



Margit M. Winstrom, MD

The Good Old Fashioned Family Doc Clinic

“We do it the old fashioned way ~ with TLC”

THE NECESSITY FOR NONSENSE

There is a fascinating, growing like wildfire, social movement afoot among the “50 ish” and beyond female population of our country. It calls itself “The Red Hat Society”. (www.redhatsociety.org)

Who would have thought that “disorganization” without committees, meetings, dues, rules, agendas or even a stated purpose would appeal to so many diverse women? It has grown from a group of 5 friends to over 20,000 chapters across America, Canada, Australia, and beyond. Obviously it has tapped into an unmet need – perhaps a subtle and heretofore unrecognized need, but a very real and apparently easily fulfilled need.

These are women who have been the caretakers of their families, served on committees, sat on boards and chaired galas and been secretary or treasurers of every do-good and civic organization in their wake. Their kids are now gone, many are divorced or widowed. Many have rebuilt a circle of friends and a support team, (but just as many have not) but it seems what’s missing is the whimsy, the freedom to break loose from “life as usual”. Permission to break from the rules (that granted were often self-imposed) of what is proper, what matters, what is in style, and what is done. To be given the opportunity and actually encouraged to do what you want is an irresistible call. No matter how deeply you long to be outrageous, bodacious, far out—it is often far to intimidating to pull it off alone particularly if you have lived a life of “prim and properism”.

The Red Hat Society’s only rule that you wear a red hat and a purple dress (preferably clashing) immediately implodes the otherwise all-important consideration of “appropriate attire” and all the judgment and comparison issues that stem there from. Suddenly you are free to “do your own thing”. You are empowered to seize the moment, and milk it for all the joy it can give. To really experience being uninhibited, totally present to you, your friends and life is a very real, safe, wholesome, and healthy alternative to alcohol.

Not too long ago I wanted to go to an event that wouldn’t have been much fun alone. So I decided to give it a try. I sent out an e-mail to the over 50’s in my world including an 89 year old who had just lost her husband, telling them to just show up with a red hat and purple dress if they wanted to. I was amazed at who all showed up including the octogenarian. We had a blast and it has grown ever since. Everyone seems to know someone else who “would just love this”!

We obviously do have a need for nonsense and it like laughter is good for whatever ails us apparently more than we realized.

I encourage you to experience this phenomenon for yourself. You don’t have to be official—just call up a few friends and then go buy a red hat. Good, clean, healthy nonsense will inevitably follow. I guarantee!