

## SIERRA BENDER PRESS KIT

### **Bio**

Sierra Bender is a leadership coach, community organizer, and modern-day Renaissance woman whose work has been featured internationally, in media outlets including *Marie Claire*, *Shape*, *Whole Living*, *USA Today*, *Univision TV*, and *Oprah Radio*. The survivor of child sexual abuse and a rare tubular pregnancy that left her pronounced dead at the age of 32, Sierra's quest for self-healing led her to the ashrams of India, the jungles of the Amazon, and the mountains of Peru, where she studied with shamans, yogis, and indigenous healers. Out of this wisdom, Sierra published her first book, *Goddess to the Core*® (Llewellyn, 2010), and created her trademarked "Boot Camp for Goddesses®" program series -- the #1-selling programs at Kripalu and Omega retreat centers for over a decade.

Sierra is a certified Prana and Kripalu yoga therapist, energy healer, medical intuitive, and holistic nutrition counselor, with specialized training in neglect and abuse, addictions, conflict resolution, aromatherapy, and menopausal health. She also is the founder of the Sierra Bender Empowerment Method® (SBEM), a 4 Body Fit® multi-disciplinary approach to transforming women's physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual bodies. Scientific studies recently demonstrated that SBEM has a 90% rate of efficacy in increasing women's power and self-esteem. Sierra has since partnered with high schools, universities, and government agencies across the country, on a mission to teach SBEM as a tool for fighting against social ills -- such as sexual violence and distorted body image -- through heart-centered work that nourishes the soul and unites people in community.

## **About the Sierra Bender Empowerment Method (SBEM)®**

The Sierra Bender Empowerment Method® (SBEM) synthesizes conventional and holistic medicine, indigenous wisdom, exercise physiology, quantum physics, yoga therapy, and psychology. SBEM teaches that the spiritual is emotional is mental is physical -- meaning that each body needs to be strong, healthy, and in alignment, for optimal health and wellness. To this end, SBEM offers a challenging workout for each of the four bodies:

It trains the **spiritual body** through praying, singing, intuition building, rites of passage rituals, and intimacy practice; it trains the **emotional body** through breath work, aromatherapy, open-share circles, drumming, and massage; it trains the **mental body** through archery, meditation, labyrinth walks, martial arts, and the study of science and philosophy; and it trains the **physical body** through weight training, hiking, dancing, yoga, and sweat lodge purifications.

Through building a foundation of stamina, strength, and suppleness on each level, SBEM's multi-disciplinary, 4 Body Fit® approach has proven effective in breaking the cycles of stress and disempowerment. SBEM facilitates a whole-being transformation -- empowering individuals to claim their self-worth, command their space, sculpt their form, and align their thoughts, emotions, and actions.

## **Areas of Expertise**

- Trauma, violence, and addiction
- Self-destructive behaviors
- Holistic health and wellness
- Relationships and sexuality
- Indigenous medicine and ritual
- Prayer and divine intelligence
- Women's empowerment and leadership
- Sacred sites and the global goddess

## Interview Topics

- **Balance Your Four Bodies.**

We can have the mental power of a scientific genius but the emotional intelligence of a two-year-old. We can have the physical strength of a warrior but the spiritual conditioning of a coward. To be truly fit, powerful, and engaged in Life, we need to be healthy in each of our four “bodies.” The Sierra Bender Empowerment Method® is a 4 Body Fit® multi-disciplinary approach to strengthening the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual dimensions of our lives.

- **Befriend Your Intuition.**

*Stop, look, listen, and feel.* Intuition is the human portal to Divine Intelligence. It awakens us to the truth of a matter – which is why we often try to quiet the intuitive voice! When we act on our intuition, however, we operate from a higher state of consciousness that “knows” with all our senses. We are guided by faith instead of fear, trust instead of uncertainty, hope instead of doubt. When we become intimately acquainted with our intuition and listen to it, we conserve our energy and invest in our future – saving the time and money wasted by poor choices and resulting drama.

- **Awaken Your Core.**

Most women remain unaware of our core power and our untapped potential therein. Because we do not recognize this power, we give it away without even noticing. In a safe and nurturing circle for women, however, we can become intimately acquainted with our inner power and begin to use it in ways that positively impact our lives. We can release old baggage, claim our space, and radiate an inner and outer vibrancy – walking and talking with clarity, strength, and grace.

- **Take a Reality Check.**

We are financially empowered. *Women comprise about half the workforce yet make as little as half of what men make for the same job.* We are sexually empowered. *The sexual script caters to male needs, with 50% percent of women never experiencing an orgasm.* We are physically empowered. *Every day, an average of three women are murdered by their husbands and boyfriends.* Sure, we've "come a long way, baby" from the days when women were property, rape was legal, and only men could vote. But we still have a long way to go. Rape, murder, distorted body image, chronic depression, self-mutilation, eating disorders, and financial disparity are just some of the many social and physical diseases plaguing women and girls today.

- **Eat as if Your Life Depends on It. (It Does.)**

Food is medicine. As with all medicine, it can hurt us or heal us, depending on how we use it. In our fast-paced, modern world, we consume canned food, fast food, and shrink-wrapped food that is disconnected from the source, stripped of nutrients, and laden with chemicals. Our bodies are starving for nutrients and poisoned by toxins – contributing in large part to the staggering levels of chronic illness today. When we "go green" not as a fashion statement, but as a reunification with Mother Earth – eating locally-grown, organic fruits and vegetables, for example -- we return to food as vital nourishment, alive with the vitamins, minerals, and enzymes we need for optimal health. And so we can prevent, manage, and even reverse disease, without the need for costly pharmaceuticals and their potentially dangerous side effects.

- **Go Ahead: Get Angry!**

Women have been taught that anger is "bad" and "unfeminine." Anger, however, is in fact a positive energy – a powerful life force serving as the body's red-alert system. When we experience anger, we become poignantly aware that something is not right. If we then stuff this energy down, we implode – becoming depressed, acting in self-destructive ways, or otherwise dimming our inner light, truth, and beauty. If, to the contrary, we embrace our anger and channel its "juice" in healthy ways, we become emboldened and empowered to take action – enabling us to serve our own higher good, as well as that of our families, friends, and communities.

- **Kick the “Good Girl” Bad Habit.**

Research indicates that the average American woman says, “I’m sorry” 200 times a day. By taking on the role of placating others, we effectively apologize our way out of existence, asking forgiveness for not being a wind-up doll: *I’m sorry for having a boundary. I’m sorry for taking up space. I’m sorry for having my own ideas.* When we refuse to succumb to the Good Girl Syndrome, however -- when we access our core; when we get clear on what we do and do not want in our lives; and when we shift the reference point from others to ourselves -- we create the space for our inner goddesses to emerge, awaken our spirits, and transform our lives.

- **Embrace Your Inner Goddess.**

The goddess archetype has been co-opted -- reduced to a shallow, conventional sex symbol. The authentic goddess energy, however, is the feminine essence -- a woman’s divine “knowing” and expansive sense of self. The real goddess is akin to a diamond – reflecting light, truth, wisdom, beauty, and love. She holds the balance of being flexible and firm, graceful and strong, peaceful and fierce. When women embrace our inner goddess, we refuse to dim our own light or lessen our own power in deference to other people’s comfort levels. We speak truth and radiate vibrantly from our core, without permission and without apology.

- **Learn from a Near-Death Experience.**

In 1995, following a ruptured uterus at age 32, Sierra Bender was pronounced dead. As medical personnel attempted to resuscitate her limp body, Sierra crossed over into the Afterlife, where the Source of Creation asked her four questions: 1) *Where did you disconnect from Divine love -- not just the emotion, but the most powerful force on this planet, with action and responsibility behind it?* 2) *What were the belief systems -- from your culture, religion, media, and family -- that took you farther away from the source of this love?* 3) *Why do you punish yourself, by not feeling worthy of this love?* 4) *Why do you consistently resist this love, by repeating self-defeating behaviors?* Not only did Sierra’s body come back to life, but her spirit was awakened. After living a life full of external illusions, Sierra suddenly felt in alignment with her core power, freedom, love, and intuition, certain she would never compromise herself and go out of alignment again.

- **Take the Throne.**

While 21<sup>st</sup> century women are supposed to be smart, powerful, beautiful, and successful, it is still unacceptable for us to outshine or outperform men. Right at the tipping point of manifesting our full power and true potential, we often sabotage our efforts and come crashing down. Because we equate being truly powerful with being all alone, we typically settle for the classic, co-dependent role of a strong woman *behind* a powerful man. Instead of deferring our lives and power to the status quo, however, playing a role in someone else's kingdom, we need to stand in our power and instigate a paradigm shift, building our own *queendom*. We need to value our own time and energy as much as that of others - walking through the world victorious and courageous, not victimized and compromised.

- **Follow that Goddess!**

From Greece to Israel to Hawaii, the world is full of sacred sites devoted to the goddesses of pre-patriarchal society. By traveling to these spots and praying, we awaken the goddess energy within ourselves, and we pay homage to our ancestors -- validating the existence of those who came before us, proffering respect and care for that which was destroyed, and nourishing our feminine essence and wisdom. These journeys are a righteous passage, an inner quest, and an outdoor adventure of a lifetime.

## Interview Questions

- Please describe your near-death experience in your early 30s, and share how it changed your life.
- How has your own transformational journey qualified you to work with others on a self-healing quest?
- Take us through a typical weekend workshop. What is it like?
- What are the science and philosophy behind the Sierra Bender Empowerment Method®?
- Please discuss the outcome of the research that American University and the University of Puerto Rico conducted on your method.
- What are your goals, now that research studies on your method have been completed?
- What are some of the changes that people have gone through in your programs?
- How does your method treat the top social and physical illnesses for women -- such as domestic violence, sexual abuse, eating disorders, depression, addictions, and post-traumatic stress?
- What steps did you take to heal from child sexual abuse?
- How do you define violence against women, and how do you see your method as a response to it?
- How common is sexual violence against women and girls, and why do you think it is so rampant?
- How does sexual violence affect boys and men?
- What is a goddess, and how can women embrace the goddess within?
- In what ways do women not recognize their power, and in what ways do women give away their power?
- Why do women fear becoming leaders?

- What is the difference between surrendering and giving up?
- You say that modern medicine saved your life but didn't heal you. What do you mean by that?"
- Please talk about women's relationship to anger.
- What is feminism today?