

Personal Safety Nets® e-Newsletter



What's "Security" for Grads?

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Letters . . . We Get Letters

(and we love you for them!)

Q: I love the concept of building community, and on my own block the *Block Watch and Emergency Preparedness* meetings have helped us get to know neighbors. However, I would not have my contact information on a block roster available to everyone because even on my nice street, we have people who are unknowns (we know the houses have changed hands but we never see the new owners) and some who are most politely described as opportunists. Can I do better than this?

- Linda Carlson



A: Linda - you raise a wonderful question regarding the balance between openness and

Letting Them Grow . . . Or Stay

I recently watched a "reality" show on television (we'll get to my use of time and my judgment at another time!). Anyway, **the story centered on a boy, recently graduated from college, who returns to live in his parents' home. He tells the audience he is doing so because "it's so easy."** He loves that he doesn't have to pay rent, has no responsibilities, and his mother makes his lunches! His mother is glad to have the prodigal son home and happy to wait on him hand-and-foot. His step-father is no so happy, especially after encountering the young man and a few of his friends, drunk, in the kitchen at 3:00 in the morning, making a mess, and enjoying all the spoils of the fully packed refrigerator. Both wanted to provide a safe setting for next steps.



I was happy to see that, before addressing the son, **specific behaviors and how to deal with them became a discussion topic between the parents.** The mother supported the arrangement as "security" for the son; a place for him to feel protected and safe while he transitioned into the next phase of his life. The dad expressed his concern that the mother was laying out this security blanket because of her fears about her son leaving the home nest. **He thought that maybe she wanted to protect her boy from the hurt and anguish of not having or finding a job and not building a life after college.** The dad saw the boy as too free of cares and was in favor of letting the boy face the world to "sink or swim."



I'm guessing that we'd all agree that feeling secure is a good thing. **Achieving or enhancing security, however, may look different depending on our definitions and perspectives.** Like the mother on television, security may mean protection from all possible threats or inconveniences. Like the dad, it might mean building strength and capacity for coping with challenges that arise. **What does it mean to you to feel safe and protected? Is this feeling supplied by forces outside you or from within? Does it vary?**

In *Personal Safety Nets®: Getting Ready for Life's Changes and Challenges*, we show how "security" is enhanced through practicing certain skills in connection with others. This type of security

inclusiveness and personal safety. Indeed, why would you want to have your name and contact information out there in the hands of people who you don't know yet? How would you get to know new neighbors? If you've met them, how do you decide whether they are people you'd want to be closer to? How close? These are important questions.

Most likely you'd want anyone sharing this roster's information to be someone who shows up for Block Watch meetings. Then, at least, you know their faces and that they participate in block activities - both good clues to trustworthiness.

I'm assuming the invitations to ongoing meetings are extended to all houses, but I could be mistaken. If so, how will you ever meet "newbies?" If not, is it because these meetings are held in peoples' homes and the same reluctance you expressed exists? You might try holding your next meeting in a more neutral space. Decide that someone will "shadow" anyone new, become their guide for the first meeting. **It's possible that an established group could intimidate someone new and they'd welcome special attention.**

You suggested one approach tried: "one neighbor and I organized a potluck to introduce her neighborhood friends to my neighborhood friends, but it was all by invitation." This seems like a terrific idea, while leaving me wondering whether you're part of a very big block. **Perhaps a useful idea is to start where you did, then reconvene every few months, inviting people who came to the first potluck to bring a neighbor who wasn't formerly included. Perhaps the folks you don't know personally know are known to and liked by someone else. You might try it.**

focuses upon resiliency and resourcefulness - building a community (safety net) to help you face problems and opportunities. So while the mother and dad discussed whose meaning would take priority, they and the son might be better served by addressing the situation as a learning opportunity. **The son must be reminded (or taught) that his family cannot provide the only security he'll need to move onto the next chapter of his life. He needs to see this as a time to create a plan for extending out to others for the next opportunity or change in his life.** If he learns to do it now, he will know how to do it whenever situations change or evolve.



Maybe you, or someone you know, is facing a similar situation. It's wonderful that graduation is all around us, but before that graduate settles into a summer (or more) of fun and relaxation, **maybe the best gift you can offer is to help that graduate learn to recognize and use the personal resources that abound - because enhancing connections with others will pay more in the long run than a month of free lunches!**

Roommates and/or Children(?)

- 1) **How do parents and young adults effectively readjust** to living in the nest together? Though you have missed your little cherubs, their return can cause the nest to topple. The [Seven Keys to Peace and Harmony](#), and a lot of communication will help you get through it.
- 2) Often "security" advice to college graduates deals specifically with learning about managing personal finances, taking immediate steps to budget and save, and maintaining those **good habits**. [This is good advice - but this CFD article adds five must-do tips](#).
- 3) Before you hear the words asking whether your graduate (or a parent/sibling/older child) can come to live in your nest, you should ask yourself these "[20 Questions](#)" about home sharing - **it will help you re-focus on what it is you need and what you expect**.
- 4) Then, are you and your graduate (or any other potential roommate) compatible? This is a big question - so [we've created a tool](#) that walks you through **everyday and long-term compatibility information**. Fill this out before you sit down for a meeting (and give one to your grad to fill out), then bring along when you meet face-to-face. Having your ideas in front of you will help keep the focus on the important questions.

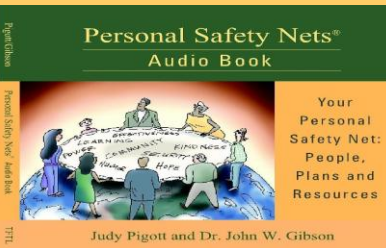
*Editor's Note: Throughout the process of graduates re-entering your life or your home, it's good to remember that for the past few years (even if you have other kids at home) you've had a little more freedom, a little less stress and a little less responsibility. Don't give that up - and don't fall into old habits. **Give yourself the okay to take care of yourself and your needs** - you deserve it!*

A Block Watch roster is better the more complete it can be. Right? You'd want to know who was inside any house that caught on fire, wouldn't you, not just those of friends? Possibly there are two rosters, one listing addresses and inhabitants for all, the other with phone numbers and email information. Is this feasible? **Start with defining what you want from this group. Ideas originating from groups are often really helpful and group IQ can be amazing.**

At Personal Safety Nets we advocate for being careful to take care of yourself. If your intuition and information suggests caution, heed this! At the same time, please allow for new information to come through. Often it's the input from a new source, different in assumptions and history from our own, that proves valuable in a situation - a neighborhood crisis or earthquake for instance.

Readers, do you have other ideas regarding Linda's questions?

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Testing . . . Painlessly!

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It's our way of meeting new people, expanding our reach, testing new procedures and improving our information and format. **To find out more, or to see about scheduling, call Ben at our office (206-659-0665), or visit [our website](#) - it's a first, positive step. Welcome!**

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