

PRINCIPLE 10 TOOL: Form Your Own Estrogen Squad

In the middle of a blank piece of paper, draw a large circle and label it **You**. Now draw four other circles around “**You**” and label them Family, Friends, Professionals, and Other.

Now, inside each circle, write the names of one or more women who you feel could be included. (In some cases, the circle might be empty - that's fine.) For example, in your Family Circle, you'd choose one or more members of your immediate or extended family with whom you'd feel comfortable sharing your deepest feelings. Your circle might include your mother or sister, a special aunt, maybe even your teenage daughter. If you think they might like to join the journey with you, all the better.

Do the same for the Friends circle, choosing the one or two women who have given you the most support and encouragement and who might like to join the journey with you.

Do the same for the Professionals circle. Here you might include a therapist, or your family doctor, if he or she is caring and supportive of your goals.

Finally, repeat the exercise for the circle labeled Other. These folks might include a sympathetic acquaintance met in a yoga or Tai Chi class, a local support group, or a weight-removal chat room, or it might be someone from your from a positive group you belong to.

As you fill in each circle, remember that you needn't come up with 20 names. Three or four women will be plenty.

Once you've assembled your Estrogen Squad on paper, you can approach them (or a select few) in person, by phone, or online. Explain that you're embarking on the Body By MJ journey, and that one of the exercises in this lesson requires you to form a support system. Then ask them if they'd be willing to offer support and advice, say, once a day for 10 minutes. This assures them that you won't forever be crying on their shoulder.)

How many self-generated sources of support were you able to find? Chances are, more than you thought!

One more thing: You have to work at maintaining your Estrogen Squad. As would tending a rose bush, you have to be mindful and pay attention to its needs. Trust Me - the blossoms are worth every ounce of sweat.