



Personal Safety Nets® e-Newsletter



Chapter 8: Prepare to Say Goodbye

September 2011, Issue 43

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Letters . . . We Get Letters



On the 4th of July I was wearing my sexy, slippery Italian red sandals at my daughter's house when **I slipped while walking down her front steps.** I landed on the side of my left foot. X Rays revealed an avulsion fracture of the 5th metatarsal (the bone was in two pieces) and a week later I had surgery and **since July 15 I have been using a knee scooter and crutches to get around.** The scooter must be lifted into and out of the car.

In the beginning I had quite a bit of energy and could easily lift the scooter into the back seat and hop on one foot into the driver's seat. **As time has gone on with less and less regular exercise, it's become more difficult.**

From the beginning, I have mobilized my "CareTeam," even when I wanted to be totally independent. **Luckily I have learned as a long-time caregiver that caregiving is rewarding. Sometimes it was hard to ask, but I knew my friends and neighbors would be blessed if I asked for their help.** Because everyone I know is busy, I have tried to spread the calls around.

Endings and Beginnings

So far, in the past several newsletters, we have summarized and editorialized on topics covered in all but one of the chapters in our team-building book: **Personal Safety Nets(R): Getting Ready for Life's Inevitable Changes and Challenges.** If you've been following, you know that most care-share teams are created with the idea of accomplishing a specific task or group of tasks. **Need brings together a group of people who figure out what their vision of success is, and then use their skills to serve as a strong part of a personal safety net for another.** Although these teams usually end within a year, some teams, originally centered on helping another through an illness or major life change, shift purpose over time, continuing as some form of organized friendship that re-evolves into care-team mode as needs arise.



Since lives change, and **every change involves both a beginning and an ending (Read: Maria Lives),** it is inevitable that care will no longer be needed for a certain purpose (either because of a death or wellness). It's also very possible that persons who had planned to participate can't do so for the life of the need. Other responsibilities or changes in circumstances call them away. **(Read: Vivian Needed to End Care-Sharing Team Membership).**

This means that those remaining on the care team, and the team itself have **a chance to acknowledge the contribution of the one who is leaving,** and validate their intention to move on.



When it's time to say goodbye, whether this because of a return to health or strength of the care partner, a death or departure, or for any reason at all, **it's important to take time for some sort of goodbye,** honoring ritual, and to allow emotional space for grieving. **(Read: Deborah's Many Good-byes).** Losses are often accompanied by strong emotions that may challenge emotional stability and sense of self, whether for the care partner or a care-team member. The good-bye ritual honors good work and commitment, as well as relationships.

Situations differ on why a good-bye is needed: 1) Sometimes family conflicts or personal styles may offend a team member, forcing him or her to quit. 2) Care-team members may feel they can no longer support the existing situation. 3) Care partners may not want to continue having you in a care-giver's position. 4) If your care partner gets well, the team is no longer needed in its current form. 5) The care partner may die.



Finally, in the last example, a death causes the ending of a care-team,



Here are some of the tasks they have done for me: brought in meals; bought groceries for me, using lists I prepared; watered my plants; driven me to doctor appointments; taken out the trash and recycling; lifted heavy objects in and out of cupboards and closets; run the vacuum cleaner; and stripped the bed, and remade it. My family even took me on our annual camping trip, putting up my tent and taking it down and giving up our normal hiking for scenic car rides instead.



My "CareTeam" has included a 10 year old, family, my next door neighbors, and many, many friends. **I am so grateful that I have a personal safety net and when I recover, I plan to resume being part of being part of the safety net for others.**

- Trudy

Editor's Note: Trudy James will be teaching her class, "A Gift For Yourself & Your Loved Ones: The Five Wishes" at the Greenwood Senior Center on Mondays, October 17 & 31. Gain more info at www.greenwoodseniorcenter.org

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plus a thorough range of feelings. **In small and large ways, life demands that we grieve our losses, harvest our memories, and move on.** (Read: **Martha's Gift to Her Friends**). For most of the reasons for a team ending, it's quite natural to experience complex feelings: relief mixed with sorrow, anger combined with guilt, or fear overlaid with depression.

All of this is normal and needs to be accepted, experienced, understood and passed through.

What's important at the time of leave-taking is to honor the good that has come from the relationship, recognize hard parts but focus on the intention to help -- and say goodbye both to the expectations and dreams, as well as to the individual. (Read: **Rest in Peace**).

(Editor's note: What we also find is that people who have helped another often say yes to new opportunities, and people who have been helped often go on to help others. (Read: **Martin Comes Full Circle**). We all need to be seen for who we are. We all need to have our voices heard. And we all need to matter to someone besides ourselves. **Joining others in offering assistance to another is good for ourselves, as well as for those we help** -- it feels good, and the experience creates a desire to "do it again." Saying goodbye respectfully increases the chance of this. Besides, it can be heartwarming -- and that's important too.)



News & In the News

FREE WORKSHOP - OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!

Haven't had a chance to attend our seminar yet? Here's a great opportunity - **attend our 2-part workshop at Phinney Ridge Community Center. Session 1 is 7:30 - 9:00 on October 13th; Session 2 is at the same time, November 3rd.**



Come get better at replacing fear and isolation with security and connection. Our interactive class helps you assess and build your personal & community safety nets. Gain valuable insights. Get better at asking for help, and increase

your ability to deal with life's twists and turns. **The class is limited to 30 so please call now.**

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New - WALLET CARDS - 2.0

They've arrived! The PSN Wallet Card 2.0 - new and improved - is now available for free from our office. Simply send us a self-addressed, stamped envelope and tell us how many of the new cards to send to you. Yes, we said they are FREE and the very best way to gather needed information and prepare yourself for any immediate emergency, and all challenges that may come your way.





Call or email your boss, your friends, your family - even your community organization & leaders - to tell them Personal Safety Nets® wants to put 5,000 copies of our book into the hands of people who care!

We're doing this by making all our seminars and presentations FREE from now until June 2012, and we include a free book for every participant. So help us reach our goal before June and be part of the PSN network.

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Personal Safety Nets



Dr. John W. Gibson
and
Judy Pigott

A Complete Reader's Guide!

If you've never read the book Personal Safety Nets® it's still not too late to read the Cliff Notes' version!

In this e-Newsletter (above) we review the concluding chapter of the book, and with a quick click you can take a peek at all of the book's chapters. Enjoy!

**"In the Beginning"
(Chapter 1 - January)**

**"I Need You & You Need Me"
(Chapter 2 - February)**

**"Your Internal Muscles"
(Chapter 3 - March)**

**"Putting a Team Together"
(Chapter 4 - April)**

**"Keeping Your Team Going"
(Chapter 5 - June)**

**"Know What to Expect"
(Chapter 6 - July)**

**"Watch for Stumbling Blocks"
(Chapter 7 - August)**

*Order the book - in print or audio -
(\$10 - for a limited time) -*

Come to a seminar, and you get the book for free!