

## Being Alone

By Barbara Alpern



There's been a lot of conversation lately about "aging solo." Some TTN members interpret it as meaning they have no family or close friends they can call upon in an emergency, or when they may not be able to care for themselves without assistance.

**However, there's also another definition that applies to many of our members.**

I joined TTN in 2014 after retiring at age 66 from a very demanding and stressful job. I realized that, if I continued to work at that pace until age 70 (when I originally planned to retire), I might not make my 70th birthday. After I retired, I thought I could be happy staying home, reading, maybe learning to knit, and never interacting with another human being (except the food delivery guys since I don't cook).

After several months of doing just that, I realized that I needed more. I have two younger brothers with whom I'm very close, but they both still work and have families. So basically, I was alone. Then I found TTN.

As Vice Chair, and then Chair, of the NYC Chapter, I often get urgent calls and emails from new members who are in a panic because they're suddenly faced with a lot of time on their hands and no one to share it with. Maybe they just retired, or just moved to the city, or recently lost a spouse, or their children moved and took the grandchildren with them. They may still have loving family members (as I do) who care about them very much, but who also have their own lives.

Whatever the reason, many members joined TTN because they were faced with being alone, and that frightened them.

Some members are interested in meeting other women who share their concerns and fears, and will support each other through this challenging time of transition. TTN offers Transition Peer Groups (small groups who meet in members' homes to discuss topics related to the types of transitions we all are likely to experience at some point). We also created Life Transition Services, which offers more in-depth workshops to help members navigate through these challenges and figure out what's next in their lives.

Some members need someone to escort them back from a medical procedure, or to be a



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second set of ears during a significant doctor's appointment, so they [joined the Caring Collaborative](#), which provides escort and other services related to healthcare and a Member Information Exchange to contact other members with similar health-related issues.

Some want to do something that will make an impact. We help them connect to volunteer organizations, or to use their skills (or develop new ones) by joining one of the committees of volunteers who run TTN. Or, they can join our Civic Action Special Interest Group and take action to protect the rights that our country's founding fathers thought were important enough to document in our Constitution.

And some members just want to have fun. So we offer a host of Special Interest Groups focused around such topics as Culture, Dining Out, Travel, Photography, Book Groups, Games, Movies, and the list goes on.

Finally, there are our events, which range from going backstage at the Met, to Pot Luck dinners, to author events, and Financial Planning seminars.



Best of all, there's no limit to how many activities in which our member can participate. The first thing I did when I joined TTN was to join a Transition Peer Group. These women offered support and bolstered my confidence in a way that I hadn't experienced before. Between this group and other women I met as I continued to take part in various TTN activities, I felt very comfortable taking on the responsibilities of Chapter Chair, since I knew I was surrounded by friends.

TTN completely changed my life. If you take advantage of what it offers, it can also change yours!