



THE LOTUS SEED

It's Never Too Late to Grow

MAY 2021

LOTUS NETWORK®
SIGNATURE EXPERIENCE

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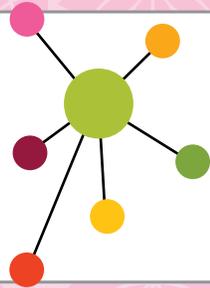


Spend an Extraordinary
Sunday Morning Virtually
with

MARIA SHRIVER

AUGUST 29, 2021

TITLE
SPONSOR
IRIS SMITH



CONNECTION CHALLENGE

This activity is a unique and creative way to connect with the Lotus community.

(learn about the challenge on page 2)

"Only through our connectedness to others can we really know and enhance the self.

And only through working on the self can we begin to enhance our connectedness to others."

- Harriet Goldhor Lerner



LOTUS LADIES

PERSONAL PROFILE: LOUANNE SARAGA WALTERS

There is a story Louanne likes to tell. It is a story written by Neale Donald Walsch about a Little Soul in conversation with God. God asks the Little Soul if she can describe who she is.

(read more on page 3)



MOTHERHOOD

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO TRUST YOUR INTUITION

Drawing from her personal story of crisis and subsequent healing, Kara will share her unique perspective on what it takes to trust a motherly heart and live the life you were born to live.

[CLICK HERE TO
LEARN MORE](#)

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR OUR JUNE 15TH ZOOM-IN SESSION

Emotional Brain Training

"It's Never Too Late to Lead a Stress Free Life" with featured guest Cindy Lackner, MA

[CLICK HERE TO
SEE OUR HAPPENINGS](#)



INVITATION
TO FOLLOW,
BE ON THE
LOOKOUT!

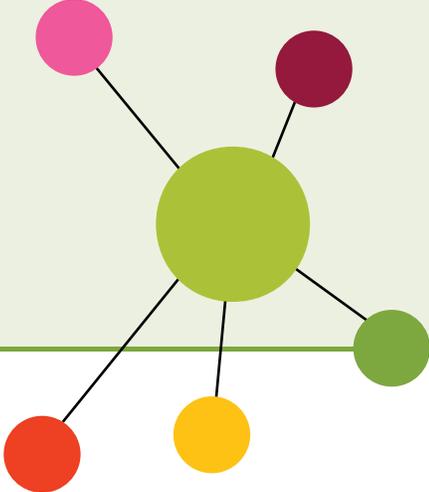
STEPPING OUT WITH LOTUS NETWORK

Do you love to take walks? Do you like to explore our city? Are you tired of the long COVID winter and in need of some fresh air and some good old-fashioned fun and socializing? Remember those days?

Lotus Network is launching a series of three opportunities this summer to enjoy nature, have some fun, explore our beautiful mile high city and develop deep and meaningful connections through socially-focused walking. All walks will adhere to state guidelines for COVID-19 safety restrictions and requirements.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT
THE OUTINGS](#)





CONNECTION CHALLENGE

Leave a gift in a public place.

Place a small gift in a space where people will find it...pennies at a fountain, balloons at a park, sidewalk chalk at a playground.

Write a little note so people know your gift is there to be taken or used, and then leave it there knowing that you are about to make the day for someone, or several someones, you may never even meet.

Better Together.

[Click here to see past challenges >](#)

We would love to hear about your experience around this challenge. Please send us an email at: LotusSeed@lotusnetwork.org





LOTUS LADIES

PERSONAL PROFILE

*Louanne Saraga Walters, who bravely volunteered to share her story as our fourth Lotus Ladies Personal Profile, is the embodiment of one of the core values of Lotus Network: **It is never too late to become the person you always wanted to be.** We hope that her story will inspire you to share your own story or nominate someone else whose story deserves to be heard...we believe they all do!*

Louanne Saraga Walters In the Midst of Crisis, We Become

Written for Lotus Network by Jessica Redmond of *Storyteller*

There is a story Louanne likes to tell. It is a story written by Neale Donald Walsch about a Little Soul in conversation with God. God asks the Little Soul if she can describe who she is, and after trying on several identities—love, kindness, empathy, joy—the Little Soul eventually settles on forgiveness, but there is a problem. In order to become forgiveness, the Little Soul needs to have something to forgive, and none of the other good souls around her seem capable of hurting her in that way. Finally, a Friendly Soul steps forward and volunteers to ‘do something really terrible’ because the Friendly Soul so loves the Little Soul and wants her to experience what it’s like to become forgiveness. While the act itself is painful, it allows the Little Soul to experience her true self, and for that, she is profoundly grateful. Louanne has found that when she looks at life in this way, even the most painful moments—in fact, especially the most painful moments—can serve as an essential awakening. There will always be mistakes and hurt; what matters, she has come to understand, is what we learn to do with them.

Louanne grew up in a conservative, strictly Christian, military home. As she entered her teen years, she began to feel an unwelcome attraction to girls, an attraction she knew would be viewed by other military families and her Seventh Day Adventist community as both unnatural and sinful. “I couldn’t let my father down, and I couldn’t let my mother down, and I didn’t want to let God down,” she says, so she suppressed her impulses, focusing her attention instead on academic achievement and hoping that would be enough to keep her in her parents’, and God’s, good graces.

She went on to a varied and successful professional career, working as a news anchor with NBC, a cruise director for Royal Caribbean, and as a national account manager for T-Mobile. It was there that she experienced the first of what she has come to see as two major personal awakenings. Up until that point, Louanne had done everything she could to stifle her sexual orientation. Other women she knew seemed to find something magnetic in men; perhaps if she tried out enough of them, she hoped, she could experience that attraction too. Unsurprisingly, her promiscuity did not lead to Mr. Right. Then, at the age of 33, Louanne fell in love for the first time with a woman, a co-worker named Tess, and that changed everything.

Finally, she realized what she had been missing with all those men; she didn’t want to be with a man at all. She wanted to be with a woman. Unfortunately, while Louanne was able to allow herself to fall in love, the year and a half they spent together was deeply unhealthy. Tess, ashamed of the sexual aspect of their relationship and battling her own demons, insisted both she and Louanne remain closeted and maintain active relations with men to ensure the office gossips would never suspect the true nature of their relationship. Louanne followed Tess’s rules until, after a meaningless encounter, she discovered she was pregnant.

Louanne Saraga Walters *(continued)*

Louanne had never been one of those girls who dreamed of motherhood. Her sister had been, and even as girls they always assumed that one would become a mother while the other would be the supportive aunt. As it turned out, both women ended up pregnant three months apart. Certain that she was in no position to raise a child either emotionally (she had compromised herself so much already and she didn't even know who she really was) or professionally (her job required long hours and nearly constant travel), Louanne made the difficult decision to terminate her pregnancy.

As painful as it was, the abortion led Louanne to the realization that she could no longer keep making decisions based on disliking pieces of herself. She did not want to keep faking an attraction to men, nor did she want to be in a dysfunctional relationship with a woman who thought same sex relationships were shameful. She wanted to be in a healthy, loving partnership with an emotionally stable woman and to be an example for other lesbian women that they, too, could and should fully express who they were and who they loved.

This change did not happen overnight. It was, as Louanne says, the result of several years of "very focused and intentional growth." She found a spiritual home in the Unity Church, and through connections she made there, was introduced to a woman, Sharon, who embodied the positivity and self-acceptance Louanne realized she had been looking for all along.

Finding love and continued professional accomplishment, Louanne went on to work as a financial advisor, nonprofit development director, and is now a REALTOR[®], applying her skills as a fiduciary to real estate, did not mean that the hard life lessons stopped coming. Six months into her relationship with Sharon, Louanne's second awakening arrived via the kind of phone call no one ever wants to get. Louanne's mother, who had gone to the hospital for a routine, outpatient surgical procedure, had suffered a disastrous medical accident. The chances of survival were dismal. Louanne, with Sharon by her side, rushed to be with her mother for however much time she had left. In those several weeks, as Louanne observed the incredible compassion her mother showed her medical team, something began to shift. The doctor had made a horrible mistake, to be sure, but holding onto anger would do none of them any good. Likewise, watching her mother's life slipping away was incredibly painful, but with Louanne holding one of her mother's hands and Sharon holding the other, they were able to find a form of beauty even in that final moment.

Reflecting on these two most pivotal points in her life, Louanne sees how, like the Little Soul having to be hurt to become Forgiveness, she has grown from these painful yet significant experiences. Her relationship with Tess taught her not to hide from her identity as a gay woman but instead to embrace and celebrate it and to love her whole self. Her mother, both in the way she lived (in her fifties, Louanne's mother came out as a gay woman herself) and the way she treated those around her in her final weeks of life, gave Louanne a powerful reminder of the importance of honest, heartfelt connections.

Louanne knows that her path to becoming is far from complete. There are still hard lessons to be learned and many new ways to experience growth, all of which she welcomes, certain that, as she says, "It's never too late to be aware of who you're becoming."

[Click here to read more about our previous Lotus Ladies >](#)

**To nominate a Lotus Lady, email us at:
LotusSeed@lotusnetwork.org**



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of 2021 sponsors:*

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Our mission:

Lotus Network provides opportunities for women to create
meaningful connections, personal growth, and
purposeful living through social and educational resources.

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