



Personal Safety Nets® e-Newsletter



Things True & Interesting

July 2012, Issue 51

In This Issue

- Letters . . . We Get Letters
- Need Insurance?
- Facts & Fiction
- What or Who Will Save Us?
- Our Workbook - FREE
- Let's See Your Story

Next Up - Retreat For Women

ON August 8th, from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm, join Trudy James (**Heartwork**) and Judy Pigott at a Day Retreat for Women)entitled:

**"Giving and Receiving
Wise Support - Listening
for Inner and Outer
Resources."**



The retreat, which is the opening event of the **Heartwork Listening to Wisdom Series**, costs \$65 per person and will take place at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish Hall in West Seattle. **To register, call 206-985-0400. Space is limited so act now!**

Letters . . . We Get Letters . . .



I love to travel. I pack my bag with all the things I think I will need to keep me happy for the time I am gone: clothes, shoes, books, etc. I am content with taking that small portion of my

Fact & Fiction

There's an email circulating on-line that caught our eyes.

"In an evening class at Stanford University the last **lecture was on the mind-body connection . . . between stress and disease.** The speaker (head of psychiatry at Stanford) said, among other things, that (while) **one of the best things that a man could do for his health is**



to be married to a woman; for a woman, one of the best things she could do for her health is to nurture her relationships with her girlfriends. At first everyone laughed, but he was serious"

The emailer went on to state a number of "claims" the presenter was said to have made, including: 1) Quality "girlfriend time" helps women create more serotonin - which helps combat depression and can create a general feeling of well-being; 2) Women share feelings whereas men often form relationships around activities; 3) Spending time with a friend is just as important to our general health as jogging or working out at a gym; 4) Failure to create and maintain quality personal relationships with other humans is as dangerous to our physical health as smoking!

Since there's always a chance of misinterpretation and confusion, and because we found all of this so interesting, we did some sleuthing and found and talked to the person who gave the lecture - **Dr. David Spiegel**, Director of the Center on Stress and Health, Professor in the School of Medicine, Associate Chair, Stanford University School of Medicine - Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. **The Center on Stress and Health** researches interrelationships among the social environment, mind, brain and body to understand how stress and support can influence health - a field known as **integrative medicine**.



Dr. Spiegel was happy to tell us he did give the lecture and, in fact, did make the statements included in the opening paragraph, including **"one of the best things she (a woman) could do for her health is to nurture her relationships with her girlfriends."**

life with me. When I return home I look around my house and wonder why I have so much stuff; especially when I didn't even use everything I brought with me on my trip. And yet, I was still happy.

When I left my parent's home at 18, I zoomed out of the driveway in my '68 Camero with just my clothes and a sewing machine. It would take a semi to move me now.



Every year I do the Oprah closet thing. This is where you turn your hangers in one direction and as you wear something you switch directions. One year later, I can see clearly what I have worn and what I haven't. At this point, it is off to Funky Jane's, my local, aptly named, consignment store. It is all about lightening my load and keeping me on my path. A wise man once said that at some point we become nothing more than caretakers to the things we own.



As we open up space in our closets we create space in our minds and hearts. Once we have space, we have the freedom to decide how best to use this newfound openness.

Enjoy your summer everyone, and say hi to Funky Jane for me. In Peace, Chris Dormaier

Did you see this one?

Dr. Spiegel also told us research has proven that **creating and maintaining quality personal relationships with other humans is good for our physical health** - although at this point there is no research comparing its benefits to curtailing smoking!



Dr. Spiegel also said such other claims as - quality "girlfriend time" creating more serotonin; women sharing feelings whereas men forming relationships around activities; spending time with a friend is as beneficial as jogging - were not made by him, nor has he (or we) found any research that says any of these ideas are true.

Dr. Spiegel has conducted some ground-breaking research, though. **"Healing And Feeling: Stress, Support, and Breast Cancer"** (recently discussed on *Good Morning America*) provided positive research that **mind-body interventions can improve mood, quality of life and coping skills, as well as alleviate symptoms.**



Spiegel found that stress can elevate the chance of developing breast cancer, and that the stress of



dealing with cancer can both wear down the endocrine, nervous and immune systems, affecting the body's ability to fight disease.

The landmark study also found that women with advanced metastatic breast cancer involved in a support group, along with traditional medical care, not only experienced reduced anxiety, depression and pain, but survived an average of 18 months longer than women who did not take part in a support group. If we can modulate emotional and psychological responses, we can have a direct effect on physical health.



"These studies underscore the importance of treating people's psychosocial needs, not just their biological ones," Spiegel said. **"Integrative medicine needs to be an integral part of cancer care."**



And this is where Personal Safety Nets come in to play. Paying attention to the whole of our lives, to the wellness parts, if you will, pays huge dividends. When **we're well supported by people, plans, and both inner & outer resources we have many more options for addressing any challenge. We have a stronger sense of security and connection. We know who to count on for what, and how to ask for and graciously accept help,**



79 million baby boomers will be entering their elder years in the next two decades. Where will they live? **Elders who live with others are healthier, by 15%.** For older men, rates of depression are more than double for those living alone (30% vs. 12%) -- so says the National Association of Home Builders, 2010 Census, Pew Research Center, as reported in YES! Magazine's summer issue. There won't be enough "homes" or paid caregivers (especially with limited immigration). Is the future, then, bleak? Add this to the fact that while 2010 saw a 14.6% poverty rate in general households, this **dropped to 11.5% poverty rate in Multigenerational homes.**



So, what does good insurance look like? For health, for finances, for having a positive psyche? **Is the future bleak? We think not!** It might just look like **nurturing relationships is the best insurance around!** This might also include **shared housing that reaches across generations.** Over the past six decades we've tripled our living spaces, without trebling the numbers of people sheltered. **Shared housing, entered into thoughtfully, with support, integrity, and a plan (the PSN trio of people, resources and plans) can be good for everyone concerned.** The PSN website has **two** step-by-step downloads to help you.

paying kindness forward. Those support groups that Spiegel found so important, are easily called into action.

(See chapters 1-3 in Personal Safety Nets, Gibson & Pigott, Seattle, WA 2007). It just makes sense, being part of a healthy emotional community keeps us healthier and happier.

What or Who Will Save Us?

"While the West may have been forged by rugged individualism, it's clear that only cooperation can save it."

(National Parks newsletter summer 2012)

What a wonderful phrase! Whether we're talking about allocating precious water in Nevada, as the article discussed, or finding housing, caring for ourselves, or ... or ... or ... **it's turning to others and working together that is effective in creating security. So, with whom will we work?**

One major issue here is a fairly common assumption that it "should" be family members: children, siblings, partner, parents - who are first in line to step in. Wow! Especially for those who've relocated far from family, who are only children, or had a variety of other circumstances, this is disheartening - and avoidable.

Let's think about it. **It's our PSN belief that all family members are not created equal. Some are all-around wonderful and others are best avoided. Most are in between.**

Sister Sue is a terrible money manager, so would it make sense for her dad to look to her to manage his finances when he can no longer do so himself? Not really. But maybe she's dynamite at filling out insurance forms. Uncle Dom belongs to a religious group that does not use Western medicine; is it a good idea for his kids to think he'll be in charge of their medical needs in a crisis? No, designating someone else through Medical Power of Attorney is far more secure. Maybe he'd be much better turned to when heartfelt sharing sessions are needed.

The point is that each family is unique. Each family has strengths and weaknesses, and it only makes sense to see where support is needed, and where to effectively look for it.

Naively thinking that turning to "family," rather than creating a "family of choice" that extends beyond the biological, won't do the trick. And that's why we have seminars, workshops, and classes (link to this list) with the goal of not only avoiding things that are misalignments of strengths and needs, but that get in the way of healthy relationships. **A friend says "don't worship at the altar of false urgency" -**

plan ahead, and look broadly for the support you'll want. Then talk about your plans.



See this video to see the power of the words you use, whether talking to friends, family, or other potential collaborators.

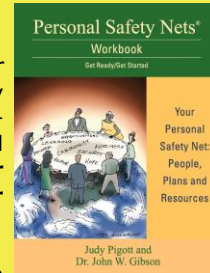




Frequently we hear from readers "I have no family here. I live alone, who will take care of me? I don't have any children. My parents are fragile and with full time work, it feels like too much to give them the care I want; but I'm an only child, and I live alone. My family is far away, I feel so alone" (taken from various emails) Again, **it may be that coming together with others is a promising tactic. A question, then, is whether these need to be people who are related to you. We think not.**

Our Workbook: Get Ready/Get Started - FREE!

We've made it easy for you to simply download our entire workbook by clicking on the Personal Safety Nets Workbook PDF on our home page or click here - and you'll have all the pages, table of contents and the entire appendix. **You can choose to save or print off the pages and have them all for yourself - FREE.**



Tell your friends and family. Direct them to www.personalsafetynets.com. Now's the perfect time to get started - **filling out this workbook will get you started on the road to a complete and very useful personal safety net.**

We'd Like to See Your Story



We're seeking your Personal Safety Net story - how YOU have dealt with a situation by building a network, or gathering with others to solve problems; putting plans, people and resources together to make a task or journey easier.

Relax and tell us your story using your smart-phone and upload them to

info@personalsafetynets.com.

Be A Good Citizen

If you're a voter in King County, WA (and in many other places around Washington state and the county) you should be aware of these dates, and remember one of the best ways to build a stronger and better community is to vote!



Jul 18, 2012 - Ballots mailed for Primary
Jul 30, 2012 - Deadline for in-person registration for Primary
Aug 07, 2012 - Primary Election
For more information call 206-296-VOTE (8683)