



Personal Safety Nets Newsletter

What It Takes To Be Resilient

July 2009, Issue 19

In This Issue

[Denise's Story](#)

[Building Skills](#)

[Award Winning Ideas](#)

[Safety Net Connections](#)

Denise's Story



Just months shy of retirement eligibility, having dedicated over 19 years of loyalty to her employer, Denise was told she'd been an exemplary manager but her services were no longer needed, effective immediately. **In a moment, Denise went from being the primary income earner for her family to the ranks of the unemployed.**

As she packed her personal belongings, her head reeling in disbelief, her thoughts immediately turned to concerns - about her family's financial future. **Denise wondered how she would handle her third life altering loss in less than ten months** - first the loss of her beloved mother from cancer, then her father's recent diagnosis of cancer, and now the loss of

Letters, We Get Letters

Dear Safety Net Team,

Q: How come some people thrive under pressure and bounce back from setbacks? Is there an underlying personality type that is more resilient?

A: First, "resiliency" is defined as: ability to recover readily from illness, depression, adversity, or the like. What better way is there to deal with the changes and challenges that come before us than having a strong Personal Safety Net in place? It's not a personality trait that gets us through; its understanding needed skills and having "go to" people and plans ready. Here are some skills that will help you get started:

Building Skills

In Denise's story (to the left), she has to navigate her present and future. Her life altering losses within a short period of time require her (and maybe you!) to skillfully manage her emotions, not allowing them to control or cloud her logic. Her goal is to not impede resiliency. We're not telling you not to have strong feelings, but try to:



1. **Manage Adversity:** With loss there will also be denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. This is a normal and natural life process for us. What's not healthy is staying stuck in the loss. Like Denise, we must look for the seeds of benefit and focus on all we have not lost. Ask yourself: What can we do with the pain to find a gain?
2. **Recognize and Assess Fear and Anxiety:** It's normal to fear both the knowns and unknowns loss can and may bring. Much of the time, our fears and anxieties are manufactured by our heightened emotions. We must constantly ask ourselves if our fears and anxieties are rooted in logic. If Denise stayed stuck in her fears about employment, those fears may hinder from ever getting back into the work place to become employable.
3. **Choose to Trust:** Upon hearing her boss' words Denise's trust that her employer would forever reward exemplary work, dedication and loyalty was shattered. It is easy and quite normal that our first reaction is to generalize that no one is to be trusted, but Denise didn't. She knew she had to be positive, turning to her faith, and family and friends who had demonstrated they were trustworthy, in past good times and bad - her **Personal Safety Net**. Her resiliency, her ability to

her livelihood. Her senses were overwhelmed.

As Denise made the lonely trek to her car, carrying a box of memories, wondering how her bills would get paid, how she would deal with this abysmal job market, she rehearsed how she was going to explain this loss to her family. Deep hurt, despair and a feeling of loneliness flooded her being. How had so many years of hard work, dedication, loyalty and trust been so easily dismissed? She was sure **the natural reaction of everyone in this situation was anger and disappointment** - and she was no different.

As she sat in her car her fears and anxieties were interrupted. It wasn't like her to drift into negative thoughts, and she knew she had no time for self pity. Her family counted upon her too much. Denise, almost speaking out loud, asked herself: "What do I have?" **She reflected upon those who had and could support and help her.** She had her loving and supportive family and she had cherished friends. She had her faith, which had not failed her. She also had passions not yet pursued.

As the parking lot faded into the distance she turned to her faith for answers to what had been planned for her. She sought courage to adapt and to be resilient in order to embrace the opportunities in her future. Denise decided she was not going home to face her family with her head down. **She would focus upon her personal safety net, with all its support, and the road in front of her.** She was certain that all had not been lost.

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deal with the trouble and seize new opportunities, would be dependent upon her ability to trust those who can and will support and encourage her.

Content courtesy of Sue Mackey, The Mackey Group

Award Winning Ideas



Earth Day 2009 saw the presentation of the first national **Living Now Book Awards** to authors who help readers learn about enriching their lives in wholesome, Earth-friendly ways.

In all, 96 medals were awarded in 28 categories, chosen from 545 total entries. Personal Safety Nets® received the Silver Medal in the (somewhat surprising to us!) category "Grieving/Death & Dying."

Seattle-based authors, Dr. John W. Gibson and Judy Pigott, are the co-founders of Personal Safety Nets® the workshop and consulting agency dedicated to spreading the news that interdependence and community are stronger than isolated independence. Now in its third year of operation, Personal Safety Nets® teaches skills and offers guidance on creative ways to fulfill our fundamental human need to build and maintain strong networks of support and creativity, preparing us for future changes and challenges and helping us achieve wellness in our personal, community, and work places.

"This certainly is a great honor for Personal Safety Nets®," said Judy Pigott. "It's nice to see awards that recognize and reward books that help readers navigate the inevitable ups and downs of their lives."

The Living Now Book Awards are presented by Jenkins Group of Traverse City, Michigan, where they've been involved in book packaging, marketing and distribution since 1988. "These award-winners make up a must-read list for gaining knowledge about life-improvement goals we'd all like to achieve," said Jim Barnes, the awards director. "We owe a debt of gratitude to the writers of books that enlighten readers, bring families together, and make the Earth a safer, healthier place."

[Learn more at LivingNowAwards.com.](http://LivingNowAwards.com)

Safety Net Connections - Good Ideas, A Click Away



[Community Alliance for Global Justice - Dinner and Fair](#)

Seattle, WA - July 18, 2009, 3-11 PM

Join Personal Safety Nets for this always enjoyable family and fun event. This year's Fair will involve multiple organizations presenting their work

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Our Writers

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Sue Mackey

[More About Sue](#)

to the public, including hands-on workshops. It's an opportunity to learn about food and farming directly from the farmers and food workers. Enjoy live music, hors d'oeuvres and libations!

[Workshop: Strengthen Your Safety Net Now](#)

West Seattle, WA - Sept. (TBA), 2009

In this highly interactive two-part workshop, we'll help you assess and build your own personal safety net; the people, plans and resources you should have in place for life's inevitable challenges.

We've moved! The Personal Safety Nets office is reopening July 13, 2009, in the heart of the West Seattle Alaska Junction.

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