



HERLAND SISTER RESOURCES

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HERLAND SISTER RESOURCES, INC.
1630 NW 19, Oklahoma City, OK 73106

IT'S A PRIVATE MATTER

In 1985, Pamela Rae Stewart, a San Diego resident, learned from her physician that her pregnancy was complicated by a misaligned placenta. She was told to avoid sex and street drugs and to take a prescribed medication. On Nov. 23, 1985 she gave birth to a brain-dead son who died Jan. 1, 1986.

What makes this case significant is that Stewart has been charged by El Cajon authorities with a misdemeanor: willfully failing to provide necessary care for her child. In short, noncompliance with doctor's orders constitutes child abuse. The case presents serious social, legal, and moral implications.

Already, there are local reverberations. A recent report in the San Jose Mercury News said a supervisor in the Santa Clara County Juvenile Court has "drafted proposed legislation that would make the fetus a ward of the court if the mother ingests potentially dangerous (legal or illegal) substances, or fails to eat a healthy diet."

Under those provisions, the fetus has the same rights of protection as a child. An expectant mother suspected of endangering her unborn baby could be detained. However, what is not clear is how specific behavior can be shown to have specific consequences before the fact, that is, before the baby is born.

Moreover, at what point will the line be drawn that friends and relatives are also responsible for the health of the fetus, for example, in the case of secondary effects of smoking? Despite the rule of confidentiality, even the physician may be expected to turn state's evidence

that the patient is not in compliance and is thereby jeopardizing the health of the fetus.

The Stewart case presents a new twist on the old controversy of abortion. As obstetricians more and more become physicians to the fetus, the mother's basic legal rights of bodily integrity and self determination are forsaken - despite lack of medical knowledge about the direct consequences of her behavior on the fetus' well-being.

Furthermore, if regulating the well-being of the fetus becomes the norm, doesn't this really mean regulating the behavior of the expectant mother? The charges in a case such as this revert to defining the pregnant woman as a second-class citizen, simply a carrier of the products of conception within her.

The trend of the current administration's ideology is that the condition of one's health is an individual responsibility but to be monitored by the state. While money may not buy happiness, it can insure better nutrition and a more hygienic environment. If we as individuals are solely responsible for our own health and well-being, can the poor then be prosecuted for their poverty?

The real question of the Stewart case directly reflects how this ideology can overstep the boundaries of the balancing of civil liberties with governmental regulation. When does the private affair of a pregnancy become a public issue, and when is the moral dimension of prenatal care that of the public domain?

SYNAPSE, Oct. 16, 1986,
Board of Publications
University of CA.



announces

the next meeting of the collective

Open to the Public

Sunday, January 18, 1987, 6:00 p.m.
1630 N.W. 19, OKC

Publisher: Herland Sister Resources
Advertising: Loral Reeves, 495-1094
Circulation: 600

CAN YOU HELP?

Sue Perryman, native of Oklahoma, owns a pony ride and travels the carnival routes. In October of this year she lost all she owned (except her ponies), when her motor home burned up. Included in her losses were the \$1800 she had saved to buy winter feed, and her impressive collection of lesbian/feminist music, books, tee shirts, etc. Due to rising costs, Sue had let her insurance lapse until she could get to Arizona to purchase less costly coverage. There is little hope of recovering her losses. Sue's situation falls "through the crack" of social services. Because she owns eight valuable ponies (overdue feed bills and no means to haul them, notwithstanding), she has been denied food stamps or any substantial assistance.

Sue has received some aid from family and friends in the area. D.J.'s Crescendo Club in Oklahoma City collected \$100 to help Sue get back on the road. Phoenix Wheeler, HSR board member has helped by collecting food, clothing, eyeglasses, etc. While attending to basic needs, Sue still longs for the comforts of music (Meg Christian, Chris Williamson, Betsy Rose, Cathy Winter, Ferron, Teresa Trull...) and literature, especially out of print titles like Old Dyke's Tales, by Lee Lynch. Contributions (including cash or course) will reach Sue c/o Herland or c/o P.O. Box 924, Norman, OK. 73070.

HERLAND SISTER RESOURCES LIBRARY UPDATE

The Herland Lending Library needs your help! We are in the process of revamping the Library and we have found that there are a considerable amount of overdue books (some books are 2+ years overdue). In the past month we have notified some of the persons who have overdue books with very little response. On several, we do not have a current address. The Lending Library is for everyone who has a Library Membership or who is a "Friend of Herland." People who become a Friend of Herland are automatically granted library membership. Also, until the books that are overdue are returned to the Library, no other books can be checked out.

Books can be checked out for two weeks, but we are flexible about the two weeks check out time for members who live outside the metro area. We want all members of Herland Lending Library to enjoy the collection of books that are available and unless these policies are enforced the collection will diminish in time. So do us a favor and check your book shelves and see if you have some forgotten books that need to be returned to Herland. Your help in this matter will be greatly appreciated.

ALCOHOLISM CONFERENCE

Country View, a private alcoholism treatment program, is sponsoring a conference on adult children of alcoholics, March 11-14 in Tulsa. For more information contact:

Conference Coordinator
Country View
12300 East 91 St.
Broken Arrow, OK 74012

SPECIAL PRINT SALE

OKC artist, Bernadette Martinez, has donated signed prints from her show at the Waterford to help in Herland's fund-raising drive. The prints are being offered at a special price of only \$15 and are available at Herland now.

WORKING GROUP STUDIES LESBIAN BATTERING

The Working Group on Lesbian Battering announces a research project on Violence in Lesbian Relationships. This Study, conducted by a Philadelphia sociologist, Claire Renzetti, has been endorsed by the Working Group, which has served as an advisory board to the study since its inception. Victims and survivors of lesbian abuse are asked to complete a questionnaire on the violence in their relationships. The group needs your help to fulfill its goals of raising the community's consciousness about this problem and developing services for victims. To receive a copy of the questionnaire, send you name (or a pseudonym) and address to:

Dr. Claire Renzetti
5600 City Line Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19131

The Working Group itself has been meeting since September 1984 and has been involved in community education, improving resources for victims and survivors, and offering a support group for battered lesbians. For further information, contact Shawn Tower c/o Women Against Abuse (215-686-7082) or the Battered Lesbian Support Group (215-592-4583).

FAKE CLINICS

Oklahoma Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights (ORCAR) has just published a new brochure on Oklahoma's "bogus clinics" entitled BEWARE OF ADS LIKE THIS. It also lists those bona fide clinics in Oklahoma that offer non-judgemental, full option information, and counseling and referrals for women making reproductive decisions. Copies can be secured by writing:

OSCAR
P.O. Box 50193
Tulsa, OK 74150



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JUDY CHICAGO TO SPEAK IN NORMAN

Artist, Judy Chicago, is scheduled to speak at the South Central Women's Studies Association Conference. The conference will be March 27 & 28 on the Univ. of Okla. campus, and Ms. Chicago's Birth Project will be exhibited by the OU Museum of Art in connection with this event. The museum is asking for donations to help defray the cost of rental and shipping. If you would like to help, call Jane Hallett, 325-3272. Watch for more details on the conference in next month's newsletter.

WOMEN'S EQUALITY ACT 10 YEARS OLD

The Women's Educational Equity Act (WEEA) Publishing Center is celebrating its tenth year as publisher & distributor of over 280 print & audiovisual materials, all focused on gender-fair education. WEEA is a federally funded product that provides grants to develop practical, field-based programs and materials to sex equality. The research and teaching materials developed under these grants are sold to the public. Write for free catalog:

WEEA Publishing Center
Educational Development Ctr.
55 Chapel St.
Newton, Ma 02160

Up & Coming 12/86



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BOOKS DONATED TO HERLAND

Recently, Herland acquired several boxes of books from Maren & Pearl from San Antonio after the Las Mujeres Women's Bookstore closed. We greatly appreciate these additions to our library and after inspection of the books were surprised that very few were duplicates. Since the list of new books is too lengthy to print, a few titles are: Changing Women in a Changing Society; The Other Half; Super-Woman; Free & Female; Beyond Intellectual Sexism. These books are presently being processed and will be available to check out within the next few weeks. There are a great number of books available from this donation, and we greatly appreciate Maren & Pearl donating the books to Herland.

COMING OUT TO MOTHERS

We are Lesbians, collecting stories about how womyn came out to their mothers. We are interested in the events, thoughts, and feelings that womyn experienced while coming out, and the reactions they got from their mothers. All too often in works about coming out, Lesbians are grouped with "gays" and mothers are lumped with "parents." We see the need to recognize the power of the daughter-mother relationship in the coming out process.

We hope this anthology will encompass the lives of all womyn so that we can have a book that provides information and validates our feelings as Lesbians who have already come out or who are in the process of coming out to our mothers.

Please send stories (poetry, photographs, etc.) or inquiries to:

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OU WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Congratulations to the University of Oklahoma women's basketball team, which took first place in the L'eggs Invitational Tournament over the Thanksgiving holiday. The Sooners won with victories over UT-San Antonio (67-63) and New Mexico State (80-71). The 1986 Big Eight Champ's schedule for January home games is as follows:

Jan. 6 Kansas State, 7 p.m.
Jan. 8 Tulane, 7 p.m.
Jan. 10 Colorado State, 7 p.m.
Jan. 14 Kansas, 7 p.m.
Jan. 21 Okla. State, 5:15 p.m.
Jan. 24 Nebraska, 7 p.m.
Jan. 31 Iowa State, 7 p.m.

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PRO-FEMINISM AND NONVIOLENCE

BY SAM DIENER

"As WRL has played an important role in counselling men who are unwilling to commit aggression in wars, it might consider playing a comparable role in counselling men who would like to know how to resist committing aggression at home—against women" — Barbara Deming

"The War Resisters League affirms that war is a crime against humanity"

WE live in a constant state of civil war. It is waged in our neighborhoods, hidden, and largely unacknowledged. In the U.S. alone there are a million casualties and thousands of deaths in this war. It is a war of male violence against women and action against this war, especially by those of us who are men, is long overdue.

The feminist movement is striving to analyze and expose the nature and the causes of this war. In response to challenges by feminists, some men are beginning to acknowledge their responsibility to work against men's violence and its causes. Many of us call ourselves "pro-feminists" and are seeking to build a movement of men who support the struggles and goals of the feminist movement. We are working to help ourselves and other men become more non-violent, open, cooperative, and caring human beings.

PATRIARCHY AS INSTITUTIONALIZED WAR

"We therefore are determined not to support any kind of war, international or civil..."

We live under patriarchal rule. Patriarchy is a system where males are given sexual, cultural, social, religious, and political power over females. In our patriarchal society, men's violence against women is at war-like levels. Since crimes against women are notoriously under-

reported, the total number of deaths and injuries are hard to determine. Yet despite the difficulties of compiling statistics, the U.S. government estimates that there are at least 300,000 women raped by men and 2,000,000 women battered by men each year. If casualties on this scale were being inflicted in a conventional war, it would merit daily headlines and weekly "body counts" on the network newscasts. Instead, our mass media portrays this type of violence and dehumanization as a source of pleasure through depictions of women who enjoy pain and men who enjoy inflicting it.

The effects of male violence are far reaching. In some ways, all women in our society are held captive. Some women are held captive by men who batter them. Other women are captive in their homes in a different sense. They are taught never to walk outside alone, especially at night. The degree to which their movement on the street is restricted by the fear and reality of male violence is the degree to which a woman lives in occupied territory.

PATRIARCHY AND MEN

Patriarchy, in addition to waging war on women, also instills values and encourages behavior in males which are a primary root of international war and a model for other forms of oppression. Boys around the world are taught through toys, rituals, and myths to glorify the use of violence to fight for themselves and their countries. Patriarchy teaches men to view each other as enemies and competitors for racial, economic, political, and sexual status. This makes it possible for us to wage war against each other. We are only "unified" in one thing: patriarchy confers upon all men, as men, power over women.

Additionally, since the first role and value differentiation children become aware of is based on gender, the oppression of females becomes a model for other forms of oppression based on race, sexual orientation, class, body size. Each form of oppression has its own unique dynamics, but the patriarchal model of

oppression is pervasive and constitutes a foundation of every "modern" society around the world. For this reason, and because women are almost always oppressed within the group, I believe no analysis of, or struggle against, other forms of oppression are complete without an analysis of and a commitment to resist patriarchy.

THE MEANING OF PRO-FEMINISM

"...and to strive nonviolently for the removal of all causes of war..."

The idea of pro-feminism is a relatively new one and there is some controversy over the need for the word. Why not call everyone working to dismantle male supremacy a feminist? I think the issue has parallels to the debate over affirmative action as a mechanism to resist racism. Some people claim affirmative action is itself racist since it depends on consciousness of race. But affirmative action does not create race consciousness. It affirms the reality that we live in a racist society that is already race conscious. The question to be answered is how we are going to act on this consciousness. Affirmative action motivates white-dominated institutions to acknowledge their racism and take affirmative steps toward change. There is a fundamental difference between race consciousness and racism. Racism, as defined by Webster's, is the exercise of power over a group based on racial prejudice. Affirmative action is a step toward eroding the power differential that underlies racism.

Similarly, sexism is power and prejudice based on sex, and any movement working against patriarchal power needs to be sex conscious in order to take affirmative steps to confront sexism. The use of the term pro-feminism motivates men to acknowledge our sexism and take steps to change. If feminism was "only" a philosophy, then certainly anyone, male or female, who believed in feminism would be a feminist, just as anyone who believes in pacifism is a pacifist. But feminism, as I understand it, is also a

Sam Diener works with WRL's St. Louis Local. He is also a member of the WRL National Committee.

movement of people working to empower women. (I am differentiating here between the patriarchal concept of domination based on power over others, and the feminist concept of liberation based on empowerment, the power to create, to define oneself, and to build cooperative relationships). But I don't think it is possible for me as a man to empower women, just as I don't think it is possible for me as a person with white skin to liberate people of color.

Thus my definition of feminism above was inaccurate. I understand feminism to be a movement of *women* working to empower women. According to this definition, it doesn't make sense for men to call themselves feminists. Some who argue that men can be feminists claim that rigidly defined gender roles hurt and dehumanize men too, therefore, feminism should be a movement for human liberation from the tyranny of gender roles. I agree with the analysis as far as it goes. But I think it disregards the idea that patriarchy also confers power over women and privileges to men solely because we are male. Gender roles restrict women and men but particular gender roles that are characteristic of modern "civilization" oppress women and thereby necessitate a movement of the oppressed group, women, to overcome their oppression. Many women, in the interest of eventually overcoming this power differential, believe some men should be termed feminists. But as a man supportive of feminism, I don't want to call myself a feminist.

The concept of pro-feminism was a revelation for me, and its importance to me continues to grow. For me it means I can reaffirm myself as a man, challenging myself and other men to change, and supporting men as we struggle with those changes. It means I can acknowledge that I do not just happen to be biologically male, but that I was indoctrinated with a male supremacist ideology. It means I can affirm my own changes without denying my experience. It transforms guilt into a sense of responsibility to act.

THE PRO-FEMINIST MOVEMENT

Pro-feminism has its roots in the late 1960's and early 70's when some men began men's anti-sexists consciousness raising groups patterned on those of the women's movement, and the gay liberation movement stormed out of the closet. The first national conference on men and masculinity was held 11 years ago, and

the National Organization for Changing Men (NOCM), a pro-feminist and gay affirmative group is 5 years old. Last June, NOCM initiated the first nationally coordinated demonstrations of men protesting men's war against women, entitled Brotherstorm. The first men's group dedicated to ending men's rape and battery of women was formed 7 years ago after challenges from the burgeoning feminist anti-rape and battered women's movements. One of these groups, Rape and Violence End Now (RAVEN) is a group I have worked with for the last year.

RAVEN's purpose is to build peer pressure among men to end men's violence against women. Our primary activity is to counsel, in groups, men who batter in order to confront violent and abusive behavior, share methods of dealing with conflict nonviolently, and support each other as we struggle to change. The groups are weekly nonviolence preparation sessions for daily life, designed for men who batter: We teach that the causes of the battering are not just man's inability to express anger nonviolently, but a socialized and culturally supported desire, and belief in a right to dominate and control his partner. The violence is used and chosen in an attempt to achieve this control. We only counsel a small proportion of men who batter in the St. Louis area, and our counselling program primarily begins after the violence occurs and deals mostly with battering, not rape. We also do public speaking/education once a week in order to change our cultural support for the male war against women.

My work at RAVEN has inspired me, taught me, and strengthened my pacifism. Watching myself and other men change, and some, I believe, change profoundly, has convinced me of the value of this style of organizing. One of the most valuable lessons I've learned at RAVEN is the incredible power of Barbara Deming's description of nonviolence as being two handed: one hand firmly saying to a person acting oppressively, "I will not allow this violence to continue unhindered and unopposed. This behavior must and can change." The other hand gently assuring the individual that the attack is on the institutional power wielded and the brutal behavior, not the person, and reassuring the individual that there is support for the difficult internal struggle that change requires. Before working with RAVEN I

believed in this concept in the abstract. But trying to use this process within RAVEN provides me with a reaffirmation of its insight on a weekly basis. It is my impression that we are most effective when we can communicate simultaneously with both hands, challenging the battering behavior while expressing concern for the person. Thus working at RAVEN strengthens my conviction that active nonviolence is not merely an ethically imperative but ultimately naive ideal, but the most practical and empowering means of achieving positive social change.

My pacifism led me to pro-feminism, and now my pro-feminism is teaching me about pacifism. I believe if we are serious about radical social change, those of us who are men must learn to integrate the two. If we truly oppose all war, we must oppose men's war against women. If we want to remove the causes of war, we must dismantle patriarchy. If we hope to overcome all forms of oppression, we must work to change our own and other men's sexism. If we are to wage peace, we must begin at home.

WHAT MEN CAN DO

- Get involved in Brotherstorm (for information contact: Jon Cohen, 726 Westgate #3N, St. Louis, MO 63130, (314) 721-4489 or Michael Rudnick, 220 5th Street, Providence, RI 02906, (401) 272-9262.
- Start a pro-feminism study-consciousness raising group.
- Raise money from men for rape crisis centers or battered women's shelters.
- Join NOCM, PO Box 451, Watseka, IL 60970 (815) 432-3010.
- Support pro-feminist music—Geoff Morgan, Romanovsky and Phillips, Fred Small.
- Confront sexist language and rape "jokes."
- Do childcare for feminist events.
- Confront sexist ads, including promotion of macho men.
- Find/start a local changing men center, program for men who batter.
- Help men stop from killing their brothers. Stop the poverty draft.
- Confront heterosexism and homophobia, help stop AIDS.
- Educate heterosexual men about responsibility for birth control.
- Subscribe to Changing Men Magainze, 306 N. Brooks, Madison WI 53715. ■

How to Protect a Non-Traditional Relationship?

by Cindy Brown

In our October feature "Why Can't Sharon Kowalski Come Home?" Karen Thompson told the painful story of how a judicial system biased against non-traditional relationships separated her from her lover of four years just when her lover needed her most. Below, Cindy Brown describes some legal steps that can be taken by people in non-traditional, non-recognized relationships to gain some legal standing vis-a-vis their partners in order to gain some protection against the kind of catastrophe experienced by Sharon Kowalski and Karen Thompson and countless others.

The tragic case of Sharon Kowalski, severely injured in an auto accident, declared incompetent by Minnesota courts, and denied any visitation by her partner Karen Thompson, demonstrates the extreme vulnerability of non-traditional relationships to legally-sanctioned disruption by hostile families and judges. The struggle of Sharon Kowalski and Karen Thompson is not unique. There are suits nationwide involving disputed child custody, loss of visitation rights to severely injured partners, and settlements of estates that set aside surviving partners, all arising out of the non-recognition of such relationships.

Despite these sobering realities, there are ways to legally declare a relationship to another person without marriage. It is possible to give your partner decisionmaking powers in case of serious illness, make sure your children have the parent(s) you desire for them, and bequeath your property to those you designate without regard to marital status.

Although the legal system may seem forbidding, and individuals may have reservations about utilizing the often repressive machinery of American justice, legal means can and will be used to achieve goals such as depriving partners of basic human contact. Under such circumstances, it is prudent to make plans ahead of time for extraordinary circumstances, and to use the legal system to your advantage, instead of letting it take advantage of the vulnerability of non-sanctioned relationships.

The following questions and answers are offered to let you assess your own needs, to provide an overview of specific legal instruments, and to give you a basis for further discussion with an attorney. There are two caveats to keep in mind: first of all, no document is foolproof, though those described here will significantly improve the status of any relationship in the eyes of the court and will be accepted in most cases without problems. Second, while in general these instruments are recognized in all states and territories of the United States as long as you are a resident in one of them, you need

to consult with a competent attorney in your jurisdiction to make sure your documents adhere to specific rules for form, limits of enforceability, etc.

How can I ensure that my partner will make decisions for me if I am incapacitated?

You and your partner need to complete "durable powers of attorney." In these documents, each gives the other power of attorney in case of accident, disabling disease, or other circumstances rendering one of you incompetent to make decisions. Such power of attorney allows the person named not only to make medical decisions but also to act for you in all other capacities you specify, such as making legal decisions and completing financial transactions (e.g., signing checks). You can also specify that your partner be considered a family member for purposes of hospital visitation. This is critical because hospitals frequently have strict visitation policies, particularly for patients assigned to intensive care; even the cooperation of an injured person's family members may not be enough to gain access to an intensive care unit.

How can a "power of attorney" be challenged?

Any legal document is open to challenge if it can be proved that it was obtained using undue influence, or if fraud, such as forgery, was involved.

cont. next page



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However, a "durable power of attorney" will normally be accepted as an expression of your wishes in every jurisdiction, so long as it is properly executed.

How do I get one?

It's best to complete the document through an attorney. She or he prepares it; you read it over, sign and date it; and then the original is notarized. There is little original writing involved, so "power of attorney" documents are relatively quick to prepare.

How much will it cost?

Because they are standard, short documents, "powers of attorney" should be inexpensive. Several attorneys in the Boston-Cambridge area (where prices are higher than average) will do one for under \$100; for two people, under \$200.

How can I make sure my partner will raise my child/children?

The best tactic is to make a will and nominate your partner as guardian for your children. Courts will be inclined to follow such a nomination, but because guardianships are decided in the "best interests" of children, judges have the leeway to set aside such a nomination. However, your wishes will, at a minimum, give your partner leverage in gaining custody. The court will take the wishes of adolescents into account, which could help if there is a challenge to your nomination.

What else do wills cover?

A will allows you to dispose of property, make allowances for your children, and otherwise ensure that your death does not mean the dissolution of everything you wanted to do in your life. If you die without one, your blood relatives have every legal right to your estate; your partner will have almost no recourse in the law to challenge their claims.

Aren't wills expensive?

Wills vary widely in cost, depending upon how complex they are. A simple will, one in which you make few specific bequests, will probably cost a few hundred dollars. You can save money by keeping your will simple but adding to it a more detailed memorandum, dated and signed and clearly listing your bequests, to the person you name as the will's executrix/executor (though you should know that such memoranda are not legally binding).

Okay, if I decide to do something, how do I find an attorney?

The best way is word of mouth: ask your friends. If this is unsuccessful, or if you live in an area where there are few openly progressive, gay, or feminist attorneys, contact a statewide or nationwide legal organization such as the American Civil Liberties Union, any local gay legal group, or the Lambda Legal Defense Fund in New York and explain that you want a referral.

Once you have a referral or referrals, call and ask to see the attorney for a consultation. Don't be shy—ask on the

phone about what the costs will be, whether there is a sliding fee scale, and whether paying in installments is an option.

Make sure you feel comfortable with the attorney, and that you read carefully anything you sign. Courts are very literal-minded, and your documents should be an exact and clear statement of your wishes.

How can I pay for this?

Two powers of attorney and two wills will probably cost between \$500 and \$1,000 in total. Think of these documents as insurance with dividends that will be paid indefinitely—in peace of mind now, and as a hedge against the astronomical legal costs you could encounter in cases like that of Sharon Kowalski and Karen Thompson. Progressive attorneys may be willing to discuss options such as payment plans.

The reactionary nature of much of current American jurisprudence is discouraging; fear and bigotry are still enshrined in the law. Yet the system can also be used to safeguard your beliefs, however radical they are. Armed with this knowledge, you can act to protect yourself and your partner, creating many of the positive aspects of marriage without marrying. In the world as it is, we owe it to ourselves to use every means available to protect ourselves and those we love from the pain and loss even one random accident could inflict.

November 1986—SOJOURNER—

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