



Personal Safety Nets® e-Newsletter



The Power of Choice

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We're very excited to announce a new workshop, "A Gift That Keeps on Giving: Asking for Help With Style" Saturday, December 8th, from 10:00 to 11:30 am.

In collaboration with Northwest Center for Creative Aging, this will be our first event at our new facility at **Childhaven** (315 Broadway on Capitol Hill in Seattle). The workshop will be 90-minutes long.

The workshop is open to everyone, but seating is limited - so call today. Those who register in advance will also receive **free parking** in our underground parking lot.

In this workshop we'll help you identify the importance of giving and receiving help.

The Power of Choice

It's remarkable how powerful it is to be aware of the choices you make. Whether it's looking at the stress levels of bosses, or examining the results of giving women with cancer more choices in their types of treatment, or seeing direct health benefits from providing senior citizens with choices, there's a new commonality

THE POWER OF CHOICE

- **having choices, and intentionally exercising these choices, decreases stress and leads toward healthier lives.**

During our Personal Safety Nets® workshops, whether the people in the room are young or elderly, we share this kind of research, focusing on increasing awareness of places in life where choice exists. In field research with older adults in a nursing home setting, **Langer and Rodin**, gave one group the freedom to make choices and the responsibility of caring for a plant rather than having decisions made and the plant taken care of for them by the staff, as was the case for a second group. **Questionnaire ratings and behavioral**



measures showed a significant improvement for the choice group over the non-choice group on alertness, active participation, and a general sense of well-being. They participated in more activities, got fewer colds, and lived longer!

It seems almost silly that a group, given the choice of whether they wanted to water their own plants, would have wellness benefits, as opposed to a group that had their plants watered for them - but it's true. As we've learned lately, **the power of choice seems to have a great effect on our lives.**

Researchers at the University at Buffalo conducted a study of women between the time of breast cancer diagnosis and surgery, offering an in-the-moment snapshot of how women arrived at their decisions. A diagnosis of breast cancer will affect one in every eight women in the United States, according to the **American Cancer Society**, causing them to have to decide quickly about treatment. A friend of ours reminds us frequently, "Let's not worship at the altar of false urgency." Especially with cancers, though, we can panic and lose track of the fact that we do have a choice of





Why is it that you'd rather give than receive? What gets in the way? How to give the gift of gracious asking and acceptance. You'll think about what you might want, and what you like to give. You'll practice asking, and play with alternatives. **You'll leave with more ease and comfort in these important areas of life.**

Letters,

We Get Letters . . .



"I was a caregiver for 16 years and my family committed the grave error of never reading your book - all of the pressure and responsibility of caring for my aunt who suffers from a stroke was heaped on a couple of family members, mainly me. I would have stayed there for the rest of my life if I hadn't known for sure that it would have meant an unfulfilled life and permanent resentment towards someone I love, my aunt.



Of course, I wish your book had been around for me to read so i could say NO when I needed to and so I could demand fairness and equal sharing of responsibilities, and could corral the good troops and expel the bad, all without inviting gossip and ill will. The whole situation really hurt the family - beyond repair from my POV as it is."

- James Stewart

deciding quickly ... or of choosing not to ... even if our choice is, perhaps, against medical advice. Still, this is a choice, and in choice there is power!

In the study published in the September issue of **Oncology Nursing Forum**, women who were diagnosed with early-stage breast cancer were interviewed during the period just after surgical consultation and before surgery. According to Robin Lally, assistant professor of nursing at the University at Buffalo School of Nursing, **when women were presented with options as to treatment, they saw it as a positive prognostic indicator.**



"The women in the study valued receiving options, even if they had one already in mind, and though they may not have seen themselves as a person who is typically good at making decisions, they drew confidence from the support provided to them by their health care team while making the decision." Research is continuing to see

whether their optimism is positively linked to improved outcomes.

At Harvard University, **new research** - the largest of its kind - supports the idea that options greatly affects business. The study showed that business leaders suffer from less stress than people in less powerful positions. **Bosses are less stressed than their workers.**



While the leaders were more likely to be male and wealthier, who exercised more, consumed more caffeine, smoked less and woke up earlier (6 a.m. on average versus 7:30 a.m. for non-leaders), **the research showed that having a sense of control, options in decision-making and a say in what's going on "would buffer against stress,"** said Gary Sherman, a

postdoctoral fellow at Harvard University and the study's lead author.

Richard Elliot Wener, professor of environmental psychology at Polytechnic Institute of New York University, **agreed.** He has studied stress in **commuters and found that they become more anxious as they lose control and the ability to predict what's going to happen.**

In a domestic abuse program, children of warring partners are helped to make plans for what they'll do if their homes become unsafe: call police? run to a neighbor? hide in a closet? **The children with a plan show less stress. They have come up with a plan - and that equates with power. Because they have CHOSEN! they have less stress ... how about YOU?**



James, how I wish we'd met earlier too! Now, perhaps, you could arrange for us to send copies of our book and worksheets on avoiding burnout to those family members still on the home front. It's not too late! **When a situation gets out of control or balance, as yours did, your wise choice is to find ways to protect yourself, and in doing so, to be able to be there for others. Good luck. PSN**

Be In Charge-Vote!

Why let other people decide what is best for you when you have a voice: Vote! You can decide. You can vote. Even if you don't think you know enough, VOTE on what you do know!



We love the State of Washington's website, where the Secretary of State has listed the **top ten reasons to vote**. (Additionally, the site provides a sample ballot, teacher resources and a kid's page. Many states have similar websites, check on yours).

In the meantime, Tuesday, November 6th is coming quickly. We'd like to suggest a "voting party". Gather a group of friends and neighbors and sit down to discuss ballot issues as well as candidates. To make your party successful set some rules. Fairness and respectful communication are good places to start. Make sure to set up a system so that everyone gets a fair but limited turn to talk, and does so in a calm and safe manner.



You might consider building the party around a potluck or snack - conversation always goes better with food. If some have "mail in" ballots it would be good

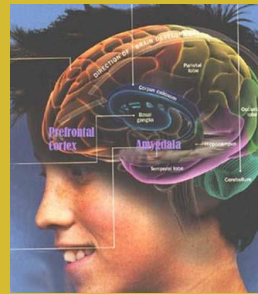
Did You See This One. . . That's Why My Teen Acts That Way!?!



In the October issue of **National Geographic** we get to look into the brains of teenagers - only to ask, **what can explain their behaviors?** We learn that our brains undergo a massive reorganization between our 12th and 25th year, and that the brain doesn't actually grow during this period. What happens is that the brain learns to become a much faster and more sophisticated organ.

Scans show that the teenage brain has a slow and uneven developmental arc - often reacting impulsively and taking higher risks to receive rewards, with little regard to costs.

Laurence Steinberg, a developmental psychologist at Temple University has conducted **recent studies** that show **"teens take more risks not because they don't understand the dangers but because they weigh risk versus reward differently:** In situations where risk can get them something they want they value the reward more heavily than adults do."



According to Steinberg, teens respond strongly to social rewards and this moves them to prefer the company of those of their own age - "teens offer teens far more novelty than familiar old family does." He suggests that **"Knowing, understanding and building relationships with them bears critically on success."** Teens also perceive social rejection as a threat to existence.

While the U.S. spends about a billion dollars a year on programs to counsel teen on violence, gangs, suicide, abuse and other pitfalls, few of them seem to have success. Studies by those studying the teen brain show **"we can ward off some of the worst hazards and nudge adolescents toward appropriate responses when parents engage and guide their teens with a light but steady hand staying connected but allowing independence** - resulting in kids who generally do much better in life."



Want More Good Reading?

If you're fairly new to the Personal Safety Nets® newsletter and interested in seeing "back editions" - it's simple - **click here and you'll have access to our entire Newsletter Library - and every edition we've produced.**



Approximately ten times a year we pull together interesting research, stories, tips, answers to questions, upcoming events, Cool Free Downloads and more.

Our goal is to help you understand that creating

to bring those along.

And, above all, remember that this is about building the kind of community -- the kind of country that you want!

a personal safety net is not only a continuing process but also a process that is done the world over.