

Business Courier of Cincinnati - December 7, 2009  
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## BUSINESS COURIER

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# Change the world? Start with the one in mirror

Business Courier of Cincinnati - by [Karen Bells](#) Senior Editor

Mary Pierce Brosmer's philosophy could be embodied in a quote from Indian political and spiritual leader Mahatma Gandhi: "We must be the change that we wish to see in the world."

**Women Writing for (a) Change**, the writing community she founded in 1991, has a mission that's a similar mix of simplicity and complexity: "Make the world a better place through truth-telling."

But that goal isn't pursued through work "out there." Instead, the path of Women Writing is traveled through interior work, using writing as a spiritual, creative and therapeutic practice.

"When individual people become healthy, their families and workplaces become more healthy," said Brosmer.

Women Writing helps people – primarily women, but not exclusively, despite the name – move toward that healthier place through writing workshops, weekend retreats, marathon writing events and semester-series classes. Members might attend a single workshop or participate for decades. Girls as young as 8 are involved – through Young Women Writing for (a) Change, which also presents writing events at schools – and the oldest participant is 96.

Brosmer and the team at Women Writing – there are three paid staffers and additional workshop facilitators who have completed rigorous training – are continually working to help more people adopt the structured writing practices. The Silverton-based "mother school" has licensed eight "sister schools" around the country, with owners trained through its **Feminist Leadership Academy**; that program also certifies people to use its methods and practices in nonprofits, businesses and educational settings. And Brosmer just published a book sharing the story of Women Writing. (See box).

### Businesses participate, too

About 25 percent of the company's work is business consulting, through its Consulting for a Change. It offers workshops, retreats and counseling to businesses in a variety of industries, both on-site and off-site.

For dentist Dennis Murphy, working with Consulting for (a) Change for the past year has been eye-opening. His dental practice in Clifton wasn't doing poorly. "We had been sailing along and doing OK," he said.

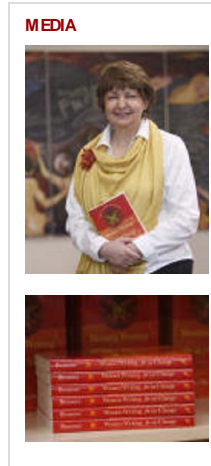
But Murphy sensed things could be better, and he wanted to improve the communication and relationships he and his staff of six have with each other and patients. After 30 years in practice, Murphy expressed a sentiment Brosmer hears over and over.

"I have tried all kinds of out-of-the-box practice management methods, and they just never felt right," he said.

Murphy began as a private client of Brosmer's and then expanded the work to involve the entire team. Over the summer, the dental practice scheduled an entire workday without clients and attended a daylong retreat. Brosmer also has conducted in-office sessions for the business and attended its staff meetings, and Murphy has committed to having Brosmer participate in its monthly meetings through 2010.

The work has been helpful, Murphy said, but there's plenty of progress to be made.

"It can be pretty intense," he said. "We're taking a step forward and a step back, gaining a bit of



ground.”

That intensity is something that might surprise new practitioners of the writing practices, said Brosmer, who bristles at those who dismissively call it “touchy-feely.”

“This teaches a personal and organizational operating system,” Brosmer said. However daunting the task, it asks of participants, “Is there a safe place for, and do you have a set of practices where you can find out who you really are?”

#### **Learn More**

- Visit [www.womenwriting.org](http://www.womenwriting.org) to find out about classes, including a free monthly sampler, or buy the new “Women Writing” book.
- Upcoming events for the book: 10 a.m.-noon Dec. 17, Loveland’s Amazing Women Holiday Gift Boutique at Blue Chip Gourmet, 200 W. Loveland; and 2-4 p.m. Jan. 9, Barnes & Noble, Newport on the Levee.

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