



# Personal Safety Nets® e-Newsletter



Laughter is Healthy

August 2014, Issue 71

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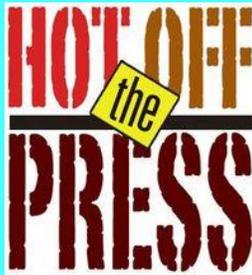
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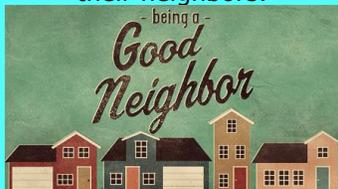


## Good Neighbors Are Good for You!

Being a good neighbor and having good neighbors is likely to reduce your risk of heart attacks. **Good neighbors make good hearts!**

In a new [research](#) study suggests. (see the [NBC News](#) report) participants were asked to rate their neighbors in three areas known as SOCIAL COHESION:

1. how much they felt like they were part of their neighborhood
2. if neighbors were friendly and would help them if they got into difficulty
3. if they trusted most of their neighbors.



## Make Laughter a Part of Your Safety Net

The findings are pretty clear: laughter certainly isn't hurting anyone. While the definitive research hasn't been completed, Robert R. Provine's [work](#) is ongoing and suggests strongly that laughter does, in fact, have health benefits. It's getting a lot of investigative [attention](#) and, in [Laughter: A Scientific](#)



[Investigation](#), Provine details research that supports this conclusion.

In fact, another researcher, [Paul E. McGhee, Ph.D](#) says, "Your sense of humor is one of the most powerful tools you have to make certain that your daily mood and emotional state support good health."

Investigative researchers have already [proven](#):

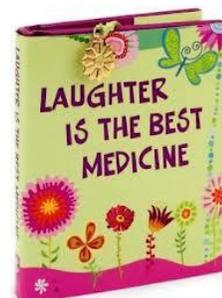


**1) Laughter is a powerful antidote to stress, pain, and conflict;**

**2) Nothing works faster or more dependably to bring your mind and body back into balance than a good laugh;**

**3) Humor lightens your burdens, inspires hopes, connects you to others, and keeps you grounded, focused, and alert.**

Authors Melinda Smith, M.A., and Jeanne Segal, Ph.D examined the research and [concluded](#), "With so much power to heal and renew, the ability to laugh easily and frequently is a tremendous resource for surmounting problems, enhancing your relationships, and supporting both physical and emotional health."



When it comes to general health, Smith and Segal [noted](#) that:

- **Laughter relaxes the whole body**, leaving your muscles relaxed for up to 45 minutes after a good laugh.
- **Laughter boosts the immune system.** Laughter decreases stress hormones and increases immune cells and infection-fighting antibodies, thus improving your resistance to disease.
- **Laughter triggers the release of endorphins, the**

During the four years of following up on 5,000 people, 148 (66 women and 82 men) had a heart attack. One conclusion was that **people who reported higher levels of social cohesion were less likely to have heart attacks.**

Specifically, each unit of increase in neighborhood social cohesion was associated with a 17 percent reduced risk of heart attack! ([Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health](#).)

### We get . . . LETTERS & STORIES



Ted and Nancy had a good life. With careers behind them, their retirement days were filled with family, travel, church activities, volunteering and socializing with friends. Life was cherished and lived as they had planned - until the day they received devastating, life altering news.



An infection following a surgical procedure would incapacitate Nancy. Her mobility would be restricted to a wheelchair, with limited use of a walker and crutches on good days.

As Nancy lay helpless in a hospital bed, wallowing in a pool of self-pity, trying to cope with and process her present and future, Ted interrupted with a declaration that would have a profound impact on how they managed the unimaginable life change they faced.

**body's natural feel-good chemicals.** Endorphins promote an overall sense of well-being and can even temporarily relieve pain.

- **Laughter protects the heart.** Laughter improves the function of blood vessels and increases blood flow, which can help protect you against a heart attack and other cardiovascular problems.



***But nowhere was the link between laughter and health stronger than in the area of [mental health](#).***

- **Laughter dissolves distressing emotions.** You can't feel anxious, angry, or sad when you're laughing.
- **Laughter helps you relax and recharge.** It reduces stress and increases energy, enabling you to stay focused and accomplish more.
- **Humor shifts perspective, allowing you to see situations in a more realistic, less threatening light.** A humorous perspective creates psychological distance, which can help you avoid feeling overwhelmed.

**So, how do you get from where you might be now (serious and stressed) - to the right (laughing and lighter) side?**

Begin by setting aside special times to seek out humor and laughter, as you might with working out, and build from there.



Eventually, you'll want to [incorporate humor](#) and laughter into the fabric of your life, finding it naturally in everything you do.

**Here are some ways to [start](#):**

- **Smile.** Smiling is the beginning of laughter. Like laughter, it's contagious. Pioneers in "laugh therapy," find it's possible to laugh without even experiencing a funny event. The same holds for smiling. When you look at someone or see something even mildly pleasing, practice smiling.
- **Count your blessings.** Literally make a list. The simple act of considering the good things in your life will distance you from negative thoughts that are a barrier to humor and laughter.
- **When you hear laughter, move toward it.** Most often, people are very happy to share something funny because it gives them an opportunity to laugh again and feed off the humor you find in it. When you hear laughter, seek it out and join in.
- **Spend time with fun, playful people.** These are people who laugh easily-both at themselves and at life's absurdities -- who routinely find the humor in everyday events. Their playful point of view and laughter are contagious.
- **Bring humor into conversations.** Ask people,

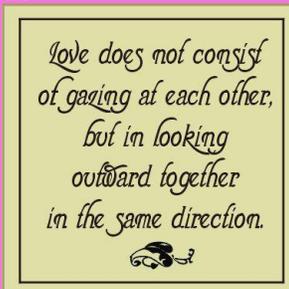




"Nancy", Ted said, "let's be clear about this. It may be your body, but this is about us, not just you. We're in this together. What's happened to you has happened to me, too. My life has changed and will forever be changed by this news. Our life, plans and dreams for the future have to be reset, not just your life, plans and dreams."

"My training and entire adult life has been spent as an engineer, not a caregiver. I'm not wired to be a caregiver. You have to accept and learn how to function with limited mobility, and I have to learn how to function as a caregiver, not by choice for either of us, but by necessity.

What's important is that we understand we are in this together. It's not about you. It's not about me. It's about us. From this point forward, we think about how our attitudes, actions, choices and decisions affect each other. We must commit to do what we must do to make the best of this and we must do it together for each other."



Ted had the courage to speak what many of us think but don't have the courage to say. While there are many ways to reduce stress in the short term, long term stress and anxiety can only be tackled through open and honest dialogue, and compassion for one another's roles and burdens.

"What's the funniest thing that happened to you today? This week? In your life?"

- **Consider getting a pet.** Having a pet is good for your mental and physical health and people with pets tend to laugh more. Studies show that [pets](#) can protect you from depression, stress, and even heart disease.



## Personal Safety Nets is Happening!

Personal Safety Nets® will again be a sponsor for **YES! Magazine's 4th Annual Celebration, September 12, 2014, 7:30 p.m. at Town Hall, Seattle.** "Money, Politics and Saving Our Democracy" will feature Thom



Hartmann - New York Times best-selling



author and progressive national and internationally syndicated radio show host, heard nationwide by 2.75 million listeners. Hartmann is the author of 24 books in 17 languages. His latest book, *The Crash of 2016*, discusses the impact of the current economic crisis on democracy. [For information](#)

[and tickets.](#)



**"Family Matters!" On Monday, Sept 15, 7-9 pm at the Fautleroy YMCA, Personal Safety Nets® will lead an interactive workshop to help people in any family configuration find the tools, knowledge, and resources to prepare for life's challenges and changes.** This free event is sponsored by the West Seattle and Fautleroy YMCA, Fautleroy Church, Little Pilgrim School, and the Fautleroy Children's Center. **To register RSVP to Jackie@fautleroyucc.org, or 206-932-**

**5600**

Whether you're dealing with a child leaving home, military deployment, operating a family business, birth or adoption of a child, a medical emergency, helping a parent age in place, elder care, a dysfunctional workplace, or any one of hundreds of other challenges, the end result of having a "personal safety net" in place is a more safe, secure, and satisfying life.

**If your organization is interested in having a Personal Safety Nets event or seminar at your location, please give us a call at 206-659-0665.**



Muster the courage to have such a conversation. It may not come easy but it's the first step towards managing your life and emotions during a time of great and unexpected change. It's all about shared responsibilities, giving and receiving, loving and being loved and mutual support in caring and being cared for. Ted is right. Be in it together, the good days and bad.



This wonderful story is brought to us by Sue Mackey, [The Mackey Group](#), PO Box 1247, Issaquah, WA 98027; [slmackey@mackeygroup.com](mailto:slmackey@mackeygroup.com).



**We're Always Seeking Your Story!**

Tell us how you have (or haven't) dealt with a situation by building a network, or gathering with others to solve problems. Tell us what worked, or what didn't.

Sharing is a wonderful thing and your story will certainly be a helpful learning tool for many others!



**Tell us your story by using your smart-phone and uploading your audio-story to**

[info@personalsafetynets.org](mailto:info@personalsafetynets.org) or directly by clicking [here](#) and writing your story.



**On September 17, 2014, Judy Pigott, Co-Author of *Personal Safety Nets: Getting Ready for Life's Inevitable Changes and Challenges*, has been invited to be the Keynote Speaker at Sarah Cecil's Edward Jones Investments Financial Advisors Annual Client and Partner Luncheon.**

The event is during lunchtime, at the Women's University Club (1105 6th Ave Seattle WA). **Attendance is limited, and if you're interested, please call Sarah's office (206) 938-6017 to see if space is available.**



**We will also give the closing plenary talk for the University of Washington's "Building Elder Friendly Futures - Locally and Globally" Conference. The conference is being held October 8-9, 2014 at the University of Washington's HUB in Seattle. It is open to the public.**

**Click [here](#) for more information or to register.**

Remember: If your group is in need of a keynote speaker to discuss the building of community and the benefits of Personal Safety Nets®, please give us a call at 206-659-0665.



**On October 9, 2014, Personal Safety Nets® will again be honored to be part of the training for the [ANEW](#) program - providing an opening week seminar for a new group of women beginning their quest for new viable and satisfying non-traditional career pathways leading to family wage jobs.**

**ANEW - Apprenticeship & Non-Traditional Employment for Women** - was founded in 1980 by women dedicated to improving access and advancement in non-traditional career paths. It is among the oldest pre-apprenticeship programs serving women. Since its inception, ANEW has run 70+ classes for hundreds of women. [ANEW](#) provides women of all ages, races, and backgrounds with quality training, support services and employment preparation.





**On November 5, 2014, Personal Safety Nets® will be offering a support seminar to the Employee of the City of Tukwila as part of their Employee Wellness Program.** We're always happy to be involved with "wellness" programs for all ages, knowing how helpful they can be in making lives more full and connected. **If you're interested in having PSN work with your group, give us a call at 206-659-0665.**