

Sisters woman leads retreat in Bali

By Sue Stafford
Correspondent

When Sisters resident Kelly Sheets is asked to talk about her Curiosity Experiment endeavor, her eyes light up as she leans into the conversation, full of energy and enthusiasm.

“All of my experiences — travel, recreation therapy, business, yoga, meditation — have provided the groundwork for this project. I have learned that I do my best work when I am immersed in what I am doing, instead of seeing a client for one hour once a week. I get energized instead of tired. I am moving all my business to be experience-based.”

In February, she conducted her first intensive five-day/six-night personal growth retreat with a client in Bali.

“I’ve never felt more loved or cared-for as a person,” reported Sheets’ client on the last day of her retreat.

That personal 24/7 attention is made possible by the fact that Sheets has her “wing man,” as she refers to Karen Giannakopoulos, her assistant who sees to all arrangements and details, prior to and during the retreat.

Giannakopoulos interviews the client beforehand to ascertain their food preferences, activities they enjoy, general likes and dislikes, daily routine, any special needs, and anything else that will help customize their retreat experience.

From the information, Sheets is able to determine

activities and experiences that will contribute the most to the client’s personal growth. If they regularly enjoy comfort and luxury, she may have them spending time camping, or hiking rugged terrain.

By challenging their normal routines and belief systems about themselves, in an unfamiliar setting, and asking the hard questions, Sheets is able to help her clients unwind habitual behaviors to explore other ways of being and feeling, and then intentionally choosing how they want to be.

Why did Sheets choose Bali as the location for the retreats? She has lived in Bali for periods of time in the past and is familiar with its exotic environment. It is a place where all the senses are heightened, making it easier for people to tap into their feelings and become more aware of themselves and their beliefs and actions. With Sheets as a knowledgeable guide, they are able to experience themselves in a different way, in a different culture, in a different land.

“The culture is not cluttered,” Sheets explained. “You get what you need,” whether that is experiences, weather, relationships, or sights that cause new thoughts, new actions, new results.

Two concepts form the foundation on which Sheets’ program is built — intimacy and vulnerability. She sees intimacy as an “actual energetic interaction” in which a person experiences a close

personal relationship that is absent any “stories” or limiting beliefs that keep one from seeing what’s really there.

Vulnerability is the decision needed to allow oneself to be involved intimately. By choosing to be vulnerable, a person is allowing another to see their weak spots.

“If I’m not being vulnerable and intimate, I’m expending energy protecting myself,” Sheets explained. “And that is energy that could be expended in positive ways instead.”

Sheets teaches and models three behaviors that contribute to a holistically healthy way of being in the world. Self-awareness comes through daily meditation and movement to create both bodily and emotional awareness. And Sheets asks the tough questions to facilitate that awareness.

Becoming self-responsible allows a person to think, feel, and act in accordance with who they are and not based on the actions of someone else or exterior circumstances.

The final piece is conscious action — decide on how you are going to show up in your day-to-day life, and do it.

Many of Sheets’ clients are people who have received a great deal of external validation because they are so good at what they do. They feel trapped on a treadmill or a hamster wheel — just doing more and more and running faster and faster.

In their work with Sheets they are able to explore what



PHOTO PROVIDED

Kelly Sheets in Bali. Her work pulls together several passions.

else is possible by turning inward and determining how to BE more, and DO less.

Sheets’ initial retreat client experienced a sweet moment while working on rewiring her thought patterns about always “doing.”

“I remembered that I am spectacular!” she exclaimed.

To participate in a customized Bali retreat, start by contacting Sheets for an interview. The retreats take place between October and June. Her current website is www.kellysheets.com.

To accommodate those who would like to experience a mini-version of the Bali retreat, Sheets is offering two-and-a-half day/three night retreats in Central Oregon beginning in May and running through fall. These are also individual customized experiences, during which the

client is able to work on an issue that seems to present the biggest hurdle in their way — powerlessness, lack of clarity, indecisiveness, insecurity, or anything else that is holding them back. They explore their patterns of behavior and where the problem is showing up in their life. The retreats may include outdoor activities, cultural events, shopping, tasty meals, and/or relaxation.

In addition to her retreats, Sheets is developing a deck of cards, with the help of Giannakopoulos, who is a graphic artist, to be used for daily inspiration and shifting awareness. She is also formulating content for a new book and putting the final touches on her new website, www.curiosityexperiment.com. In the meantime, Sheets can be reached at kelly@kellysheets.com.

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