



Personal Safety Nets® Newsletter

Power Builds a Stronger Personal Safety Net

March 2009, Issue 15

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Powerful in the Flood



Mona

*"Mona, you must get out **now!** The water's rising fast, and **your house will flood** this time. I'm sending Matt down to take you to Sue's."*

Kirby, my neighbor, was adamant when he called me. I'd been steadfast in my decision to stay put in my home, despite the firefighters' strong recommendations to leave. I'd been raised in this home and it had withstood previous floods. **I'm 81 years old, staunchly independent, on chemo, and staying put!**

As Matt and I struggled across what had been a street and was now a torrent of waist-high

Dear Linda,

This month our focus is **Power**, another of the core Safety Net values. We gain power over difficult and uncomfortable situations by a willingness to take in, assess and evaluate new information. In the story "Powerful in the Flood" Mona (81 years old) tells us how she became powerful in the January 2009 flood in Snoqualmie Washington.

New this month, check out our column at [West Seattle Herald.com!](http://WestSeattleHerald.com) We're expanding our readership and hope you'll post a comment.

Soft Skills

Mona used many soft skills as she moved from independent and powerless to interdependent and powerful. The most significant skills were:

- Courage
- Decision Making
- Adaptability



Courage: Mona was adamant in her decision to stay in her home. It took courage to take in new information. Choosing to let go of her independence allowed her to make a far better, more informed decision. It also took courage to move in with a housemate of a virtual stranger. She chose to trade independence for interdependence.

Decision Making: Mona realized she had the power to change her mind in order to make a life-affirming decision. This new decision considered all the stakeholders - two daughters, friends, neighbors, and rescuers and the impact of her choice on them.

Adaptability: Mona had no power over the rising water. She had power in her willingness to adapt to the circumstances. Adapting and changing her decision made her life less stressful, introduced a new neighbor and friend, and gave her two daughters peace of mind knowing that their mom was in good spirits and well cared for.

water, I realized this flood was different. Here I was, headed to my neighbor's, holding a plastic bag of necessities over my head.

Five days later, finally able to return to my flood-damaged home, I realized how powerless I'd have been if I'd stayed with my decision to stay put and be "independent". The only way out would have been helicopter rescue, putting many at risk. I'd have been dropped at a shelter.

Instead, I found power in changing my decision. At Sue's, **interdependence became my power, not isolation.**

Sue used her Blackberry to keep my children, friends and loved ones informed about my welfare, even when power and phones went out. She and volunteers orchestrated a clean-up party before the water had receded. She and I found strength in one another through our budding friendship and the tears we shared. **I was reminded that real power resides in interdependence, adaptability, having courage, and good decision making.**

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Our Writers

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POWER

It's easy for most of us to feel powerless when things in our lives change rapidly. It's natural to focus on all we've lost and the challenges ahead. **A Personal Safety Nets® approach emphasized the personal power inherent in identifying the many choices that exist**, rather than on the problems.



- We can ask for help
- We can gather information
- We can choose whom to tell
- We can invite the opportunity to learn
- We can say "no" when it's appropriate - because, after all, it is our life.

Seattle Events- Open to the Public

Ready to make a difference in your life? Join us at one of our upcoming classes and learn how to weave your own Personal Safety Net, and why it's important. [Events](#)

15th Annual NW Parenting and Family Education Conference

Judy Pigott is presenting a workshop titled: *Bringing Order to Your Life*, on Friday March 27th 8:45-10:45 AM. This event is being held at Edmonds Community College, Seattle WA. Full details can be found [at their website](#).

Tending Our Roots

Dr. John W. Gibson is the keynote speaker at the April 22, 2009 breakfast meeting of Senior Services, dedicated to promoting the well-being of older adults. [Events](#)

Bringing Order into the Next Chapter of Your Life

Join Judy Pigott as she teaches a 3-session class held at South Seattle Community College, April 22, 29 & May 6, 6-8 PM. \$99 plus \$40 book fee. [Events](#)

Feelings: Recognizing & Coping with Anger, Guilt and Grief and Getting the Help from Those Around You

Join John and Judy as they discuss the above topics at the annual Seattle Caregiver Conference held in Tukwila, WA on June 1, 2009. [Events](#)

Thank you to our readers who have shared their feedback, which has been overwhelmingly positive regarding our new look to the monthly newsletter.

Tao Te Ching: Power Quote
Mastering others is strength. Mastering yourself is true power.

The Safety Net team,

Judy, John, Linda, Nate and Sue

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