughout their 60-day course

By ESTHER SMITH
News staff writer

Change is good; everyone tells you that. But it doesn't always feel so good.

If the change isn't your choice or if too many changes are happening at once in your home or work life, it can leave you feeling overwhelmed and under a great deal of stress, which is not good. Fortunately you can learn to create positive change and maintain resilience even under circumstances you cannot control.

"Shift Your Life: Resilience Under Pressure," is a workshop that will be offered at Cascade Wellness Center in June by Dr. Sherene Suchy, Adjunct Lecturer with the Graduate School of Management, University of Technology Sydney, and Pamela Wolter, licenced massage therapist and certified hypnotherapist. The workshop will provide intensive training and insights into the relationship between emotional adaptability and change, and offer tools to balance personal energy.

Who can benefit from this workshop? Everyone, from people who are facing a major life change to those in management positions who want to improve their human resources skills.

"People come to these workshops with a variety of change challenges — caring for elderly parents,

dealing with teenagers or changes at work,” Suchy said. “It’s a real mix; I get people across the board.” Or, as Wolter added, there may be no major change at all, they might have just reached a point in life when they’re not happy.

Suchy, who along with a partner launched the workshop in Australia, has been coaching individual and organizational change since 1991. She is on a year-long sabbatical to conduct workshops and to promote her book, “Leading With Passion: Change Management in the 21st Century Museum,” which was released in January.

Wolter has been a massage therapist in Hood River since 1986. A year ago she teamed up with Jolie Lucas-Holt, LCSW, to form Cascade Wellness Center, which has since grown to include a financial counselor, an acupuncturist, and an arts representative. Wolter’s experience with healing and knowledge of the body complements Suchy’s psychology training and organizational expertise.

“When I met Sherene, I found the perfect blend in what she’s been doing combined with what I do,” Wolter said. “I have lots of background in health and wellness, so I could share that with her.”

The workshop is spread out over a 60-day period. According to Suchy, it takes that long to change behavior.

“Studies have shown it takes 11 days from when you sense you want to make a change to when you are actually moved to do it,” she explained. “It takes 21 days of practice to form a new habit, and 60 days for it to become unconscious behavior, and over a year to be completely comfortable with it. Resistance to change is an innate part of our makeup.”

As the first step in the program Suchy tests to find the “Emotional Intelligence” of each participant to use as a baseline. Emotional Intelligence (EI) is an emerging field of science that is being used more and more in business, sports, and elsewhere to create better and more productive team members and managers.

Understanding your own strengths and challenges as a leader and as a person is important in order to learn how to best play to those strengths or manage those weaknesses.

The next step is to have each person focus on the most major challenge he faces, and then work on ways to strengthen his energy and resilience. The tools Suchy and Wolter use for this are nutrition — including learning to eat right for your blood type — exercise, and meditation. Nutrition and exercise work together to boost energy and mood, and meditation and mental imaging to increase resilience and to balance energy, which improves the ability to bend around life challenges.

“The program has a very deep spiritual base as well,” Suchy said. “Not spiritual as in religious — although for some people it may be that — but everyone gets to define that for himself. It could be nature, sports, or whatever else brings you to the state of flow.”

Flow is defined as “the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it even at great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it,” in a book by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, a professor who has devoted his life’s work to the study of what makes people truly happy.

“The workshop teaches how to take a day to day assessment — ‘Where am I today?’ — and incorporates tools and resources for self-directed learning,” Suchy said. “There are exercises to practice for greater resilience and flexibility; the ability to bounce back when you get bent out of shape.”

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[Return to Top](#)