



Personal Safety Nets® e-Newsletter



The Lessons

March 2013, Issue 58

In This Issue

Letters . . . We Get Letters

Seen this One?

Every March

Women's History Month &
The Lessons of Friendship

Some Learning - PSN Style

Letters,

We Get Letters . . .



"I really appreciated the workshop I recently attended and your input, especially in relation to building safety nets. I tend to be introverted and in the last twenty years I haven't built many friendships.

Thank you so much for the information of how important that is, **not only for the emergencies in life, but also for sustenance for our souls.**

I began your book, "Personal Safety Nets" the night I got home from the workshop and read nearly the first half of it! I also talked with my husband about the book and the workshop. It was a good reminder to "put my life mask on first" when caregiving and to have people in place and the ability to ask for help when I need it.

Thank you for all the work you are doing."

- Karen

Women's History Month & The Lessons of Friendship

International Women's Day

IT'S OUR DAY!



On Friday, March 8, 2013, groups around the globe celebrated **International Women's Day (IWD)**. In the United State, though, March 8th is just one special day within the whole of **Women's History Month**, with the whole month of March's efforts directed towards learning about and reflecting on a **global effort now over 100 years old**. Out of this comes action! The theme for IWD 2013 is "**A promise is a promise: Time for action to end violence against women.**"

In keeping with this aim, **the House and Senate passed, and President Obama signed, a renewal of the Violence Against Women Act. The newly passed legislation creates and expands federal programs to assist local communities with law enforcement and with aiding victims of domestic and sexual abuse. Most notably, the bill now offers protections for gay, bisexual or transgender victims of domestic abuse, as well as allowing American Indian women who are assaulted on reservations to take their case to tribal courts, which otherwise would not have jurisdiction over assailants who do not live on tribal land.**



Women's History Month got us to thinking about the relationship women have with each other, with violence, and about some research that ties these and personal safety nets together. **A UCLA study suggests friendships between women are special.** "Scientists generally believed that when people experience stress, they trigger a hormonal cascade that revs the body to either stand and fight, or flee as fast as possible," explains Laura Cousino Klein, Ph.D., at Penn State University and one of the study's authors. **The researchers suspect that women have a larger behavioral repertoire than just "fight or flight," each of which has aspects of violence within it.**

From the PSN Staff:

First, thanks to Karen for her kind words. She was referring to her attendance at "Finding & Using Your Inner & Outer Resources" a retreat workshop series presented by Judy Pigott of PSN and Trudy James of Heartwork. This was held in February, at at Our Lady of Guadalupe in West Seattle.



This was the second part of an open-to-all series of half-day retreat workshops for women of all ages. **Each workshop stands on its own - you may attend one or many, and you need not have gone to an earlier one to attend the next one.**



Here's fair warning - so you have plenty of time to get these on your calendar and register:

The next workshop (#3), will be held on Saturday, June 29th from 10 am to 4 pm. It's entitled "Building on and Celebrating Your Inner & Outer Resources." The 4th in the series, "Extending Your Inner & Outer Resources to Build Community" will be Saturday, September 14th from 10 am to 4 pm. Both will be held at Our Lady of Guadalupe in West Seattle.



Even if you've never attended a Heartworks or



Dr. Klein **says**, "It seems that when the hormone oxytocin is released as part of the stress responses in a woman, it buffers the "fight or flight" response and encourages her to tend children and gather with other women instead. When she actually engages in this tending or befriending, **studies suggest that more oxytocin is released, which further counters stress and produces a calming effect. This calming response does not occur in men.**"

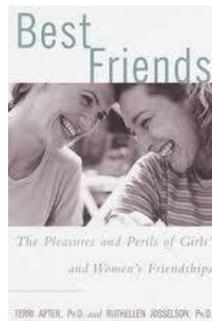
Dr. Klein and her group also **found** that the oxytocin released as part of the stress responses - known as the "tend and befriend" chemical - may explain why women consistently outlive men. **Study after study found that social ties reduce our risk of disease by lowering blood pressure, heart rate, and cholesterol.** "There's no doubt," says Dr. Klein, "that friends are helping us live." In one study, for example, researchers found that people who had no friends increased their risk of death over a 6-month period. In another study, those who had the most friends over a 9-year period cut their risk of death by more than 60%.



Additionally, friends are also helping us live better. **The famed Nurses' Health Study from Harvard Medical School found that the more friends women had, the less likely they were to develop physical impairments as they aged, and the more likely they were to be leading a joyful life.** In fact, the **results** were so significant, the researchers concluded, that not having close friends or confidantes was as detrimental to health as smoking or carrying extra weight!



If friendships between women keep them healthy and even add years to their lives, why is it so hard to find time to be together? That's a question that troubles researcher **Ruthellen Josselson, Ph.D.**, co-author of *Best Friends: The Pleasures and Perils of Girls and Women's Friendships* (Three Rivers Press, 1998). "Every time we get overly busy with work and family, the first thing we do is let go of friendships with other women," explains Dr. Josselson. "We push them right to the back burner. That's really a mistake



because women are such a source of strength to each other."

So, to Karen's point which was made in her letter to PSN (see "Letters" left column in this issue), **friendships and relationships do feed the soul, even as they help ensure that there will be networks of support available in time of need.** And, more than that, they also sustain the body in a more healthy way. **During this year's Women's History Month let's do**

Personal Safety Net retreat or workshop, you'll want to consider these two - chances to better know yourself so you can learn to better interact and make use of support.

These retreats are designed to guide and empower women to take charge of creating and maintaining circles of support.



Seen This One?



Another issue closely related to Women's Month recently came across our desk and piqued our interest.

The Women's Media Center conducted a 2013 research project on the status of women in the US Media. What they found will help you see that gender equality in our media is a goal rather than a reality.



few of the findings:

** At its current pace, it will take until 2085 for women to reach parity with men in leadership roles in government/politics, business, entrepreneurship and nonprofits.*

** Only 17 women at media and technology companies are on Fortune's 50 Most Powerful Women in Business.*

** By a nearly 3 to 1 margin, male front-page bylines at top newspapers outnumbered female bylines*

our individual best to connect with our sisters, to acknowledge oxytocin's effect as we "tend and befriend" (in all realms of life) and decrease the level of violence against all.



Editor's Note: *The CBS News show, **Sunday Morning**, must have been reading our minds. Just this past week their "cover story" was called "Friendship: Close ties that enhance, extend life." Reporter Rita Braver introduces a number of groups and talks about the latest science - which proves friends are very good to have.*

Some Learning - PSN Style

I've been working with my daughter to help her build her personal safety net ever since she left for college. I should have started earlier!

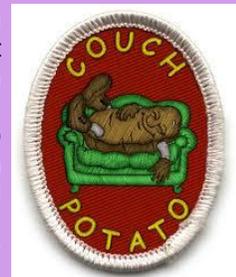
With her permission, I've used many of her trials and tribulations in our seminars. Now there's been a banner "teaching moment" that I think applies to many. Sooner or later our kids move away from home. Maybe they've listened to you when you've tried to explain about Personal Safety Nets, and have thought about how to apply this to their lives. Maybe they didn't or it doesn't look like they did. But maybe,



if you talked AND set a good example, some of the ideas sank in - even if it didn't show at first.

On a personal note, this story came from one of those "I told you so" moments.

My daughter did little at the end of her junior school year, or over that summer, to find a new roommate to live in an apartment at college with her. As late August arrived, with time to return to Western around the corner, reality and panic set in. She reached out to her "social network," and posted on Craigslist. She combed through some stupid or unreliable replies to Craigslist postings, and then **she jumped at the first "real" sounding good match.** It was a girl, she said she'd pay, and she didn't sound crazed. I offered to go to an initial face-to-face meeting.



The two girls talked a few times on line before the three of us sat down for lunch. **My daughter's idea was easy:** if the lunch went well, we'd see a real estate agency that specializes in placing students, go see some apartments, and sign a lease that day. Just that easy!

Before lunch, **I asked my daughter if she needed or wanted help** in talking to, or getting to know this possible roommate. I

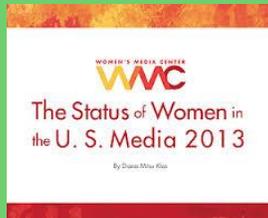


even reminded her of a great "roommate compatibility" **worksheet** on our website. This was originally designed for homesharing, but could easily be adapted for college roommate purposes. Of course, the answer was quick, **"I can handle it myself, dad."** So we had a nice lunch, a little talk of majors and schedules, and with the

girls in agreement, off we went. We looked at a few apartments and they decided upon one. Though I'd kept quiet, **I definitely had some worries when the new roommate liked an**

in coverage of the 2012 presidential election. Men were also far more likely to be quoted than women in newspapers, television and public radio. That's also the case in coverage of abortion, birth control, Planned Parenthood and women's rights.

* On Sunday TV talk shows, one survey found that only 25 percent of guests were female.



To read the entire PDF click here or to read a summary of the findings, check out our Cool Free Download here.

Every March . . .

Every March I'm inspired by the words of Jim Valvano, (featured in our **March 2010 newsletter**), a college basketball coach who starts a foundation to combat cancer, while he suffers from the disease. Maybe they'll mean something to you too.



"To me, there are **three things we all should do every day**. We should do this every day of our lives. **Number one is laugh**. You should laugh every day. **Number two is think**. You should spend some time in thought. And **number three is, you should have your emotions moved to tears, could be happiness or joy**. But think about it. If you laugh, you think, and you cry, that's a full day. **That's a heck of a day**. You do that seven days a week, you're going to have

apartment that was still occupied and a complete mess!

Papers were signed, though at the last minute the new roommate divulged that she had a cat and needed permission to have it in the apartment. In the excitement of getting this apartment issue settle, my daughter said yes. (Did I mention my daughter is allergic to cats?)

When I broached the subject, she looked worried but the quick answer was, **"We're so close to school starting, I'll live with it, I need a roommate."**



From my quiet seat, **it was clear to me that the girls had nothing in common** and, in fact, this played out during the school year. They were cordial, but one was a slob and one was neat. One liked loud music, one didn't. One liked light, the other darkness. But they never had a

cross word - they never talked at all!

At the end of the second quarter - **a few weeks ago - the roommate told my daughter she was moving out!** Never mind that they'd together signed a year-long lease. Needless to say, the fur flew! What is significant, and educational, is the way in which my daughter found someone else to be her roommate - yes, someone totally new to her - again!

This time (I can hardly believe this) she took my advice and used the PSN Cool Free Handout on Homesharing that helps potential roommates learn more about each other before committing to sharing space. It has questions such as: do we have anything in common? Do we think of "clean" in the same way?, and what, if anything, drives you mad?

My daughter sat down with the new potential roommate and gave her a copy of the form - which she had adjusted to fit her needs and questions - and explained that this was absolutely necessary if they were to start communicating and understanding their compatibility. Later that night I got a text,

"The girl is great, we have lots in common, and she loved going over the form together. She wished she had it at her last location."



inner resources and 4) utilizing outer resources. She'd been listening all along!

At long last I had evidence that **she knew that asking people important questions early makes things easier; that having a plan provides direction; that using inner resources can save you from making a poor or rash decision, and that using outer resources that are available**

ROOMMATE WANTED

FEMALE STUDENT SEEKS ROOMMATE.



The new roommate moves in this week! **So I asked my daughter what was the lesson in the experience? Dutifully, she mentioned the four facets of a good personal safety net: 1) gathering people, 2) investigating and making plans, and 3) making good use of your**

something special."

to you (in libraries, in resource centers, and on computers and such) provides tools that you may never have known existed.

I'm one delighted father, still resisting the urge to say "I TOLD you so!"