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Healing Choices News

Healing Choices/ Diane MacKinnon, MD, ACC/ 603-577-1981

Dear Friends,

I hope you enjoy my second newsletter of the year. I'd love to hear from you.

Warmly,
Diane

Stop Making Stuff Up!

"I can't seem to make any new friends," my older sister said one day when we were talking on the phone. A former physics teacher, she is now a stay-at-home mom with three kids.

"Have you tried asking someone to have coffee with you?" I asked.
"You have to be direct."

"Yes, I asked that woman I liked from Kyle's sports class if her son had any play dates and she said he did so I figured she didn't want to get together with me and Kyle."

"You made that up," I said, speaking as a coach.

"What?"

"You made up that she doesn't want to have a play date with you and Kyle. You don't *know* that she doesn't because you never asked her."

She changed the subject. Since she's my sister, I let her get away with it. But if she were my client, I would say that we all make up stories about other people all the time, and they are usually negative with regard to ourselves.

If we are going to make up stuff about the people around us (and we are, because we're human), let's either make up stuff that feels good or test whether or not what we make up is true.

A client recently told me she was upset because a friend was supposed to go walking with her, but the time for the walk passed and her friend didn't call. My client was certain that this woman didn't like her anymore and didn't want to walk with her anymore.

This may not sound like a huge problem, but my client was a new mother, home alone every day, and had struggled for months to find a kindred spirit; someone in a similar situation. Her thoughts about this friend were causing her real suffering.



Individual Coaching:

...**Free coaching session offered to anyone interested in learning about coaching.**

...**Different coaching options available.**

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Healing Choices

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**"If you're being
dragged, let go
of the leash!"**

Free Coaching Session
Call or email me to set
up an appt.

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"Maybe something came up," I said. "Maybe something happened and she didn't have time to call."

"Yeah, maybe."

I encouraged my client to "make up" a reasonable explanation for her friend not calling, something that had nothing to do with her, at least until she found out what really happened. She agreed to try.

Weeks later, my client told me that her friend's mother had become ill and her friend went out of town suddenly and she forgot to call. Now her mother was better and she and my client were back to walking together.

So let's start "making up stuff" that feels good, or at least neutral.

I have been trying to apply this technique in my own life, especially after an episode that showed me how wrong I was whenever I made stuff up.

Last summer, during a lesson, I asked my violin teacher, Mary, if she'd seen Patrick, one of the other teachers, lately. He taught piano and accompanied me during my recital. We made plans to go out to a restaurant we both loved one day after the recital. I contacted him by email a couple of times and hadn't gotten a response, so I made up a story about him: *He doesn't like me and he just said he wanted to have lunch with me.*

Then, when more time went by and I still hadn't seen him or heard from him, I started to think: *Maybe he quit! Maybe he's sick! Maybe he left town!*

Mary said she'd seen him earlier that day.

"So, he's okay?"

"He's fine."

"Okay, then," I said, raising my bow to start playing. "I'll just make up that he's too busy to get together with me, rather than that he doesn't like me."

Mary started laughing and said that she made up stories about him, too, and her stories were never true, either.

Since then, I've seen Patrick, and he is always happy to see me. He's just a busy guy. I bet your friends are busy, too. So rather than make up that they don't like you, make up that they are busy. You'll feel *much* better.