

Arts & Life

Wilton Villager

RELEASING STRESS



Photos by Alex von Kleydorff

CORE ENERGY Above, Judy Gotlieb, left, takes her frustration out on a punching bag held by Marsha Antkies. Below, they illustrate a power struggle through a game of tug of war. The women are certified Core Energetics instructors and are offering a group workshop next month.

Women's group helps empowers clients and releases frustration

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WILTON — In a world filled with business meetings, teachers' conferences and after-school activities, people have various ways of coping with daily stress. Whether working out at the gym, practicing yoga, meditating or involving themselves in a hobby, different strategies work for different people.

Judy Gotlieb and Marsha Antkies, certified Core Energetics instructors, have a unique approach to dealing with stress and the feelings associated with a busy lifestyle, and it includes a rubber mallet.

"We all sit with energy in our bodies, and when you express it physically, it helps to get you out of your head," Gotlieb, a Wilton resident, said.

Gotlieb's home office is filled with tools including a large rubber cube, a giant medicine ball and, of course, the mallet.

During a recent interview, she and Antkies demonstrated a number of techniques including tug of war, which represented a power struggle between two people; rolling back and forth on the medicine ball to expose vulnerability; and hitting the cube with the mallet to release frustration.

They also stood on opposite sides of the cube, banging their hips, or the core of the body, against it in an effort to release stress and express their feelings.

The Institute of Core Energetics was founded by Dr. John Pierrakos in 1973 as a way to redirect energy, or the "life force" within the human body.

"It helps people drop into a place of inner wisdom," Antkies said.

"It's about slowing people down," Gotlieb said, "Helping them be grounded in the present moment so they can know what they really need in the moment."

Next month Antkies and Gotlieb will offer a weekly women's group that focuses on the strategies of Core Energetics.

The two-and-a-half-hour session is geared toward empowering women, and helping them on their journey toward personal growth.

"The goal is to become more of who you are," Gotlieb said.

Gotlieb started the program about 20 years ago, when she started seeing a Core Energetics practitioner on a regular basis. She decided to become certified in the program, and is now a member of the Institute of Core Energetics faculty.

"I've become more honest, direct and open," she said of her progress. "I don't hold back in the way I



used to. I'm more empowered. I've taken more risks in my life."

Antkies, who is certified and also sits on the faculty, said she reclaimed more of her "Marshanness" since starting the program years ago.

At 4 feet, 11 inches, Antkies said she's found she's a "pretty powerful person."

"I used to play it small," she said. "It empowered me to stand out there and say this is who I am, and not try to play subservient to other people. That was all a lie."

Both women believe the group dynamic is helpful because it helps women see that others share the same issues.

Antkies said the results don't happen overnight. "It sneaks up on you," she said. "All of a sudden you realize your behavior pattern has changed. You may be willing to take more risks. You may be willing to fail."

Gotlieb said that because the program takes time, they ask women in the group to commit for the season, which runs through June.

The physical aspect of Core Energetics is just

one component of the group exercise, and it's not required.

Gotlieb said the group challenges beliefs women learned during childhood.

"We followed a set of rules," she said. "You have to give to get, the world is a dangerous place. We challenge some of the belief systems some people have."

Antkies said people can become stuck, but when they go against the norm, they become empowered.

"Some people go out and get better jobs because they're stronger and more powerful," she said. "Others go back to school because they believe they deserved it."

Antkies also said the confidential group meetings are very personal.

"They get to know each other in ways that even the closest people in their lives don't know them," she said. "There's a certain intimacy not easily attained elsewhere."

Group sessions are \$60 per week. For more information, or to register, call Gotlieb at 834-1012 or Antkies at 438-9526.