



# EXPRESS YOURSELF!

## The Clothesline Revisited

Mary Bub

“My life has been a tapestry of rich and royal hue  
An everlasting vision of the ever changing view  
A wondrous woven magic in bits of blue and gold  
A tapestry to feel and see, impossible to hold”

These lyrics from the song *Tapestry* by Carol King came to mind this morning as I was reflecting on the theme “Express Yourself”. It seems to me that our lives are full of expression. We do not necessarily think about the many ways we practice self-expression every day, but as I was spending some time mulling the idea around, I found myself wanting to find an image, or at least a way to reign in this subject that seemed too big, too overwhelming, too much to talk about.

I was happy this morning when the words to “*Tapestry*” came to mind. I hadn’t thought of it in a long time but at least these first few lines seemed to fit. We might consider the experiences of our lives being woven together, some of them a rich and royal hue and certainly ever changing. And, wouldn’t it be wondrous if we could think of them in bits of our favorite colors, filled with magic? It is true that at times we might look at our lives in ways that help us to understand what we feel, value, think, learn and see but for me, too often it is just too much to hold because just when I think I have it in tow, it changes.

What helps me keep my life tapestry rich and wondrous and woven with magic? I offer you the idea that by expressing myself through my relationships to myself, my family, my friends, my community, my little corner of the world new threads combine with the old and the picture changes. Some of the threads may become tattered, some may unravel, new ones of various colors may be added, but each one holds a piece of the expression of my life. What might be an image that you can claim for yourself when thinking about expressing yourself?

### Our Mission

Wisconsin Rural Women's Initiative empowers women living primarily in rural areas. The ultimate goal is to effect systemic change within families and their community through a unique Gathering Circle process. WRWI promotes wellness by developing personal skills and cultivates transformation in a safe environment.

## *“Express Yourself”*

*Carolyn Willetta*

This morning I was given cause to think of how I express myself and to consider changing it.

In my haste to organize the refrigerator for Sunday’s potluck and simultaneously prepare breakfast (never a wise thing to do) I inadvertently poured apple cider into the orange juice glasses. This would seem to be a minor inconvenience, yet my response was a short emphatic, “Oh, S\*#@!” As I poured the cider back into the quart jar and replaced it with orange juice in the glasses I realized I had missed a “Tah Dah” moment as described by a WRWI sister in this newsletter several years ago. As I recall, saying “tah dah” after making a mistake of the type I did is a way of keeping things in perspective, of not taking myself too seriously.

When I was growing up I never used profanity; now I find it coming out of my mouth at moments of frustration and irritation with myself. Yes, I made a mistake. But, I did not have any broken glass or spilled liquids to clean up. What was I so angry about?

One of my dictionaries gave the literal meaning of the word “express” as “force out”. Maybe I need to work on forcing out “Tah Dah” and disciplining the profanity that has crept into my life. I think it is worth a try.



### *Steps to Creativity*

1. Have your sense of humor with you at all times. Choose friends with a sense of humor.
2. If it’s worth crying over, it’s probably worth laughing at. Cultivate a sense of perspective that permits you to see the wider and longer view.
3. If you are anxious, scared and feeling powerless, change your, I can’t to I will.
4. Never use the passive voice. Do not say, “It will get done.” Say, “I’ll do it” and then offer a solid, unwavering deadline.
5. The pinnacle is always slippery; no peak is safe. Only plateaus offer a place to rest. Are you ready to stay on a plateau or are you climbing?
6. Be kind, not nice. Kindness is both intentional and meaningful. Acts of kindness require generosity, emotional and otherwise. Always be kind to yourself.
7. Only poor workers blame their tools. It’s not the fault of the tools, take responsibility. Use the tools you have been given for your own best personal development.
8. You can always change direction, choose a different course. Stop, take a breath, evaluate and start again.
9. Take time to play.
10. Be aware that a safety net, if pulled too tight, easily turns into a noose. Don’t trade independence for security without being aware of the consequences. Color outside of the lines sometimes.
11. You should do everything possible to enjoy your life’s creation. Practice show and tell.
12. Problem solved. Celebrate!!

## *There's An Old Expression*

*Rose Marie*

There's an old expression: To err is human, to forgive, divine. I was curious about the source, so I looked it up. It's from a very long poem by Alexander Pope, called "An Essay on Criticism". While Pope's actual topic does not wholly fit the considerations here, its last paragraph does have two lines not to be ignored:

The clearest Head, and the sincerest Heart. . .  
 ...Not free from Faults, nor yet too vain to mend.

It was no problem for my friend Carolyn to "express herself" on the topic of my father's funeral; that brave and honest woman put pen to paper and told it to me straight between the eyes. She mentioned things like every choice having a consequence, reconnecting with family ("you're not here alone, you know"), the value of even flawed love, and (sigh) how God often asks us to go places we'd rather avoid. I had pretty much already sorted out how my authentic self felt about the first three, but that last one? That's the one I chew on inside the stillness, even now.

Sadly, this thought-provoking and valuable letter arrived much too late – weeks after my father's soul was already in heaven, and his body was keeping guard next to Mom. Too late to read the book she recommended, too late to consider if my absence would hurt any of my relatives, too late to consider scenarios besides the one already set in stone.

Although I live the furthest away, I was the only one who somehow knew his death was imminent. In September, I contacted my favorite brother and asked him to visit Dad to prepare for the end being very near. But Dad had told him many times in the past that he was ready, so my brother just left things as they were. I called my father a few weeks later, but wasn't able to talk with him because the nurse was there, but she wouldn't tell me anything because I wasn't the approved local contact. It turns out he had aspirated the night before - two days later he was already gone. My other brother got the news in a call on his cell phone. But because there was no regular phone nearby to call long distance, and my area code isn't included in their mobile plans, I got an email with the news. Even though I had known for a month that he would die, I still cried for two days.

But I did not attend the funeral. The reasons do not matter anymore. Oddly enough, though, I had to help plan the funeral. My sister didn't know what my Dad's favorite hymns were and thought that I might know. And yes, I had some ideas, and it seems they sang one from the list I sent. Beyond that, the only real details of the funeral came from my cousin – a warm and funny and courageous survivor, who oddly shares far more of my outlooks than any of my siblings, even though she is a good bit older and was not a part of my life until just ten years ago. Bernie was honest enough to admit that indeed, at

least one cousin disapproved of my absence. But on the whole, it seems no one else really commented beyond the courtesies of "It's too bad she couldn't make it". And actually, unlike so many previous family meetings, this time I was okay being ignored.

Characters and events from my past seem to express themselves sharply in my memory. My mother loved good quality items as well as interesting travel, while Dad stayed home, bought cheap shoes and wore his undershirts until the holes under the arms were as big as oranges. I can still see Mom issuing the command "Come here, Joe!", and then reaching to grab that hole, yanking as hard as she could until she had basically ripped the shirt off his body, finishing with a decisive "We're goin' shoppin' on Saturday". She wasn't one to be cheap with anything, I guess, and that definitely included a very generous spirit of self-expression.

He, on the other hand, didn't express much about deep feelings or any other inclinations, religious or philosophical. He did say, however that he wanted to leave us something, although in truth we all have as much or even more than he did. I never understood that urge, but it was important to him. We would all rather have had him go to Atlantic City or Vegas and blow the whole thing on slots. But he never would.

In the end, my authentic self can clearly and sincerely express one thing. My saddest moment came when an insurance check arrived last week in the mail. I haven't yet been able to bring myself to put my John Hancock on that small piece of pink paper. And no matter what it would have taken to get me to attend Dad's funeral, I can assure that endorsing that check will be orders of magnitude more difficult. At that moment, he will be really, truly, and forever gone. But I can hold on to one thought which is in fact the only truly serious thing that I can remember my father ever saying to me.

When I was very young, I had a last-minute offer to leave home for a teaching job in a town I had never seen, working with people I had never met, and I only had 24 hours to make my decision. A wise man with five daughters who I knew from work counseled me at lunch, "Can you think of any really good reason not to go?" I could not. So on that basis, I called and said I'd be there on Monday. That night, I talked with my Dad about his own decisions about work, and when did he know that he had made the right choice? He didn't say much. He simply looked at me and admitted, "Rose, you never know."

Boy oh boy, ain't that the truth...



## Crone's Corner

Marishka

I am sure that most of you have heard the latest hit song by Sara Bareilles titled "Brave." Well, I heard it some months ago and really liked it a lot. The idea of being free enough, open enough and fearless enough to say what I want to say, to let the words fall out honestly and that someone would want to see me as brave was enticing. However, since the song has exploded on the internet, T.V. commercials and into a variety of other venues I find that although I still like the original message intended by the artist its misuse annoys me.

So now you can say, "so tell us what you really think". O.K. I will. This whole experience reminds me that when we take the risk to express ourselves, we don't often, like Sara B. have the opportunity to have our words heard in the context in which they were intended. On the other hand, when we are given permission to say what we want to say we too often take that as carte blanche to say anything and not necessarily what is honest or true.

Perhaps the lessons here is; be thoughtful about what it is you want to say, then say it honestly knowing that it is not what you think others want to hear. After this kind of discernment go ahead, be brave and let the words fall out honestly. When we are sure of the context in which we are offering our thoughts and feelings we will not do exactly the opposite of what we want to do and say what we shouldn't say. We will be brave, whether others think we are or not.

### Stitching Woman

Marishka

*Cloth is her canvas as nimble fingers weave  
silken thread in and out of the gentle fiber*

*Each piece is a resurrection of a woman who  
stitched before*

*Her mind holds their image her heart their un-  
told story*

*Only in the woven picture is the deepest revela-  
tion found love and peace and hope abound*

*She stitches her soul and the souls of many weav-  
ing, hoping, dreaming, being*



### Procrastinator's Song

David H.

*He loves to tease, this one  
Unseen and high overhead,  
first a laugh and then a challenge  
His chaffinch call  
"TEE HEE Hee, hee, hee  
WHICH year?"*

*He knows me well, this one  
Though we've never properly met.  
How else could he know there are  
So many dreams and ideas set  
Aside for some other year.*

*"Next year!" I laugh and reply.  
"Next year!"  
He tilts his head and just calls again  
"TEE HEE Hee, hee, hee  
Which year?"*

*We play this game year on year.  
But this year. This year.  
This year I begin to doubt.  
Perhaps I could run out  
Of Next Years?*

*So,  
"THIS year!" I shout  
In reply,  
This year I will pick up that dream  
and strum its strings.  
This year.  
Not next*

## *Facilitator's Corner ~*

**Theme:** Wisdom

**Centerpiece:** A purple or violet tablecloth. A candle and shawl. Anything that speaks to you of wisdom. Possibly a statue, a book title, something from nature.

**Suggested Reading:** Wisdom rocks me, shatters my illusions, moves me to solid ground. I rest in the still water of her womb.

Wisdom bends me ~ sways with me through doubt and fear. I know the sound of her voice singing, calling, bringing me to rest.

Wisdom breaks me open ~ out of the darkness of warm, secure places she softens my rough edges, spreads my arms wide. I breathe in her kaleidoscope of color. I taste the freshness of her breath.

Wisdom invites me to be ~ to create, to nourish, to be nourished, to love, peace and awesome awareness.

Wisdom comforts me. I return to her again and again. I return to her again and again. I am at home in her-at oneness; she is the door to my heart, to my soul, to me.

Wisdom knows me. I cannot hide from her, She understands all my ways. She teaches me, her words are energy, purest lighting streaking the sky.

**Process Questions:** Define wisdom for yourself. How have you developed this definition? Finish the sentence  
Wisdom.....me.

Name some women in your life that you would call wisdom women.

**Closing:** Ask each woman to read her statement about wisdom. Ask everyone to respond by saying; we affirm the wisdom in you and in me. Close with the Circle Song or your circle's common statement.

**Alternative Idea:** Ask your circle ahead of time to bring with them a picture, poem or story of someone they believe to be a person of wisdom. Place the items on the centerpiece after they have been shared. This can be the process in place of the reading.

### *Creative*

*Dorothy Hammerand*

From the first day we come into this world our minds are working, creating. We create ways to get around finally taking those first steps. Our childhood, we have friends only we see, take trips on the carpet of imagination. We dream of what we will be and build with toys the hope of tomorrow. Then a word from a teacher, parent, a stranger and our creative being is pushed down into a darkened corner of our mind.

The years pass, we grow up. But without realizing it, our creative being is being let out, piece by piece. Then a word of encouragement from someone and the flood gates are opened. Our creative self is let out for all the world to see. Columbus, Henry Ford, Robert Frost, etc... Their creative self made our world better. So we should embrace our creative self, let it shine in this dark world and pass it on to our children. Onward through all time. Be it a painting, words, ideas, etc... who knows how our creative side might some day change us, others, or even the world!

For our creative self has made cars, trains, buildings, rockets, medicine and all the wonders of this world. This creative self we each have we must let it come out from darkness and let our child within shine to brighten and enrich reality.

**DATES TO REMEMBER.....**

***In Honor Of~***

*Cynthia Friauf*

*Dorothy and Dick Gibula, Marie Seaman, S. Bernita Marie Bittner, Bernie and Ginger Bittner*

*The many women we have come to know over the past sixteen years.*

We are excited and hope that you mark your calendars now! We are looking forward to meeting some of you for the first time, to renew friendships and hear your stories since we last met.

For more information call 262-723-4156 or e-mail ~ wisconsinruralwomen@gmail.com

**Women Gathering  
April 12-13, 2014  
Heidel House  
Green Lake, WI**

**WRWI Board Meeting  
April 23, 2014  
Location to be announced.**

**Facilitator Gathering  
April 26, 2014  
Location to be announced.**

**Nuts 'N Fruit Munch Mix**

*Ellie Lynch*

- ¼ cup (1/2 stick) margarine or butter
- ¼ cup firmly packed brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 4 cups spoon size shredded wheat cereal
- 1 cup honey roasted peanuts
- 1 cup dried cranberries

Preheat oven to 300°F. Place margarine/butter and sugar in large microwaveable bowl. Microwave on high 30 seconds or until margarine/butter is completely melted when stirred. Add ginger; mix well. Add cereal; toss lightly. Spread into single layer in greased 15x10x1 inch baking pan.

Bake 15 minutes. Remove pan from oven; stir in peanuts. Return pan to oven; continue baking 10 minutes. Cool completely.

Add cranberries; toss lightly.

Storage: Store in tightly covered container at room temperature.

***Express Yourself***

*Dorothy Hammerand*

*Hide not what is inside you  
Express what you feel,  
Be it by words or actions,  
so that others know  
What you are truly feeling.  
We hide inside ourself  
Emotions that could damage us.  
So seek out a friend,  
Someone you can trust;  
Express yourself to them  
And inside you will feel much better,  
Then the world will be a warmer place  
And you will be a wiser person  
Because you have expressed  
yourself.*

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### Opportunities to Spread WRWI's Mission & Message

Sponsor a rural/farm woman with my/our donation for...

#### RURAL / FARM WEEKEND

Partial Scholarship \_\_\_\$75.00 \_\_\_\$125.00 \_\_\_ \$150.00 other \_\_\_\_\_  
Full Scholarship \_\_\_ \$250.00

#### WOMEN GATHERING WOMEN LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Full Scholarship \_\_\_\_\_\$525.00 other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I / We would like to know the name of the woman I / we are sponsoring.  
\_\_\_\_\_ I / We would like to remain anonymous.

Support WRWI's Programs with my/our donation for...

Rural Women's Day for Survivors of Domestic Violence \_\_\_\$1500.00 other \_\_\_\_\_

Rural Farm Women's Weekend \_\_\_\_\_ \$3500.00 other \_\_\_\_\_

Women Gathering Women Leadership Training \_\_\_\$7500.00 other \_\_\_\_\_

Free Will Offering for current needs of WRWI \$\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Please send a receipt (WRWI is a 501c3 non-profit organization).

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

Send check / money order to: WRWI

ATTN: Christy Harteau  
W3319 Potter Road  
Elkhorn, WI 53121

Have any comments or questions?  
Feel free to send your notes to the  
editor at [wisconsinruralwomen@gmail.com](mailto:wisconsinruralwomen@gmail.com)

### Facilitators in Your Area

If you are interested in experiencing a Gathering Circle or want to learn more about the Women Gathering Women Facilitator Training Program, contact:

Christy ~ [wisconsinruralwomen@gmail.com](mailto:wisconsinruralwomen@gmail.com) or 262-723-4156

### Circle Song

*Leah Wolfson*

*I am surrounded by a circle of  
love, a circle of truth, a circle  
of light.*

*I am surrounded by a circle  
of love. by a circle of heal-  
ing power.*

**An Invitation** to the undiscovered writers, poets, and commentators in our midst.

The theme for the next issue of Heart to Heart Woman Talk, this very newsletter, is **"Spring"**, if you have a story to tell, a poem to share, or an article just waiting to be read, here is your opportunity.

*Articles are due by April 15, 2014.*

Send your offerings to Christy at:

[wisconsinruralwomen@gmail.com](mailto:wisconsinruralwomen@gmail.com)

OR

W3319 Potter Road Elkhorn, WI 53121

### Please Be Our Friend

WRWI has a page on Facebook, please find us  
and click like, we would love to see you there.

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