

Instead of running in a circle, try joining one!

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For years CEO's, executives and entrepreneurs across North America have been using peer mentoring groups to help them become their best – but at a price. Now anyone can create their own Executive Circle, and can achieve their personal and professional goals, when and where they choose – and save the membership fee. So promises the new book: ***One Circle-Tapping the Power of Those Who Know you Best. The Essential Guide to Creating a Personal Advisory Board*** (Quinn Publishing) by Maureen Fitzgerald, PhD. It is the first do-it-yourself book on how to create and maintain a peer advisory board.

Vancouver lawyer and author, Maureen Fitzgerald created a distinctive technique for creating a powerful "Executive Circle" and is determined to help everyone find their own Circle. As she says, "Circles are an efficient tool for obtaining wise advice, generating contacts, solving day-to-day problems and gaining support and connection. As busy professionals we don't have time to spend with a lot of people. In a circle you create comrades, who know you and your business, in a very short time." Shelley Leonhardt, a VP and coach has been in a Circle for a year. "Being in a Circle is like no other group", she says. "Not only do I feel completely supported, but the group continually challenges me in all aspects of my life and business. Now that I am in a Circle I wonder what I did before."

Refusing to pay the high fees to join established clubs, which did not guarantee any real level of satisfaction, Fitzgerald decided to set up her own, more intimate, group. In doing so she created a simple process that anyone can follow. "I was tired of luke-warm networking meetings" says Fitzgerald "I wanted to create a group that would support me unconditionally. I wanted a book club with teeth." She applied her 20 years expertise in conflict resolution and team building and developed a step-by-step method that ensures that conversations go deeper and groups last longer. These confidential groups of 6-8 people meet monthly to share stories, provide sage counsel and support each other in pursuing their goals. Circles can be used inside corporations for mentoring and leadership and by entrepreneurs and executives for business and personal development.

Fitzgerald's book *One Circle* contains everything needed to set up a successful Circle. Readers will learn how to find the right members; facilitate the meetings; make the Circle safe for candid conversations and deal with problems within the group. This model involves the group participants agreeing to five Circle Principles, applying four Circle Practices and adopting a seven-step Circle process. Fitzgerald is launching One Circle with the "100 Women Project" and has offered to establish 100 women in a circle. "In a society where individualism and fear are rampant, people need more than ever, to connect with others for their sanity and their success. My aim is to have everyone in Circle, where they can belong" says Fitzgerald. "It's like a club for everyone."

Maureen will be speaking about her new book on September 21, 2006 at the Vancouver Public Library at 7:30 in the Peter Kaye room.

Author: Maureen Fitzgerald, Ph.D. is a lawyer and mediator. She is the author of six books including *Corporate Circles*, *Mission Possible*, *Legal Problem Solving* and *Hiring, Managing and Keeping the Best*. She has a business degree, two law degrees and has taught law at two universities. As president of CenterPoint–Conflict & Collaboration Inc. she is dedicated to helping organizations and groups have authentic conversations. She can be reached at info@CenterPointInc.com

Note to media: This topic is relevant to stories on Networking, Mentoring or Entrepreneur and CEO and Executive Success Strategies

For media interviews, advance copies of the book or for more information, please contact Angela Clarke, Publicist, at 604.541.1132 or email avclarke@shaw.ca