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**Local spotlight**

## **Business consultant a temporary confidante**

Northville woman with a degree in psychology helps using one-on-one sessions and workshops.

### **Christine Snyder / Special to The Detroit News**



Being your own boss has its advantages, but it can be overwhelming, admits Ken Kowalski, owner of Upstairs Downstairs Remodeling in Westland. Kowalski may have four to 20 people working for him, but says he is often alone with his concerns. "I myself would have no one to lean on, if I'm backed up or nervous or apprehensive about a job."

Kowalski found a unique solution to the woes of business ownership -- a business confidante.

"It's lonely at the top," says Donna Marie, owner of Donna Marie Consulting in Northville. "People in general feel disconnected. They don't know how to tap into a source that they feel safe with, that's very confidential and also make lasting changes in the process."

While Donna Marie Consulting has some aspects of both traditional psychotherapy and business consultation, owner Donna Marie says it's different in approach and focus.

"I'm a confidante," Marie says. "I work with business owners, accomplished individuals. I help them in areas to create a new framework for themselves."

Marie usually assesses clients' needs over the phone and suggests a series of sessions. The sessions are usually about three hours long. "This is an accelerated process," Marie says. "They aren't seeing me for months and months."

Besides the one-on-one, face-to-face consulting sessions, Marie also conducts a monthly public speaking workshop called Speak EZ in Front of Groups.

"They are not just getting tips on speaking, they are having an experience in front of a group where they feel a shift in the anxiety and nervousness that is going on in their body when they are speaking in front of a group," explains Marie. "In essence there is a rewiring that goes on while they are there and they notice it."

Marie says she specializes in business owners because of her background. Before starting her own business, Marie worked for General Motors for 25 years in various positions, including managerial. She holds a bachelor's degree in business and a master's in psychology.

"I'm a business owner and those of us that work alone sometimes can feel isolated."

Typical issues Marie helps her clients tackle are stress, chaos, feeling overwhelmed and communication problems. The problem at hand may be professional, but Marie is quick to point out that personal issues are always intertwined. "All business matters and situations can be linked back to personal thinking and ways. They are just in a different environment."

Kowalski says he's used Marie's service a few times as different issues have cropped up in his professional and personal life, including workplace communication problems and easing into a new business partnership.

"We all have our insecurities and we all have our concerns. With Donna she is an outlet to voice them and be heard."

*Christine Snyder is a Metro Detroit freelance writer.*

#### **Donna Marie Consulting**

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- Founded: 2000
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