



*Moms Get Real™*

[MomsGetReal.com](http://MomsGetReal.com)

**Stress Less Holidays**

**2012**

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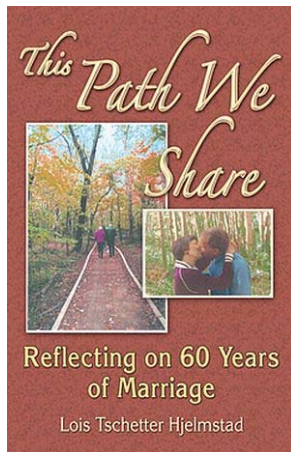
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## The Best Gift is One of Love, or a Good Book...or Both!



Lois Tschetter Hjelmstad happens to be from South Dakota – the Black Hills, where my mom and her family are from, so from the start I felt a strange connection to this woman and author who was born in a place that is so clearly defined in my childhood memories. The fact that her birthday is in October, like my mother’s, simply deepened my odd feeling of connection to this woman. She even likes purple lilacs, which are my favorite.

But what really makes her book, [This Path We Share](#), “stick to my bones” as my old poetry prof would say, what makes me want to share this book with you so fervently, is that she writes how we try to here every day – she *gets real*.

When I created [MomsGetReal](#), it was out of a sense of frustration that motherhood was somehow a role that was on a pedestal, that by virtue of being a mom, I couldn’t really be anything else, and that because I was a mom, I had to be a perfect mom all the time, and that somehow, being a woman got lost.

Well that’s just a bunch of hooley.

So what I love about Lois and The Path We Share is that she talks about how wonderfully happily married she’s been to her husband of 60+ years without glossing it over into some kind of unattainable fairy tale. She talks about how she didn’t even believe in happily ever after or loving someone forever because World War II had just ended and it wasn’t certain in anyone’s mind that there would be a forever.

She talks about the rough spots, when the whisper of divorce echoed through their home:

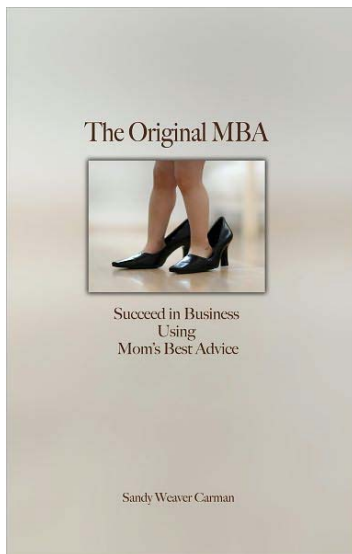
“How did we get to this miserable place? Where was ‘happily ever after now?’” she writes.

She talks about how she pulled away from her husband after losing her left breast to cancer and needing to simply focus on her own life, priorities, and grieving process, and about how guilty they felt for laughing and celebrating their 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary as her sister lay in the hospital dying of pancreatic cancer.

[This Path We Share](#) is very much a story of love, but it’s not a love story. It’s real. It’s full of the real-life challenges and moments that many couples walk away from rather than work through and endure. And of course, it’s the working through and sticking together that strengthens a bond enough to allow it to last 60 years.

It’s a book in which I find comfort in re-reading passages just to connect with the deep love and respect of their relationship, and for reassurance that even when Dave and I are going 60 miles an hour in opposite directions and can’t do more than fall asleep together with a quick good night for nights on end,. I hope you’ll read it, and even more, I hope you will get an extra copy to share as a gift.

## The Original MBA by Sandy Weaver Carman – Good for Life and Business



How many of us rely on the words of our own mothers rattling around in our heads to get us through every situation? Sandy Weaver Carman's book, [The Original MBA](#), (also available on [Kindle](#)) combines the pieces of advice she received from her mom over the years into a blueprint for successfully running a business – and a life.

Carman's style is direct and straightforward, making the book a fabulous & delightful read that not only pays homage to her mother but will have you appreciating yours a little more as well. Whether or not you own a business, the advice and stories in the book are simply wonderful – it's a curl up and feel good book.

Constructed in such a way that it links childhood lessons with real-life adult experiences, the book is set up to allow you to rely on it like a workbook to improve your own success in business and in life. Each section of the book is named after a room in a home, and the book includes a number of "chores" readers are assigned to help reach their own level of success.

The advice is down to earth but incredibly meaningful and useful, with tips about all kinds of things, including:

- Making boring and dreary jobs more palatable (working your way up)
- Managing your schedule (project management)
- Being comfortable in our own skin (rising to the top)
- Working less, but getting more done (efficiency)
- Taking time for you (prioritizing)
- Connecting with others (networking)
- Communication skills

The Original MBA is the kind of book you'll want to keep within reach so that you can refer to it when you're having a rough moment – with your kids, your mom, or your boss.

## Stress Less About Germs During the Holidays with Nozin



I don't know about you, but the minute we have to turn on the heat in the house, I dread more than just the bills. I dread the dry skin, the closed windows, the flyaway hair, and the germs my kids will start bringing home from school with them. I also dread what it will do to my nose. I have a very precarious relationship with my nose.

Because I work from home and don't get exposed to runny noses and sneezing people on a regular basis, it's virtually guaranteed that what my kids bring home from school, I'll be catching.

We do what we can – keep hand sanitizer inside the door, encourage the kids to wash their hands, eat healthy foods, and get plenty of rest. But what I really want is a cork for my nose that will keep germs from getting in.

I think I've found the next best thing.



NOZIN is a new product on the market designed to help minimize the spread of germs. Clinically proven, Nozin [kills 99.99% of germs](#) and lasts for up to 8 hours.

I have to admit, I was nervous to try it. And, I had a little trouble figuring out the “pop” in the POPswabs™ but I was genuinely pleased and pleasantly surprised. Not only does it significant germ protection but the inactive ingredients are all natural oils, which moisturize my nose. One of the oils in Nozin is orange oil, which gives it a very nice scent.

The POPswabs™ are easy to stash in your purse or pocket and perfect for people who teach, work in daycares, spend a lot of time in airplanes, or otherwise are exposed to germs during the cold and flu season.

Learn more about how Nozin can be incorporated into your hygiene routine by reading [“Lesson in Hygiene”](#) by Dr. Richard Bailey. You can purchase Nozin at most major department stores and pharmacies.

## The Uglee Pen Is a Totally Cool Stocking Stuffer



Most people probably don't bother using pens anymore, thanks to computers, but I love writing by hand. I write checklists, letters, notes to my kids, and work on my book using pen and paper. The trouble is, thanks to slave labor performed during my years in corporate servitude, I have a touch of carpal tunnel syndrome, and that means that when I write a lot, my hands go to sleep.

I really don't like that.

But I DO like the [UGLee Pen](#).

[The UGLee Pen](#) was created and designed by a physician and it's the first pen I've used that lets me write for a significantly longer period of time without experiencing discomfort or numbness.

The pen has a smooth glide and a specially designed cushion grip that follows the contours of the hands. The name UGLee comes from Ultimate Grip and Dr. Lee, the creator.

UGLee Pens are a perfect solution for people who suffer from hand cramps, tendonitis, arthritis, carpal tunnel syndrome, hyperesthesia, ischemia, paresthesia, neuropraxia, callouses, and tight grip and have found writing more difficult. It's perfect for those who have to write in volume, press through triplicate forms, or take copious notes (guess what will be in Kira's stocking this year?!).

The UGLee Pen is designed to be the world's most comfortable ergonomic pen - a pen that is actually ergonomic, based on more than eight years of research in the interaction of hand anatomy and human physiology with writing instruments. The overall shape as well as the detailed contours are perfectly engineered to follow the anatomy of the hand.

## Add Luxury to Your Holiday with Midori Ribbon

I've actually been asked if I let my kids wrap our gifts, my wrapping jobs look so bad. My mother-in-law, on the other hand, comes armed to share the holidays with packages that look like they came right out of a catalog because they're so beautifully wrapped. I've often wished there was a way to get inside the package and get the gift without destroying the beautiful ribbon, and often enjoy simply admiring the beauty of the package.

I've always wanted to add a special touch to my gifts, and I've finally found the perfect way to do it with [Midori Ribbon](#). Midori Ribbon offers the most exquisite designs, perfect for making beautiful packages but also for many other uses, like making beautiful hair ribbons, crafts, and for those with the talent, the ability to embellish clothing.



Midori, the company, is named after its owner, who grew up in Japan, where gift giving is both an art form and an important social obligation. Midori had a simple idea: bring the beautiful fabric ribbon she knew as a girl to the United States. Started at a kitchen table in 1989, Midori -the company and the woman - have thrived. Now owned by Midori's daughter Aya and her husband Trevor, the tradition of providing the most beautiful ribbon possible -ribbon fit for a Queen - continues.

Add a little grace and style to your holidays with a selection of ribbon from [Midori](#). But be warned – the packages may be so beautiful that no one will want to open them!

## MOD Camera Straps and Accessories Add a Stylish Touch



I love discovering people who don't accept the status quo, who see a way to put their creative energies to work, and who believe in quality.

I like it even more when it's a mother-daughter partnership.

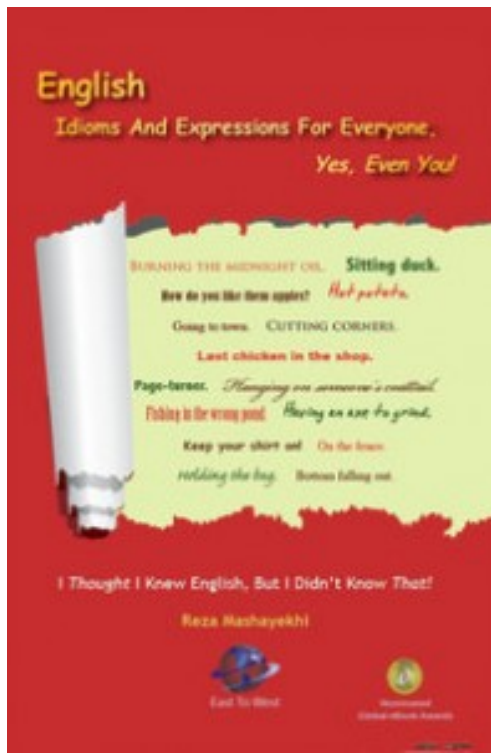
Mod is a family company started by mom-daughter team Amber Clay and Jeannie Cheatham. The company began out of frustration Amber experienced in not being able to find a high quality camera strap. All she could find were simple straps in basic colors. Amber, with her mother's help, used her grandmother's sewing machine to create her own camera strap using houndstooth and hot pink fabric.

This was a strap with real personality, and it was a hit. Amber and Jeannie realized that they could make straps to sell at a local camera shop. The straps were seen by an independent sales distributor, who recognized the potential. Photographers (particularly professionals whose images are seen almost as often as their clients') liked the idea of having stylish, personalized, high quality straps for their cameras.

The company has now expanded to include bags and lens caps, carrying through the quirky and stylish designs. My strap, the purple & black zebra strap, is not only well made and sturdy enough to use everywhere we travel, but it's incredibly fun. Mod Straps make the perfect gift for the photographer in your life – even you!



## Need a New Book for the Nightstand? This Is It!



[English Idioms And Expressions For Everyone, Yes, Even You!](#) by Reza Mashayekhi is a fabulous compilation of all the things about the English language that make it so difficult to learn, even for those born to it, which is why I recommend this book not just for those who are learning English as a second language, but for anyone who enjoys expanding their vocabulary.

Just because you *can't hear yourself think* doesn't mean you have to *throw the baby out with the bathwater* because you'll probably *be caught red-handed* and end up *spilling your guts*.

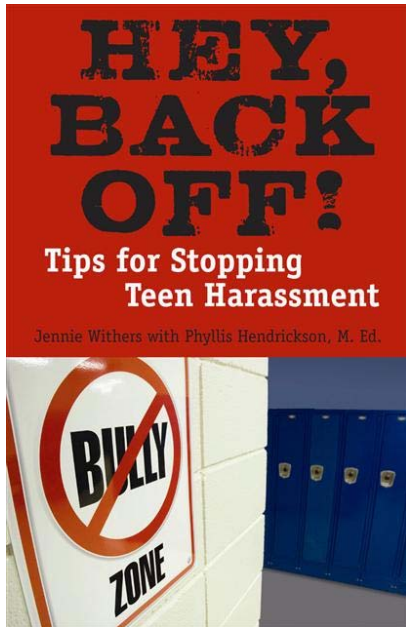
As a sometimes French translator, it's often these English idioms that make a good translation so difficult. Having this reference to quickly see another way to say the expression is useful. It's also very helpful for my language-obsessed son who is always asking us what things mean. And,

it makes great bathroom reading for those who indulge in that moment of quiet.

Every idiom you can think of, from “A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush” to “Zip it!” are included in the book, which explains the meaning and often provides a sample sentence in addition to the definition or other, related idioms. There is also an extensive index in the back so that you can look up the idioms you find most troubling.

[English Idioms And Expressions For Everyone, Yes, Even You!](#) retails is available at Amazon price or directly from [Englishidiomsandexpressions.com](http://Englishidiomsandexpressions.com) for only \$13.95 where 10% of proceeds are donated to Direct Relief International.

## A Tool for Teens to Help End Bullying – A Life Changer



Jennie Withers and Phyllis Hendrickson teamed up to create an amazing resource for teens and their parents to help put a stop to teen bullying: [Hey, Back Off! Tips for Stopping Teen Harassment](#). With bullying affecting more than half of all teens, the problem has become an epidemic.

Withers is a graduate of Boise State University and taught high school for several years before focusing on writing full time. She is also the author of *Hey, Get a Job!* Phyllis Hendrickson has a master's degree in education and more than 14 years of experience as a high school counselor. The two have created a book that will help teens

This book will help teens and their parents:

- Recognize harassment - bullying, sexual harassment, stalking, hazing and cyberbullying
- Understand harassment laws and how they protect victims and punish harassers
- Identify your passive, aggressive or assertive personality types
- Discover what your personality type has to do with harassment prevention
- Learn how to become assertive and how to maintain an assertive personality
- Know strategies that work and those that won't when dealing with harassers or bullies
- Read stories and quotes from real peoples' experiences
- Complete activities designed to help you prevent harassment
- Prepare to become a person who is confident, happy and successful!

[Hey, Back Off!](#) is targeted to teens and includes workbook pages that allows teens an outlet for some of the things they've experienced as well as tools to handle bullying, report it, and make it stop.

Included in the book is an entire section for parents (and teachers and communities) that provides them with tools for recognizing bullying when it happens, intervention techniques, and methods for supporting bullying victims.

Withers and Hendrickson have put together an incredibly helpful resource that can truly have an impact.

## Stress Less with Eco-Friendly Pest Control Products

The holidays are not the time we're typically thinking about pest control. And the only "going green" most of us are considering is a Christmas tree. But in the world of pests, places like California, Arizona and other warmer state are struggling with imported ants; mosquitoes are playing vampire in New York City, and bed bugs are now resistant to all the pesticides currently on the market, not that we really want to think about pesticides this time of year.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year? Guess it depends on whether or not you can get to sleep without the bed bugs biting.



While not a traditional product to consider around the holidays, this is a STRESS LESS holiday guide, and nothing helps reduce stress like discovering a new product that takes care of pests in a way that doesn't have you worried you'll be facing health issues for the next ten years from the dangerous poisons in the pesticides.

[Greenbug](#) is safe, effective, and best of all, eco-friendly, ridding you of pest problems with products to which the bugs are not able to develop a resistance. Have a real "green" Christmas this year by choosing an eco-friendly way to rid yourself of the bugs that add stress to your life, from mosquitoes and silverfish to bed bugs and ants.

Traveling for the holidays? Sleeping in a strange bed, either in a hotel or as a guest in someone's home? Does it make your skin crawl to know that it is predicted that in the next five years bed bugs will proliferate to such an extent that there is an almost 100% chance you will come into contact with them?

[Greenbug](#) is a sure way you can manage a Stress Less holiday season.

## SmartSeat Chair Protectors – The Perfect Gift for Families with Young Children

The first home my husband and I owned together had a beautiful formal dining room. I found the most amazing dining room table (eight feet long, marbled top, black) and chairs that took four of us to get up the stairs. It was magnificent. The chairs were large, overstuffed and covered with a black satin-like fabric.

A few months later, we had a baby.

It didn't take long before my beautiful black dining room chairs were just gigantic targets for everything from baby cereal (you know, the stuff that turns into paste hard enough to use to shore up the foundation) to split pea baby food to a canvas for the imagination of a toddling infant who discovered how to chew up baby cookie and turn it into finger paste.

So much for my big plans for a formal dining room! When we sold the house, we sold the table and chairs with it.



Since then, the only dining room chairs we have had have been wood or those easy to clean vinyl covered chairs. While it's too late to save my dream of a fancy dining room (it's ok – our kitchen table tends to be more of catch-all workstation for work, homework, and crafts these days). But for those of you who still dream of beautiful dining room furniture without giving up on having children, I'm so excited to tell you about SmartSeat Chair Protectors™!

SmartSeat Chair Protectors™ are the kind of product that reassure me that innovation isn't dead. I am always excited to discover that someone has come up with a great, sensible solution to a problem that plagues every mom. I'm even thinking I might have to shop for a new dining room set now (our kids are older and no longer finger painting with chewed up teething cookies, but they're still messy).

From high chairs to toddler seats to dining room chairs (especially the fabric covered ones), the SmartSeat Chair Protector™ will prevent crumbs, spills, and stains from ruining your chairs. The protectors are designed to fit on any style of chair and are versatile enough to be attached, using the Velcro straps, in a variety of different ways.

Best of all, though, when things get messy, you just pull off the SmartSeat Chair Protector™, throw it in the washing machine, and voila! Perfect dining room.

## Make the Holidays Extra Special with 3D Laser Gifts

Finding the right gift that expresses how much you care for someone can be difficult. I think that's why so many people end up crabby and irritated in the stores this time of year. They're not trying to be mean; they're simply frustrated at not being able to find that perfect gift that says everything they want to say to the recipient.

[3D Laser Gifts](#) offers the perfect solution: you don't have to go to the store or even leave your home and you get to give a gift that will be treasured forever. The entire process is quite simple: you go to the website, upload a favorite photo, and submit it. 3D Laser Gifts magically transforms your photo into a 3D image inside a heavy crystal object and your image is frozen in time.

While it is an ideal choice for Christmas for grandparents and other family, it's also the perfect idea at Valentine's Day, for graduations and other special occasions, and even as a corporate gift (think: embed your business logo in a crystal to send to your best clients).



I had no trouble choosing what photo I wanted to use for my crystal – it's the same photo of Parker and Anika that adorns my desk, appears on my credit card, and occasionally rotates through as wallpaper on my computer. It is the one image of my kids that I never want to forget – and now, it's forever frozen in time in the form of a beautiful photo crystal.

This will be my gift of choice for those difficult to buy for family members like grandparents, parents, aunts and uncles.



All 3D Laser Gifts needs from you is a high-quality photo. They advise: *"We simply need a good quality photo. We can then laser your photo into our crystals utilizing the highest quality standards. Make sure when you upload your photo that it is well illuminated, in a high resolution and is not blurred. Your photo may show one, two or up to three people."*

3D Laser Gifts offers a variety of different sizes, shapes, and display options for photo crystals, and carefully ship the crystals in a padded, decorative box. It's simply a lovely option for gift giving any time of year.

About MomsGetReal™

[MomsGetReal](#)™ is a premier parenting community owned by Shadra Bruce and operated by a team of socially savvy, dedicated mom bloggers known as the Mama Posse™. Our extended reach, powerful credibility, and a growing fan base is an exciting thing to be a part of.

MomsGetReal™ has grown into a phenomenal community of Moms dedicated to helping other moms know that when life with kids skids out of control and gets a little bit crazy, we're here to help with stories, advice, giveaways, and recommendations that make it all a little easier.

All of the Momspirations who write for MomsGetReal™ are dedicated to stripping away the pretense and getting real about Motherhood in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. MomsGetReal™ is a growing community of mom experts who seek to freely share their experiences in order to help others find solutions, solace, advice, and resources that make raising healthy, happy kids a little bit easier, empowering Moms to make a difference for their families, in their communities, and in the world.

Would you like your product to be included in next year's Stress Less Holiday Guide? Simply contact [MomsGetReal](#) for more information. MomsGetReal produces four to eight product review guides per year. Upcoming guides include:

**The New Year, New You Guide** will feature health & wellness, diet and fitness, and weight loss products and run January 1 - January 31 on the site and include a freely distributable publication featuring all sponsors and products.

Future guides:

**Toy Extravaganza**

**Kid Lit Event (children's books)**

**The Ultimate Travel Guide (summer 2012)**

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*The content of this guide is freely distributable. All items reviewed in this guide were provided by the companies so that I could adequately evaluate the product and provide my honest opinion. No monetary compensation was provided.*

*MomsGetReal™ complies fully with FTC Guidelines for bloggers and promotes honesty and transparency in all communications. The only expertise I claim to have is my own experience as a mother of 5, and several products were rejected for this guide that did not meet my personal standards for things I would use for my family or personally recommend.*

*If you have any questions or concerns regarding these reviews, please seek additional information directly from the manufacturers, authors, and product websites.*

*All prizes awards during the All Treats, No Tricks Fall Event were awarded using random.org to choose the winner from entrants for each product.*

*MomsGetReal's full FTC compliance disclosure is available [here](#).*



## *About Shadra*



*Shadra Bruce is the creator of [MomsGetReal](#)<sup>TM</sup>. In addition to her business as a [social media consultant, writer, & editor](#), Shadra has been a contributing writer to several well-known websites, newspapers, magazines, and journals. She was a feature columnist for two years, penning the weekly feature “A More Perfect Union” with her husband Dave for the Corning, New York newspaper The Leader. In the column, they explored the joys and challenges of building a newly formed blended family together.*

*Still happily partnering as parents and writers, Shadra and David are co-authoring a book based on their popular news column, [Ethical Revolutionist](#)<sup>TM</sup>. In 2011 David launched [DadsGetReal](#)<sup>TM</sup>. The two serve on the Board of Directors and as national co-chairs for the Parent Advisory Board for [Kidz Rock! Inc.](#)*

*Shadra is the author of [Stories from a Step Mom](#) (set to publish in early 2012) and a leading expert in family relationships, stepparenting and blended families. She has a bachelor’s degree in Economics and a master’s degree in English Literature.*

*Passionate about helping to improve relations in families, communities, and cultures, Shadra is a strong advocate for global peace. She resides in Bath, New York with her husband and children. A gypsy at heart who loves to travel, Shadra is fluent in French, essentially nomadic, and comfortable making her home wherever her travels take her, which is often Montreal.*