

# Personal Safety Nets® e-Newsletter



The "Stories to Tell" Edition

December 2011, Issue 45

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## Santa's Backpack



*Ed. Note: As another holiday season approaches and another year comes to an end, we've been looking through Santa's Backpack with the idea of sharing from the letters, articles and comments that have come our way. With all the joys and warmth of the holiday season, let's remember, there's also a darkness to this time of year. A Personal Safety Net can help. Enjoy - the story, and the holidays!*

## Down Your Chimney This Year?



**Oh, no! Not another tie or photo album!!**

Want to give a gift that keeps on giving? Want to do something *really* nice for those at work, in your favorite organization or club, or for your ever-growing, extended family (of 10 or more)?

**What could be better than treating them to a FREE Personal Safety Nets® seminar?!**

Personal Safety Nets® is moving towards its goal of putting 5,000 copies of our book into prepared hands to remind people of how teamwork can help!

**From now until June 2012, most seminars are**

**Ana writes:**

**". . . I created what you call a "Personal Safety Net" which I called a vessel that consisted of four friends who knew my story.** No, the friends did not know each other. I felt that they may need the support of one another should they become scared. I recall how I asked them. I said that I was in a deep depression . . . I knew how to make it though . . . (and what I needed) was to know if they would be there if I needed to talk.

**Yes, just telling them and them agreeing to be there if I needed to talk gave me the strength and a sense of safety** to make it through the recurring suicidal fantasies. The 'amazing love and bravery' was in that they, in fact, trusted me to make it through my way and for then NOT to hover over me in the process as I had requested, but simply to be there if I needed them.

I occasionally called them. One, who lived out of town, called to ask if she could stop by. She did and we simply sat together. Several months later, the break in the depression occurred . . . I . . . called one of the women . . . (who) 'amazingly' said 'just come over'. We said few words as we sat on the floor amidst the files of papers she was sorting. She made me a cup of tea. I just needed to be with her. She was superb in her 'mindfulness' and I made it through the 'black hole' because of it.



**The 'new me' came through in knowing that no matter how difficult life can be there are usually people in my sphere who will help me through hard times and would do it again in a heart beat."**

*Blessings, Ana*



**A Question:**

**It is SO appropriate to focus on Compassion Fatigue - especially during the holiday season - when caregivers are exhausted and overwhelmed!**

**FREE**, and we include a free book for every participant. **This year, give a gift that say you care! Call us today - we're waiting to hear from YOU!**

**Here's a salute to more of the great people and groups who hosted our seminar in 2011:**

**\*OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE**

(A Ministry located in West Seattle, Washington)  
 Comments included: "I should have invited all the people in my neighborhood.



This information would be useful for everyone."

**\*SIGHTLINE** (Researches the best practices in public policy for a sustainable northwest.)



Comments included: "This was great! A wonderful reminder that I do have people in my life that are willing and want to help me."

**\* TOGETHER CENTER**

(Creating access to human services, so people can find help when they need it.)



Comments included: "Really useful information and insight - that I need to put in practice."

**\*ANEW** (A non-profit offering comprehensive trades training to low-income women living in King County, Washington.)  
 Comments included: "Thanks for a thought provoking session!"

**\* UNITED WAY OF KING COUNTY**

Ariel Kaminer, "The Ethicist" of the New York Times received this letter asking (Note: edited for space) . . .

"My boyfriend of one year has been given a diagnosis of terminal cancer. He has no family around, and I have been his primary caretaker. . . It is harder for me to continue at this level. My desire to look after my own needs, personal and professional, and my guilt for feeling that I could be deserting him are becoming overwhelming. What is my responsibility?"



**The Ethicist responded: "Don't think of this as a choice between total care and no care, between perfect ethical behavior and complete ethical failure."**



There are two reasons for not thinking of this as a choice between two extremes. The first is that there are so many places **the girlfriend might move along that care continuum -- so that she cares for her own health, heart and head while providing loving support.** The second is that there isn't a "Perfect" ethical position. **Ethics, by definition, is that place where there is a choice to be made between**

**two equally ethical paths to follow.** It would follow, then, that there couldn't be ONE "perfect" position. **We'd love to have you write with what you think a good answer might be to this girlfriend's question.**



**An Good Idea:**

This comes courtesy of Bruce Feiler, award-winning author and cancer survivor. (Note: edited for space)

**What do patients like to hear? Here are four ways to help that give to helper and receiver:**

**1. Don't Write Me Back.** All patients get overwhelmed with the burden keeping everyone informed, coddled and feeling appreciated. I appointed a 'minister of information'. But you can do your part, too: If you drop off a fruitcake or take the dog for a walk, insist the patient not write you a thank-you note. Chicken soup is not a wedding gift; it shouldn't come with added stress.



**2. I Should Be Going Now.** You'll never go wrong by uttering these five words while visiting. . . don't overstay your welcome. . . 20 minutes, even less if the patient is tired or in pain. And while you're there, wash a few dishes or tidy up the room. And take out the trash when you leave.

**3. Would You Like Some Gossip?** One surefire tip: a slight change of topic goes a long way. . . sometimes ignoring the elephant in the room is just the right medicine.



**4. I Love You.** When all else fails, simple, direct emotion is the most powerful gift you can give a loved one going through pain. It doesn't need to be ornamented. It just needs to be real. 'I'm sorry you have to go through this.' 'I hate to see you suffer.' 'You mean a lot to me.' The fact that so few of us do this makes it eve more meaningful."

**News & In the News**

**Some of the places we'll be in 2012 . . .**

While we wait to add you to our upcoming seminar list,



(Bringing caring people together to give, volunteer, and take action to help people in need and solve our community's toughest challenges.)

Comments included: "You both made me really think!"

Call us at 206-659-0665 or email us to set up your seminar.

## Wallet Cards

Many have already taken us up on the invitation - the new and improved wallet card is available for FREE to your home or office by mail.

Send us a self addressed, stamped envelope and tell us how many of the new cards to send to you. (One first-class stamp will get you up to 7 cards).



These cards are the very best way to gather needed information and prepare yourself for any immediate emergency, and all challenges that may come your way.

Send your self addressed, stamped envelope to:  
PSN, 4740 44th Ave SW,  
Suite 102, Seattle, WA  
98040

## No Books Required!

Year-end is always a good time to catch up on your reading

we've already booked Personal Safety Nets® seminars at the following places:

**January** will find us returning to **Cleveland High School** to work with their **Student Ambassador Program**, as well as a return visit to work with **ANEW** - the program that helps put women in apprentice positions in the construction trades.

**February** will find us at **Seattle University School of Ministry** for the annual **Search for Meaning Festival!** We'll also be conducting seminars at **South Seattle Community College's Transition Day**, as well as with the staff at **Antioch University**.

**March** already has us visiting the **Guiding Lights Weekend**, speaking at the **Foss Home & Village Development Brunch**, working with the **AmeriCorps Team at King County Housing Authority**, and the very talented counselors who will attend the **Aging Your Way Conference**.



Add your name to this list! Now is the perfect time for you to pick up the phone (206-659-0665) and schedule a time for the staff of Personal Safety Nets® to come and work with your group or organization.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Festivals of Light

Understanding how and why different cultures celebrate and unite during the period of winter darkness helps us to understand and value their efforts to bring hope and promise to the world.

Here's how some celebrate:



- St. Lucia's Day in **Sweden**, following the longest night of the year, honors St. Lucia this day by wearing a wreath of candles.
- Kwanza in the **United States** honors African harvest traditions with candles representing the seven principles of Kwanza which are lit each night for a week.
- People in **France** light Advent Candles on four consecutive Sundays and burns a yule log, a tradition that celebrates the Winter Solstice.
- **Hanukkah**, the Jewish Festival of Lights, celebrates a triumphant 165 B.C. battle and the miracle that one days' oil lasted 8 days until a messenger could return with more.
- On Saint Martin's Day in **Holland**, children carry lanterns and go from house to house singing songs. People give them candy and other treats.
- **Diwali**, meaning array of lights, is a Hindu light festival that symbolizes the triumph of light over darkness.
- Coptic Orthodox Church members in **Egypt** decorate special lamps and candles and give candles to the poor.
- **The Philippines** festival of light is marked by the sight of "parols" or star lanterns.
- The Loi Krathong (loy-kruh-thong) Festival is celebrated in **Thailand** by people carrying their Krathongs (a lotus-shaped vessel made of banana leaves) to nearby rivers, placing a candle inside and making a wish, as they let them drift away.
- In **China** people light their houses with paper lanterns and decorate trees with paper chains, flowers, and lanterns.
- **Mexican** families march from house to house with candles



- and we're making sure it's easy to read all the past issues of the Personal Safety Nets® e-Newsletter library - without having to have lots of papers around.



Simply [click here](#) and happy reading!

**Happy Holidays**



Join us on our [blog](#) and [Facebook](#)

looking for a room at the inn. They are replicating Joseph and Mary's search in Jerusalem.



Finally, if you're tired of the same old Humbug and you need a new tradition, take your family & friends out to see the zaniest holiday show you've ever seen! ***Every Christmas Story Ever Told (and then some)*** runs at **ARTSWEST now until DEC 24, 2011**. It's a funny re-examination of all shows holiday, from Rudolph to "It's a Wonderful Life," with a review of the worlds' traditions thrown in for good measure. **Don't miss this laugh-riot play!** [artswest.org](http://artswest.org) or 206-938-0339.

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