



Knowing I'm Connected

I'm was the victim of "one of those emails." You know the kind. Everyone in your address book gets one a saying you've had some terrible experience in a foreign country (fill in the country) and that you regret the request, but you're in need of some amount of money (fill in the amount) immediately, and can they be a doll and quickly send the money.

Most of us don't realize we've been "hacked" and it's often only when our friends check with us, that we become aware we're the brunt of the attack.

I had a Facebook page, and from my many world travels (fill in the country) knew that I had many acquaintances. But when I thought of building my personal safety net (PSN) and who to ask to join, I wasn't too sure who would care about me, so I never brought up the topic with most of them.

But now the phone started to ring.

Was I really in trouble? Did I need their help? By the time PSN called, I said they were #102 of the people who wanted to be part of the "solution" for me! I was almost in tears as I told of my startling realization - I underestimated the people around me, didn't see them as willing to step up and help, didn't realize the makings of my PSN were all around me.

Luckily, I learned some lessons here (we're never too old for that ~): 1) keep changing your password, it may prevent you from a major "hack," and 2) people want to help! Maybe not everyone on your Facebook is in that category, but many people are your friends simply because they like you, trust you, enjoy sharing with you, and want to grow with you. I am happy to say, I've started building those friends into your personal safety net!

PS - I'm not an isolated story - many of us have trouble believing friends will be there for us in times of need, and say to ourselves, why bother to ask in advance! In the New York Times story "For Better and for Worse," there's a story about the marriage between the comedian and actress, Suzanne Whang, and actor an educator, Jay Nickerson.

In 2006 Suzanne discovered she had breast cancer. Keeping to what she calls her "Korean tradition," she told no one. She fell into debt for treatments including hip replacement and back surgery to the tune of \$500,000.

Broke and tired of it all, she finally told her friends. They responded - immediately helping - joining, strengthening, and maybe building a safety net that helped her with a variety of things, including taking care of her dog, cleaning house and setting up fund-raisers to pay down her bills.

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Suzanne's reaction? "I found that everyone who I thought was my friend really was." Take a look at your friends - it's time to be a part of each others' personal safety net.

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