



EXCEPTIONAL WOMEN'S COACHING

## Enjoying ALL Your Communities

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In Tiara, we intentionally create “community.” We overtly talk about what we’re contributing and what we’re receiving inside the Tiara community and the other communities in our lives. We consider whether our communities are fueling us or draining us. And, if the situation is less than ideal, we encourage each other to make requests, to change how we’re participating in the community, or to make some sort of shift to have the community in question be fulfilling.

It can be easy to see how this can work in communities or groups that we’ve intentionally chosen to be a part of such as Tiara or the Yahoo group you created to be connected with other musicians or the book club you joined. What about when you didn’t get to 100% consciously choose to be in a certain community? What if you feel like you *have* to be in a community and it is *not* working well for you? Examples might be parts of your family, a school project team, or your department at work. What if these communities are not fueling you? What do you do?

Here are some ways to shift the way in which a community looks and feels for you:

**Consider that each community does not have to be an equally balanced situation.** Yes, a way to determine whether a community is working for you can be to look at what you’re contributing and receiving. And, it’s not likely that every community is going to give you an equally balanced opportunity to give and receive. Just like in any long term relationship, there are times when you need more support and times when the other person needs more support. Communities are like that. Allow for the ebb and flow. Or, know that there are some communities in which you’ll be a heavy contributor and some communities in which you’ll receive more.

**Look at what you’re contributing.** Often when we feel we’re not getting anything out of a group, it is because we’re too focused on what we’re getting and are not noticing that we’re not contributing what we could. And when we give, we inherently get. Now obviously, a community won’t fuel you if you feel taken advantage of inside of it. And, often, when we increase our level of participation in a community, we enrich our experience.

**Identify your relevant values.** Look to your values, what’s most important to you in life. If your values are fun, family, and partnership; see if these are present and available inside the community. If they are not readily available, how can you create them? If you’re part of a group and it doesn’t feel like family and it seems as if people are interacting on a superficial level, see if you want to reach out and forge a couple of closer relationships. Small steps on your part can make a big difference about how the overall experience feels for you. You don’t have to change what everyone else is doing, you can simply change what you’re doing.

**Set your boundaries.** If the community is not working for you and it’s one you’re going to continue to be in, explore whether there are any boundaries you want to set for yourself. Do you only want to agree to participate at a certain level? Are there requests you can make to improve your satisfaction? We often assume that communities have to continue operating the way they’ve been operating. A shift initiated by you may augment the experience for everyone.



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**Accept what you can't change.** If your efforts to restructure a community or change the way it operates are met with continued resistance, you may need to accept the community as is. Instead of repeatedly trying to change an aspect of a community, you can change your relationship to it. You can accept it. When you stop actively resisting a circumstance, you can lessen your frustration about it.

Choose a community that currently is occurring as less than ideal for you. Try one of the suggestions included here. What happens? Are you able to shift how the community works for you?