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Chic Spotlight: Keynote Speaker, Author Kay Fittes

by [Cincy Chic Staff](#) - Oct 6, 2008

Cincy Chic: Why did you start [Strategies for Women's Growth](#) back in 1990?

Kay Fittes: Passion and growth! Working in the mental health field, I periodically had the opportunity to speak, train and facilitate with all-female groups. Those were the most exciting and rewarding experiences of my career. Why? With all women, there was a unique synergy, support and vulnerability that led to spectacular growth! Wow, if only I could feed that passion every day. Only one small problem: I wasn't the boss. Plus, I was eager to grow and help my clients grow by using new techniques, tools and strategies, but remember, I wasn't the boss. So I began asking, "Why not be the boss?" Enter: Strategies for Women's Growth.



Keynote Speaker and author, Kay Fittes, started Strategies for Women's Growth - to help professional women excel. Visit www.StrategiesForWomensGrowth.com to learn more about Fittes' work and the company.

Cincy Chic: What is the most important advice you can give professional women?

Fittes: Stop shooting yourself in your "high-heeled foot" in the workplace! Learn what gender behaviors are putting you at a disadvantage in your career and develop strategies to overcome them. It might be perfectionism; weak language; an avoidance of the spotlight; boundary issues; poor presentation skills; working hard, hoping to get noticed; lack of assertiveness, etc. The list is endless. Remember, competence and hard work alone will not get you where you want to go in today's marketplace.

Cincy Chic: You are a trainer, speaker, consultant, author, coach and trainer to the business, medical and educational communities. How do you manage to juggle so many professional hats successfully?

Fittes: Sometimes things never change. The venues may be different, but the issues are quite consistent for women, whether the job is in government, corporate America, education or health care, etc. Consequently, my work is to package the information in the form needed. It's really not as daunting as it sounds.

Cincy Chic: You offer several programs/keynotes about different topics such as "Secrets of Successful Women: Unlearning the Lessons Mother Taught You for Success," "Leaders Wear

Pantyhose, too: Bringing Out the Leader in Every Woman” and “Women Working With Women: Can You Survive?” among others. Which one is the most requested? What are some topics you’re working on?

Fittes: “Secrets of Successful Women: Unlearning the Lessons Mother Taught You for Success” incorporates the foundation of my entire philosophy and my core message. Consequently, it is in demand. In a workplace that is dominated by women, “Women Working with Women: Can You Survive” is a hot topic. My program “Presentations That Pack a Punch” is currently being retooled for maximum pizzazz. Many organizations clamor for more on leadership, especially geared to women. Finally, I’m always listening to women to address their wants, needs and fears. Who knows, the next new program might be a result of responses to this article from *Cincy Chic* readers.

***Cincy Chic:* How did you come up with the Six P’s for Career Success? Which is the most important to learn?**

Fittes: Intense study and a blinding flash! When Strategies for Women’s Growth was in the formative stage, I spent untold hours studying the literature, researching, interviewing and pulling upon 20 years of experience with women. One night sitting on my bed with books, files and notes all around me, it was apparent the issues divide into six categories, but I had no name for them. Frustrated, I went to sleep but awoke with the profound “Aha!” that power was at the root of each needed skill and each built upon another, in the form of a pyramid.

Hence the Six P’s were born:

1. Powerful Personal Esteem
2. Powerful Professional Esteem
3. Powerful Verbal Language
4. Powerful Non-Verbal Language
5. Powerful Presentation Skills
6. Powerful Self-Packaging

As in any other pyramid, the foundation is critical. Without Powerful Personal Esteem, the other skills are like putting makeup on bad skin.

***Cincy Chic:* You wrote “How To Raise Your Self-Esteem,” a self-enhancement system for women. This text is part of the curriculum of the Hamilton County Justice Center Women’s Substance Abuse Treatment Program in Cincinnati. Why do you think women have self-esteem issues?**

Fittes: When one looks at the statistics for women, it’s a wonder we have any positive self-worth at all. Consider the following:

- Over her lifetime a woman is twice as likely as a man to experience depression.
- 20 percent to 25 percent of all women have been sexually abused.
- 25 percent of all women have been physically abused by a man with whom they have had an intimate relationship.
- 90 percent of all people with eating disorders are female. 99 percent of all women want to change something about their appearance.
- Women still make 77 cents to a man's dollar. According to Catalyst, the non-profit organization that studies women's advancement, women have actually lost ground as corporate officers over the last couple of years.

Expectations for women from society and those internalized continue to be so unrealistic that a sense of failure and lowered self-esteem is almost a given.

***Cincy Chic:* How does Cincinnati rank in terms of professional development services?**

Fittes: We have made some great strides. Consider the Women Excel (WE) programs of the Chamber [of Commerce], the Women's Leadership Collaborative that emerged from the Pulse Study, The Women Executive Peer Exchange Network, numerous programs offered by the University of Cincinnati and Xavier [University] and the many women's networks in various corporations. Yet we have a long way to go to catch up to other communities.

***Cincy Chic:* What's the most over-rated professional development service you keep hearing about?**

Fittes: One of the fundamental tenants of adult learning is adults must be actively engaged in the process to retain information and make significant changes. Consequently, it's amazing how much local organizations spend on sending their staff to large, one-size-fits-all, national seminars. Those dollars could be spent far more effectively.

***Cincy Chic:* How do you spend your free time?**

Fittes: If it looks and smells like an antique, watch out! Our home is filled with antiques, and the quest keeps me busy. When we go on vacations, my husband will wait patiently reading a *Newsweek* while I scour the shops. What a sweet guy. We love traveling: Japan, Bali, England, Scotland, Ireland and best of all, Australia. But fall means weekend road trips to our alma mater, the University of Tennessee, to watch football. Unfortunately, it's not going so great, but there's always next year. The newest pastime is our first grandchild, Samantha. What a cutie and what an opportunity to apply everything I know about developing strong and successful women.

***Cincy Chic:* What's your favorite thing about Cincinnati?**

Fittes: I love the small-town feel but with the advantages of a good-sized city. We live in a community where the person behind the counter at the dry cleaners, the grocery store and the pharmacy all know your name. In a society that is transient and somewhat impersonal, that's amazing. And there are some darn good antique stores around here, too.