

SistaFriends Brainstorming Summary

April 16, 2011



15 Amazing & Generous Women Gathered on Saturday, April 16th...

- Anita Antoinette ♥
 - Nina Hamilton
 - Jennifer Smith
 - Sydney Meeks
 - Catherine O'Brien
 - Rhonda Gilliard
 - Dr. Karyn Meadows
 - Tasha Washington
 - Lolita Tolley-Hook
 - Tyeka Grant
 - Jennifer Brown
 - Jennifer Singleton
 - Gail Blair
 - Yvette Lambright
 - Laura Deaton
- ♥ Special thanks to Anita for helping invite such a great group!

...For 2+ Hours and with 1 Goal...

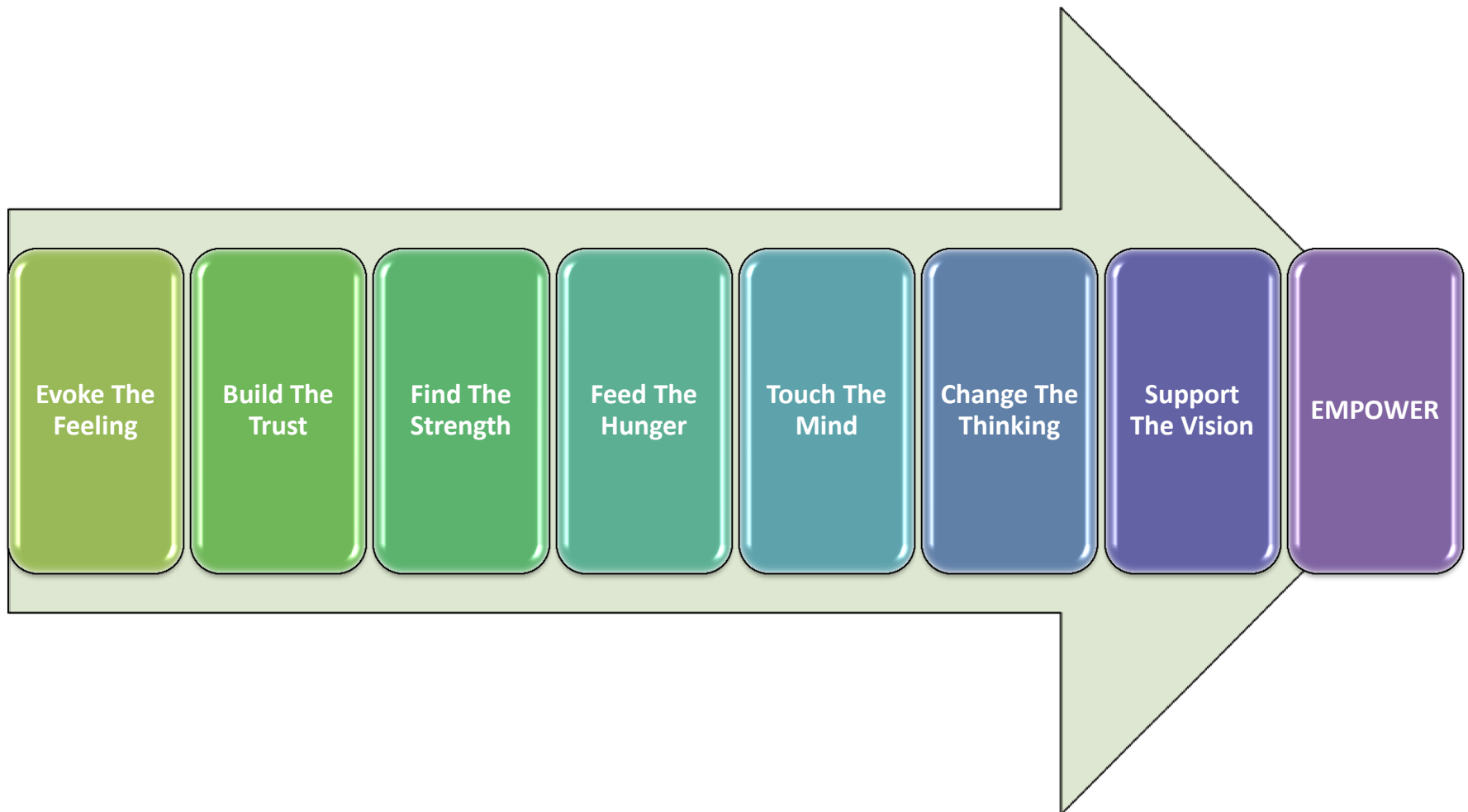
Help create a terrific multi-year program to empower women living in the Neighborhood.

- Focused initially on women who are caregivers for children in the CPN partner schools.
- Must include women in the design of the program from the start.
- Must have a mechanism built in to ensure sustainability.

First, We Talked About What We Need...

- Need a **non-threatening** approach. If we are really going to **build trust**, we need a “**relaxing** space.”
- **Take it to the women** – leaving the Neighborhood is a problem because of **child care** and **transportation**
- We need to be very **honest** at all times and “**walk the talk.**”
- We need to be **consistent** and build a **program that will last**. No “flash in the pan” stuff.
- We need to set **realistic time frames** and give ourselves **enough time** to truly reach the women we want to support.
- Need to help women become “**comfortable in their own skins.**”
- Women **need to know** what they don’t know right now and have access to **trusted resources**, without feeling stupid.
- Women need **someone to sit and talk with**, without being judged.
- This **can’t feel like a traditional “service”** if we want it to work.

Then, SistaFriends Themes Began to Emerge...



Then we got down to the Nitty-Gritty...What could we actually DO?

Exercise Programs – Walking Club, Zumba, Other Sports (Tennis?)

Book Club

Sista-to-Sista Mentoring (Yvette has some great work already done on this aspect that we can leverage)

Sista Brown Bag Lunches

Dinner and a Movie Nights

Cooking – Sell something

Crafting – Create SistaFriends store down the road?

Programs that build income – like Mary Kay/Avon

Great ideas kept flowing...

- Guided art projects...map your life and your future.
- Psychology of colors...women and the rainbow.
- Who was your superhero?
- Film or video project would be cool.
- Small groups/breakout

And flowing...

- Locations in and outside the Neighborhood
 - Food Bank Board room
 - Jenkins
 - CCHSC/King Street
 - CCLibrary
- Indoor and outdoor...picnics?
- Find the existing “Pockets of Powerful Women” and have them be speakers or facilitators.
- Incorporate community service and giving back in some way.

We talked about who might join us...

- Chris Rock's mother and/or wife
- Odessa Williams – Teenage Mom
- Lisa Robinson (Speak Sisters)
- Jonathan Green – the women in his life.
- Communities in Schools website has some great success stories from local women.

...and then firmed up some elements that should always be included...

- Should all be Sistas...“No Titles” rule.
- Should always have a facilitator...a common thread that binds the group in its early days.
- Should have some element of fun and self-care at every gathering...manicures, massages, hair styling, make-up, fashions.
- Should have monthly small groups within the Neighborhood and larger gatherings quarterly, and maybe have an Annual SistaFriends gathering starting in Year 2.

As we wrapped up, the very coolest
idea of all emerged...

“The SistaFriends Café”

- The café is itself “the gathering place.”
- SistaFriends work in the café.
- Café sells products made by SistaFriends.
- Free wi-fi access point and computer access.
- Poetry readings, gallery...
- ...All by, for and with SistaFriends!

We all loved this idea and agreed that this could be
something to shoot for long term...

Finally, we did a quick assessment of the session itself...

What we loved about this time

ENERGY.

Empowered just by
coming!

I'm never too old to
learn.

Great ideas.

Full speed ahead!

Astounding, great ideas

Food for thought

What we wished for next time

More time.

Would have liked to have
specific things to prepare
in advance.

So many great ideas,
hard to stay focused on
where we were...maybe
a printed agenda to
follow?

The Empowered Woman, she moves through the world
with a sense of confidence and grace.
Her once reckless spirit now tempered by wisdom.
Quietly, yet firmly, she speaks her truth without doubt or hesitation
and the life she leads is of her own creation.

She now understands what it means to live and let live.
How much to ask for herself and how much to give.
She has a strong, yet generous heart
and the inner beauty she emanates truly sets her apart.
Like the mythical Phoenix,
she has risen from the ashes and soared to a new plane of existence,
unfettered by the things that once that posed such resistance.

Her senses now heightened, she sees everything so clearly.
She hears the wind rustling through the trees;
beckoning her to live the dreams she holds so dearly.
She feels the softness of her hands
and muses at the strength that they possess.
Her needs and desires she has learned to express.
She has tasted the bitter and savored the sweet fruits of life,
overcome adversity and pushed past heartache and strife.

And the one thing she never understood,
she now knows to be true,
it all begins and ends with you.

--Sonny Carroll