

ALTERNATIVES
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Unsolicited articles and press releases are welcomed. Event Reviews are most welcome. Testimonials and political discourse are discouraged. Editor reserves the right to choose final content.

Provide submissions in Microsoft Word format. (.txt, .rtf files acceptable.) Email to content@AlternativesNews.com. Deadline is the first of every month.

Or submit file to:
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Typical length is 600-1000 words. Artwork or photographs welcome. Cover art welcome & 1/16 biography space will credit materials.

Please enclose SASE for return of materials.

Letters to the Editor should be original and no longer than 400 words.

Editor reserves the right to edit for clarity and length without author's approval.

Goal Sisters

by Ann Leach and Michelle Beaulieu Pillen

Friends Ann Leach and Michelle Beaulieu Pillen meet quarterly over lunch to talk about their goals. Outfitted with their calendars, journals and markers, they enthusiastically launch into conversation.

"Made any progress on your Web site goals?" asks Ann, after she orders her sandwich.

"I contacted several designers I found as well as the one you suggested. They're all excited about the project," reports Michelle. "My part of the proposal is due on Wednesday. Can you call me on Tuesday at 10 to check-in on my progress?"

"Sure can," says Ann, as she writes "Ask Michelle about proposal" in purple marker and draws a picture of a telephone next to her calendar entry. "By the way, I thought of you when I read these articles." Ann passes several articles to Michelle. "They describe the pros and cons of the newest design software."

"Thanks, I definitely need to research my options. Don't want to mess up on my money goals!" Michelle stashes away the articles and looks at her open journal page entitled, "Ann's Second Quarter Goals." "So, how are you doing with your fitness goals?"

Ann puts down her sandwich, and replies, "Great! I'm drinking eight

glasses of water every day, lifting weights five times a week, and I started water aerobics two weeks ago! I love how I feel after my workouts!"

"Way to go, Sister!" Michelle raises her water glass and clinks Ann's glass.

Ann beams and says, "Thanks! I'm worried, though, about balancing my aerobics schedule with my writing commitments. Remember how overwhelmed I got during my last round of article deadlines? I'd like for us to brainstorm ideas on how I can keep managing my time."

Michelle signals for the waitress and says, "Let's brainstorm after we order coffee and something chocolate. Then we can talk about our next quarter's goals."

Such a conversation serves as a connecting point for women who use the goal-achievement process described in Leach and Beaulieu Pillen's new book, *Goal Sisters: Live the Life You Want With A Little Help From Your Friends* (New World Library). This dynamic duo developed the Goal Sisters process almost a decade ago, when Michelle launched her own consulting business and Ann relocated to another state. Realizing that they needed more than an action plan, the two friends sought each other out for support, motivation, fun and focus as they kept each other accountable for their goals. Ann and Michelle have achieved many personal and professional successes since then and are committed to sharing the process with as many women as possible.

What is a Goal Sister?

A Goal Sister is a blend of the best parts of your childhood and adult friends: a cherished confidante, buddy, cheerleader, muse and guide. A Goal Sister is a woman who supports you to create and achieve your dreams and goals. Her values and beliefs are compatible with yours. She listens to your heart's desires and holds your vision. She provides suggestions on how to make your goals become your reality. She validates your feelings, inspires you and offers a different perspective on situations that may bog down your progress. A Goal Sister gently challenges you and holds you accountable for creating the very best life you can imagine. She trusts that you can do it, in spite of and in conjunction with all the other demands you have on your time.

What kinds of goals do Goal Sisters achieve?

Goal Sisters are all kinds of women who have all kinds of aspirations: Some want to change careers, some want to lose twenty pounds, some want to be closer with their partners, some want to do more of the things they love, some want less stress in their lives, some want more meaning in their lives. Some want to make small changes, some want to maintain achievements, and others would like to want to take giant leaps of faith.

How do Goal Sisters help each other achieve their goals?

Goal Sisters meet to talk about goals and support each other as they work on their goals. Some Goal Sisters meet monthly, others meet quarterly. Goal Sis-

ter meetings often take place over meals and typically last up to an hour. Goal Sisters create personalized action plans that encompass goals in the areas of job/career, physical and emotional health, significant others, family and friends, spirituality, money, personal growth, environment, creativity, play and volunteer service. Goals Sisters check-in with each other on progress made since their last meeting, share information of interest and exchange gifts. The meeting ends after Goal Sisters commit in writing to maintain current goals and/or achieve new goals.

What happens in between Goal Sisters meetings?

In between meetings, Goal Sisters maintain contact with each other via instant messaging, email, telephone or in-person exchanges. If you get stuck working on your goals or if you encounter fears and self-doubts, you can contact your Goal Sister; she can help you manage these issues and problem-solve difficult situations. You can also help each other to find time in your busy schedules for self-care. As your Goal Sister friendship intensifies, you may take overnight adventures away from home. These adventures allow for more time together to have fun, to discuss issues more deeply and to help each other work through tough-to-achieve goals.

Isn't it overwhelming to work on more than one goal at a time?

The reality is that achieving goals in one area of your life often affects other areas of your life. For example, the "get a new job" goal may raise financial issues, which may raise issues related to your significant other relationship. Recognizing the connections in your life, the Goal Sisters process helps you set and achieve different-sized goals simultaneously across multiple life areas. You can make your action plans practical and manageable and take small steps toward realizing big dreams.

What happens if you don't meet your goals?

It's the moment of truth! You and your Goal Sister are getting together for your monthly meeting and she asks, "Did you do what you said you were going to do with your creativity goals?" What if you didn't work on any of your creativity goals? Will your Goal Sister berate you or get up and walk away from your friendship? No. Your Goal Sister will gently ask you what got in the way of achieving those goals. She might also offer suggestions on how to carve out more time for yourself, and she might help you problem-solve about ways to keep stronger boundaries between your work life and your home life. Your Goal Sister is invested in your success and is there to nudge you toward meeting your goals.

Are you ready to make changes to your life by adding more fun and focus to a female friendship? If so, make it your goal this week to learn more about being and finding a Goal Sister by checking out Leach and Beaulieu-Pillen's new book and visiting their Web site at www.goalsisters.com. Then, start living la vida Goal Sister!

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ON THE COVER

The Butterfly

K. Friedrich has been a watercolor artist for 2 years. She lives in Slidell, LA.

"The butterfly painting was a chance for me to grow and stretch as an artist. I wanted the flower and the butterfly to come to life on paper. For me, this involved quite a bit of fear because I had never tried to paint something like this before.

When I finished the flower, it was perfect. I was terrified to paint the butterfly and ruin it. I took a leap of faith and forced myself to finish the painting. It was a moment of artistic and personal growth. I feel as though it is the best thing I have created yet."

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