

COMFORT IN CLOSENESS

by Donna Deos



NEED SOMEONE TO LISTEN?

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Last month we talked about the Freedom in Letting Go. I am sure you have heard the quote, "If you love something, set it free. If it comes back it is yours, if it doesn't it never was."

Well, this month I want to talk with you about closeness and the comfort that comes with it.

Closeness can be in proximity. It can also be in the internal feeling you have with other people.

Five years ago my daughter, Starsea, moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota to work for Target Corporation. It was hard to let her go. She is a full grown adult, so I really did not have much to say to hold her back. She found a career that used her college degree and was a great next step for her at the time.

Over those five years we kept our closeness in our hearts and with frequent visits with each other. Well, you know how the past several years have gone. Fortunately, Target is a wonderful corporation and she has been work from home for the past couple of years. This enabled her to escape Minneapolis during the George Floyd times to the safety and comfort of home in New Hampshire. We were grateful to be able to have her with us for months at a time and to know she was safe. These opportunities to be together showed us the comfort in closeness of proximity again.

She has just moved back to New Hampshire and will be very close by again for (hopefully) a long time to come. It is a wonderful world in which we live that gives us the ability to go far away and still stay close to those we love through technology, social media, video calls and zoom, and through travel. It is also a wonderful gift to have those we have let go of return to us because they have come to value the closeness of proximity and have the freedom to work from home to be able to select that as what they prefer to do.

As our aging loved ones see their friends and loved ones leave them completely. It is even more important that we show them how much we value any and all time we have to spend with them. If you are physically far away, please take advantage of the technology to visit and check in on your loved ones far away. If you are physically close – I hope you will stop and think how lucky you are to have that closeness and the comfort that comes with it.

We all have loved ones. How often do we take the time to appreciate the closeness we have with them? I hope it is often and you truly breathe in the love that is shared by each of you. – All my best, Donna



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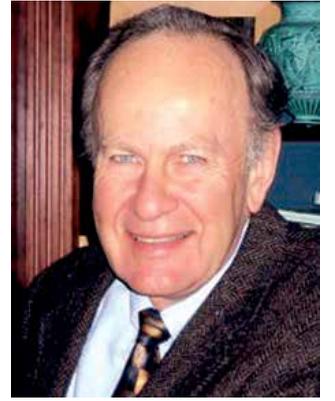
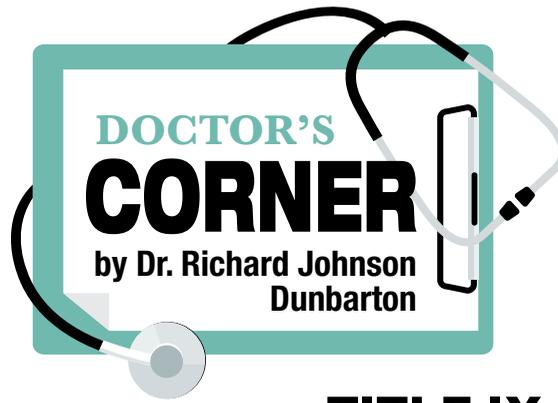
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TITLE IX

Let us start with the presuppositions (which are true) that youth who participate in school athletics have a lower risk of becoming overweight, they develop an understanding of teamwork and responsibility. They develop physical endurance. They also learn to manage their time so they can accomplish the necessary academic requirements. These students basically develop a healthy lifestyle. My wife and I insisted that our three daughters participate in school athletics. They could choose the sport(s) in which to participate. You guessed it; as mothers, they also encouraged their children to participate in yearly school athletics. Our daughters and granddaughters have participated in soccer, track, volleyball, downhill skiing, swimming, competitive cheerleading, and field hockey. Much of this was made possible when on 23 June 1972 President Richard Nixon signed the Education Amendments Act. Some of the women who were the key architects of what went into Title IX were Rep. Patsy Mink, Rep. Edith L. S. Green, Bernice Sandler, Donna Lopiano, Billie Jean King, and many more. Senator Birch Bayh was in the beginning the lone male supporting this legislation. Title IX altered women's sports forever as it recognized gender equity in education as a civil right.

You might be surprised to learn that the words "sport", "athletics" or "physical education" do not appear in this legislation which was designed to address all gender inequities in education.

Title IX has never been just about sports. But women's sports have never just been about sport. Women's sports, as all sport should be, is about equality, fairness, opportunity, and respect in all areas of participation, scholarships, and allocation of resources.

I want to give recognition to one of my high school classmates, Lauren Anderson (we graduated in 1963). She was a real force behind advancing athletic programs for women. Two of her many honors include being named, in 1987, the NE Division I Cross Country Coach of the Year and in 1990 she was named the NE Division I Track & Field Coach of the Year. (1) As a result of the work of many women like Lauren there has been real progress. In 1972, 7% of high school varsity players were female, during the 2018-2019 season that rose to 43%. In 1972 women comprised only 15% of athletes competing on college teams; in 2020-2021 that rose to 44%. (2)

The Equality in Athletics Disclosure Act (1994) is a federal law requiring colleges & universities to publicly report gender equity information about their athletic programs. It is much more difficult to get a sense of what is happening at the high school level. Girls in minority schools have only 67% of the opportunities to participate in sport compared to the opportunities boys have.

The problem we face is understanding *equality*. "Sport has never sought to celebrate testes as special in either the men's or the women's category. Precisely the opposite is true: Gonadal sex traits define the categories, and then each separate category sets out to isolate and celebrate other characteristics." (3)

We have "categories" for all different sports. D1 schools compete against D1 schools, not D3 schools. The special Olympics are for those very talented and competitive people who have some handicap, not for the NCAA superstar. Journalist Sherry Boschert correctly wrote that "opponents began trying to weaken Title IX immediately and continued to do so for decades." (4) The current assault on Title IX is allowing males who want to be female to participate in female sport, thereby usurping positions on teams and taking away record and scholarship opportunities. This is disrupting the whole purpose of Title IX, which was to create an equal playing field and opportunity for genetically female athletes. On this the 50th anniversary of Title IX, we need to understand the job is not done. How can we give athletic opportunity to trans athletes without taking away opportunity for genetically female athletes? How do we continue to protect the principles of equality within 'categories' that so many women for 50 years have been striving for?

1. <https://scsuowls.com/honors/hall-of-fame/lauren-anderson/107/kiosk>
2. https://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/13_Low-Res_Title-IX-50-Report.pdf
3. Doriane Coleman (Law Professor at Duke, and 800 meter National Swiss Champion). "A Victory for Female Athletics Everywhere" Quillette, 3 May 2019.
4. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2022/06/22/true-mother-title-ix-why-it-matters-now-more-than-ever/>