



Metropolitan Senior Network Quarterly

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MSN Board of Directors, Left to Right: Ken Cross-Vice President, Linda Walker Trenholm-Program Director, Krista Davis-former Media Director, Jane Larsen, (not pictured) new Media Director, Sande Mellinger-Co-Treasurer, Brenda Suteu-President, Garvin Reiter-Member-At-Large, Sabrina Johnsen-Director of Membership, Sandra Sprague-Co-Treasurer, Jim Norris-Lead Program Director, Therese Lambert-Program Director

Transitions

Besides my role as president of Metropolitan Senior Network and my career as Marketing Representative for Providence Home Oxygen and Medical Equipment, I am also a mother and a swing dancer with aspirations of competing. West Coast swing is the dance that I study. I just started private lessons with a dance partner that will hopefully lead to excellence at the competition in September. The first lessons have been about transitions. In dance, believe it or not, what your partner follows is the transition, that subtle movement in your partner's body that sets you up to go in a certain direction before a step has even been taken. In fact, a transition makes it easier for your body to go in that direction than anywhere else. All of this intense focus on transitions in dance has me contemplating all of the transitions we humans go through in life.

The definition of the word transition is: "A passage from one form, state, style, or place to another. Another definition of the word is: "A passage from one subject to another in discourse" (the way I did just now when I went from discussing transitions in the dance world to the definition of the word transition). Every woman who has gone through childbirth remembers "transition" as that most difficult and pain-

ful time in labor just before the actual birth of the child. Then there is one of my favorite definitions of the word and that is: "A brief adaptation to a certain proportion; to regulate or temper." This I believe is the best description of the positive movement that occurs in an organization when it is in transition.

In the business world when you say that your company is going through a "transition" it usually means a change that is full of pain and difficulties -- kind of like childbirth. There are all kinds of anecdotes about change in a company, but my favorite is something a marketing professional told me years ago. I was working for a company that had just been bought by their rival company. The logistics of reorganizing the company was very stressful. He said that the Japanese have a toast that they say at the opening of a new business, "May your business prosper and never know a transition." Wow... that's how bad a transition can be! Even the captains of technology and industry -the creators of Kamakazi pilots -- are afraid of it!

I remember thinking as I began my career in this complex world of Healthcare, that I certainly wanted to stay away from any more business' in "transition." Ha! That's a laugh. Just to spite me, every company I have worked for since and even this marketing association has continually been in one transition after another. Then it dawned on me that transitions are a natural very necessary part of growth and development. They are not a rare catastrophic event that requires a hostile take over. Just like in dance, they set your organization up to go in a better direction and if handled with grace and discipline they make it easier to move toward excellence than any-

where else.

Without a "transition" this Marketing association would never have become what it is today. I am no longer afraid of transitions -- I welcome them.

To quote the great Michaelangelo, "The great danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it."

By Brenda Suteu
President, Metropolitan Senior Network

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-Michaelangelo