



OurLifeInEstes

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A journey of the heart

“

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— Carol Billingham

Spiritual and business coach helps eliminate obstacles

By Lizzy Scully

On the brightly-colored walls behind Carole Billingham's desk, giant painted flowers seem to lean toward the picture windows. Billingham sits on a comfortable chair, wearing a telephone headset, looking at her computer, but if she looks up for only a moment, just beyond the computer are views of trees and sunshine. The relaxed setting keeps her grounded, and for the type of work that she does, there's nothing more important than being 100 percent present for her clients.

Billingham is a master certified spiritual and business coach, which means that she's a mentor, a guide and/or a counselor for women starting businesses or developing already-existing businesses. She's spent almost a decade taking classes through Coach University, running workshops, doing speeches and working to help entrepreneurs recognize what they really want and need out of their businesses, and how to deal successfully with the stresses in their lives.

"It's about being conscious and creating what you want," she explained. "When you know what you want, and you eliminate the obstacles, things fall into place perfectly." Most people don't really know what they want, and yet they are unconscious of that fact, she added.

"Most people living in our culture haven't looked at what makes them happy and why it makes them happy," she explained. She cites herself as an example. As a child, she toned down her intelligence so that she could better fit in. She realized that smart girls weren't celebrated in American culture, and therefore she acted and convinced herself that she was of average intelligence.

"I think a lot of women have made those choices," she said. "When you're young, you're not wise enough to know what's true and what's not." Even in her twenties, when she began to realize that she could easily get straight As if she tried, she found that men her age were intimidated by successful, smart women.

By that time, however, "I was wise enough to know not to tone it down," she said with a laugh. Now, she said, her work is about empowering women and giving them a chance to shine. Although she's also worked with men, she's realized in the past few years that her heart lies in working with women.

"My own story speaks to women," she said. "We all have our own version of the story, but it's the same story. We are finding our way back to our authentic selves. We all start off



Photos by Walt Hester

Carole Billingham is a master certified spiritual and business coach. She mentors women starting or developing businesses.

pure and enlightened (as babies). When little we are filled with light. Then we start getting messages about who we're supposed to be. The most prominent message is that we're supposed to be people pleasers, be nice, be pretty and make people happy. We start being who we think we're supposed to be. I believe every woman intuitively knows who she is. It's my job as a coach to hold the space for her to step into her authenticity."

To do that, Billingham shares with her clients her own experiences in the business world. She's spent nine years in sales, and numerous years as a high-powered securities broker in Miami, Fla. She had it all, a lot of money, an apartment on the beach and a glamorous life. However, she didn't have happiness.

"I thought success was working harder than anyone else," she explained. "I was chasing success out of fear. I never felt joy; or if I did, it was only for a moment." On a hunch — what she calls an "inkling" or "intuition" — Billingham decided to ditch the Florida stockbroker life and move to Colorado. Over the years she had realized that her true calling was to help people.

"My passion was helping people manage more than their money," she said. She thought about attending Naropa for a degree in transpersonal psychology, but instead began training to be a hypnotherapist. She opened her own clinic, but found that wasn't her true calling either. When she saw an article about professional coaching in the Denver Post, she realized instantly that was what she wanted to do. Now, almost ten years later, she's refined that calling and is working almost exclusively with



Photo by Walt Hester

Billingham says goodbye to daughter Ania. Motherhood, she explained, has taught her to be a better coach.

women.

She values her experiences working with men, but understands that women need to tap into the wisdom of other women. "We need to come together," she said. "We used to get together and wash clothes, and raise children together." In American culture today, she said, women become isolated from each other, and they don't have other mentors or role models. Additionally, society doesn't celebrate traditional feminine traits to the same degree that

they celebrate masculine traits.

Billingham strives to show women how to find their true motivations to start and run a business, while at the same time embracing their true selves and their womanhood.

She begins her sessions by "peeling away the layers of the onion" of a client's mind to help them figure out what it is they really want. "As coaches, we're mirrors," she explained. "We hold up a mirror for you to see who

you really are, not who you think you should be. We don't allow you to do things to yourself that are not ok." She creates a space for them to be real.

"The first step is learning to love ourselves," she said. "We haven't been taught how to love ourselves." Billingham added that women are often harsh and judgmental toward themselves; they don't trust their intuition; and they tend to try to help everyone else before themselves. She works to help women find a way to

"bring love to ourselves as we bring it to the world."

"We're all going out there looking to plug into something that makes us feel good, but we're really looking to plug into ourselves," she said. "People's goals are always about being at peace." In the last few years, Billingham says she's really begun to understand the power of the woman's journey. "It's a spiritual journey about being in their hearts."