ReachUP

The Magazine to Empower and Enrich Today's Woman

Winter 2013

Faith

P. S. You Have Everything

Family

I Didn't Know

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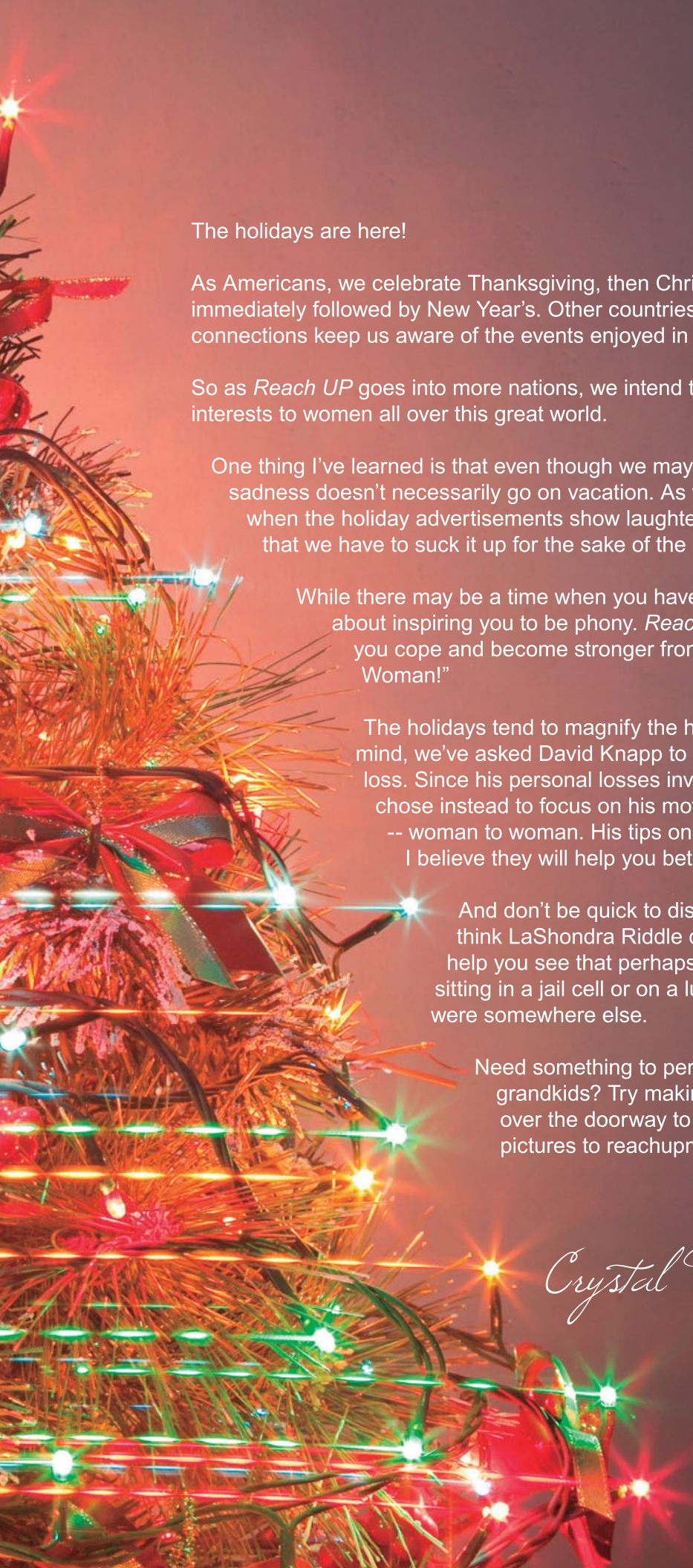


The holidays are here!

As Americans, we celebrate Thanksgiving, then Christmas comes before you know it, immediately followed by New Year's. Other countries have different celebrations, and our media connections keep us aware of the events enjoyed in other nations.

So as *Reach UP* goes into more nations, we intend to present a broader scope of articles and interests to women all over this great world.

One thing I've learned is that even though we may have parties and family gatherings planned, sadness doesn't necessarily go on vacation. As women, we often have guilt that we feel sad when the holiday advertisements show laughter and smiles. We think we are alone, and that we have to suck it up for the sake of the kids.

While there may be a time when you have to put on a happy face, *Reach UP* isn't about inspiring you to be phony. *Reach UP* is all about giving you tools to help you cope and become stronger from the inside out. I call it being a "*Reach UP* Woman!"

The holidays tend to magnify the hurt suffered during the year. With this in mind, we've asked David Knapp to write about his own experience of grief and loss. Since his personal losses involved two wives, (yes two, both of cancer) he chose instead to focus on his mother's loss so that you might identify with her -- woman to woman. His tips on coping are fresh and born out of experience. I believe they will help you better enjoy this coming holiday season.

And don't be quick to dismiss "You Have Everything" because you think LaShondra Riddle doesn't know you. Her heartfelt thoughts will help you see that perhaps you do have everything -- even if you're sitting in a jail cell or on a lumpy bed looking out a window wishing you were somewhere else.

Need something to perk you up and to do with the kids or grandkids? Try making a wreath to put on your front door or over the doorway to your kitchen. Have some fun and send us pictures to reachupmag@aol.com.

Crystal Wacker

Going from "Uh-huh" to REAL Conversation

WITH YOUR KIDS!

by Amy Wedel

At first we can't figure out why the baby is crying. We don't know what age to start them on solids. We're not sure when the right time to start potty training is.

And you'd think talking is a fairly basic achievement, but progressing from talking to conversing is a different matter.

By the time your child is around three years old, he starts to talk more. His vocabulary gets larger, and he's putting cute 4-word sentences together. Four-year-olds have ways of saying things that make anyone laugh!

As your child gets older, the level of communication between parent and child usually gets stronger. But, in reality, that's not always the case, is it?

So how do we talk -- I mean really communicate -- with our kids? How do we get more than a 2-word answer from a quiet 10-year-old?

One thing I've learned is that all human beings, no matter the age, race or background, want to talk about themselves! Ask anyone a few questions about them personally, and be prepared to hear a 5-minute answer.

This kind of communication is usually easy with younger kids since they don't have the fear of holding anything

> "Why don't kids come with an instructional manual?"

back or being judged. But the older the kids are and the more experiences they have with school and friends, the more they tend to hold back from talking with their parents.

Since children aren't yet intellectually mature enough to know how to fully and properly express themselves, it's the parents job to ask the right open-ended questions.

Out of my five kids, my 12-year-old (the oldest) is the one I have to ask at least five or six questions just learn how soccer practice was! Even though he is a kid of very few words, I try to teach him how to talk to me. He needs to learn how to express what is in his head and let it come out of his mouth. A child who doesn't talk very much can be misunderstood as a snob, a shy person, or just plain stubborn. As parents or caregivers, we have the privilege to help that child get beyond those labels and teach them converse with family and friends.

On the other hand, three of my kids are very chatty. My 6-year-old loves to talk to anyone about anything, anywhere! We joke that he likes to give away our family secrets! My 10-year-old spills out all she is thinking about and everything she has done.

To be truthful, it's very exhausting some days to listen to them. So my job is to teach them to talk about only one thing at a time.

At dinner time we play a little game that gives everyone a chance to tell one short specific thing about themselves. It gives me insight into their day, too. I learn what they've been thinking about, what could be bothering them, and I get to know them better in a matter of just a few minutes. My kids know that our dinner table is a safe place to share.

During this "High/Low" game, I ask each child individually, "What was your high point today?" and "What was the low point of the day for you?" Sometimes I change it up and ask everyone to share their favorite part of their day and then one thing they wish could have been different.

Simple, short, open-ended questions like this can happen anywhere -- while making supper, on the way home, or as you tuck them in bed. Kids feel loved and validated when they are listened to.

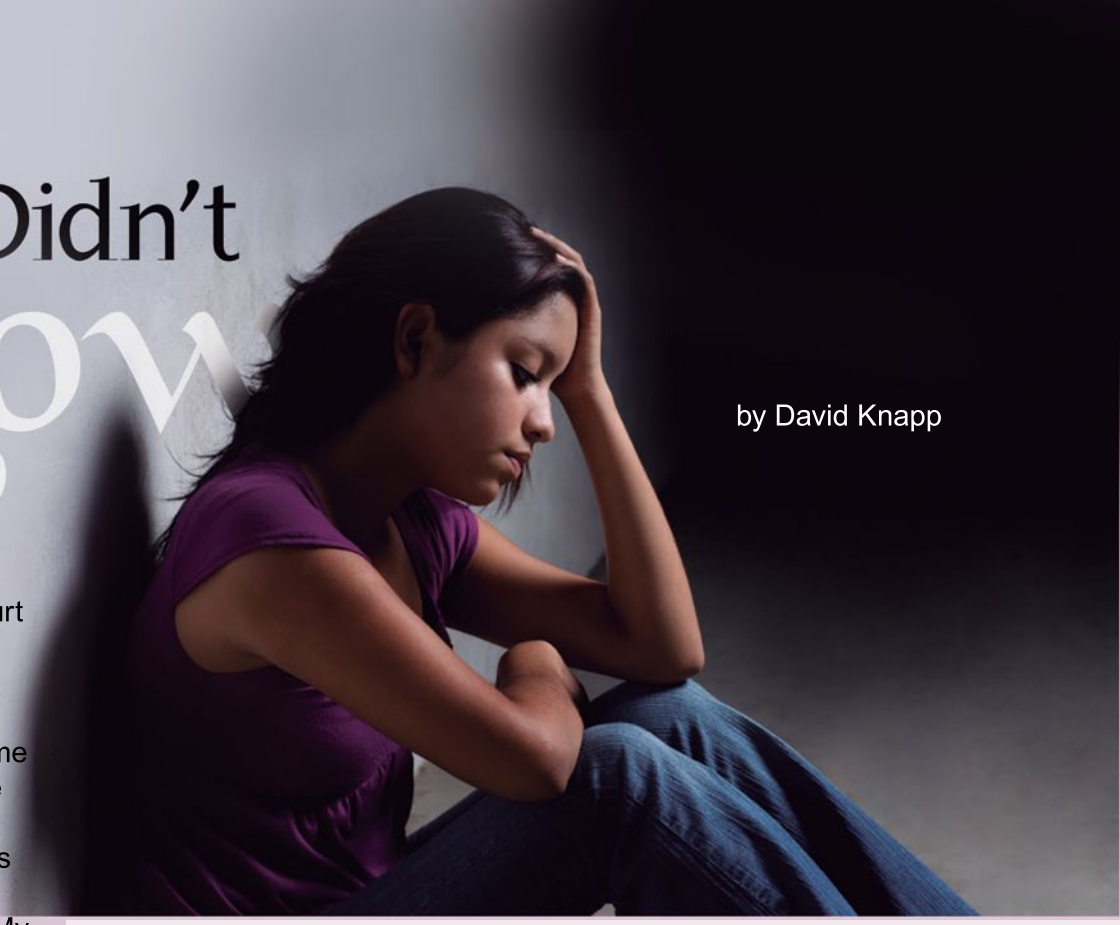
Sometimes, depending on their answers, I know if I need to ask about a certain situation or if they are having problems with friends. All I'm doing is asking questions. If I start lecturing, I run the risk of having them clam up because they're afraid of consequences.

Asking simple non-threatening questions is a great start for anyone trying to get to know a child better. It works whether you just want to connect with a child or need to be sure the lines of communication stay open as they get older.

Go ahead. What's your question for the day?

I Didn't Know

by David Knapp



I didn't know a human could hurt so much.

The doorway to my bedroom seemed to grab me and bring me to a sudden stop. Staring at the spot where I watched my wife take her last breath three weeks earlier, I melted into another uncontrolled sobbing session. My daily wandering around the house like a 2-year-old child looking for his pacifier seemed endless.

This time I ended my emotional session by thinking of deep hurts other people I knew had suffered. I saw them differently now. I remembered my mom. *Wow,* I thought, *she really had life tough when my Dad died suddenly!* Suddenly my situation did not feel as harsh.

For my whole life I only remembered those difficult years surrounding my dad's accident from an 11-year-old's point of view. But now, because of my own loss, my heart ached for my mom. I admired her in a whole new way.

The day of my Dad's accident Mom was a 30-year-old pregnant mother of four other kids, of whom I was the oldest. She lived in a home with no indoor plumbing and a pot belly stove that burned coal or wood for heat. Winter had only delivered half her force by that sunny February day that changed our lives forever.

My mom's grief seemed to cause our young lives to stop. She spent a lot of time in bed and only got up to do the minimum care for her small children. One week after dad's funeral, she delivered my youngest brother.

A week after my mom came home from the hospital with my baby brother we got an unexpected visit from my dominant grandmother. She saw the huge mess the house was in and found my mom in bed, as usual. Unfortunately, Grandmother responded in a harsh fashion. Instead of displaying kindness, she delivered heavy commands to Mom, forcing her to get up and stop mourning.

So Mom got up. Later in life, I realized that caused her to "stuff" her grief inside, and that caused a lot emotional damage.

I believe that experience, along with the busyness of life, kept a raw sore in my mom's soul. It would show up when other pains of life came along. Her healing had been aborted, and she suffered from that for years.

I saw Mom pull out Dad's picture and weep each time hard emotional events would come. The most vivid memory of that I have was during her divorce from the man she married three years after my dad's death.

Difficult days for mom continued that first year. With no husband, she still had a farm to manage. She didn't have a clue how to do that, plus care for five kids. Though our neighbors came to help plant in spring and then

harvest a crop in summer, she lost the farm. We had to move into the small nearby town. The only financial income Mom qualified for was government assistance. Three hundred dollars a month did not go very far, even back then. Very often, the money I got from mowing lawns was used to buy bread and gas.

These experiences had two effects on me.

First, I realized that the healing process after experiencing loss is vital. As much as I wanted the hurt in my soul to go away after my wife died, I really needed to allow the sorrow of loss to teach and heal my soul so that in time I could live and be whole again. I determined to find people to talk to who could understand and guide me through this process.

New insight came to me about a Bible verse I knew. 2 Corinthians 1:4 points out; "*God of all healing counsel! He comes alongside us when we go through hard times, and before you know it, he brings us alongside someone else who is going through hard times so that we can be there for that person just as God was there for us."* I realized that I was one in need of comfort from others, those whom God had already comforted in their sorrowful experiences. So, I began looking for people to help me talk through my pain so I could experience the comfort of God myself.

The second benefit from mom's experience was the understanding that my loss was not the end of life for me. Others like my mom have had more difficult things happen to them. My pity parties had to go!

Admiration for my mother also grew. You see, Mom firmly believed in Jesus Christ. Her personal relationship with Him showed, even through all her pain. I have vivid memories of her playing the piano and singing old hymns at the top of her lungs. She would sing with a big smile. She used the reality of Christ's presence in her life to encourage her own spirit. And it showed. I learned from her that I needed to do the same and make a choice to grow.

Another thing helped that might not seem so obvious. Church attendance was not an option for anyone in our family; it was a way of life. Even during all the pain and change we experienced, Mom always took us to church. There she found amazing support from our friends and relatives. Making a habit of attending church was not only a wise choice for her benefit, but it formed my young life as well. Even though things were tough, I always got encouragement from the people at church, and it seemed to ease and, at times, erase some of our pain.

Mom was not the only example of finding encouragement in the midst of pain and loss. King David in the Bible experienced many losses in his life. I Samuel 30: 6 tells us, *"David encouraged himself in the Lord his God."*

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MAKE IT TODAY

Christmas Wreath

You don't have to be a professional decorator, or a "craftsy" person for this Pom Pom Wreath project. I'm not! I'm just a mom who likes to get messy and create things along side my kids. This is fun, safe to make, and a great project for kids ages 4 to12.

Your child will be so proud of this festive decoration that you made. May you cherish special holiday memories of doing something fun together!

All four ingredients needed were at my local dollar store: Glue, 1 foam/styrofoam wreath, 3 bags of pom poms in different sizes, ribbon.

1. **Put a thick layer of glue on the top part of the wreath.**

2. **Place the biggest pom poms on the glue, spaced a little apart from each other.**

2A. **Add in the medium-sized pom poms. Stay away from clumps of colors. Arrange them to end with a good mix of all the colors.**

2B. Add more glue if necessary before you attach the smallest pom poms in the empty spaces.

After the wreath dries for a few hours, check to see if any pieces need more glue. When it is completely dry, attach an arm's length of ribbon to hang the wreath. Tie a nice bow!

Tip:

It's easier to put pom poms on in sections. Start with the top, then do the center, then the outside. If your wreath is tube shaped, finish one side (front side, inside and outer edge) and let it dry an hour. Then turn it over and finish the back side.

Of course, the first thing David had to do was to make the Lord his God. That is not a long and involved process. It's just the simple act of faith saying that you believe Jesus is God's Son and that He came to earth to die for your sins. But death didn't keep Him down! He lives forever, and He wants you to live forever with God too. That happens through trusting Jesus and giving your life to Him.

Think about it. This Christmas we celebrate God's greatest Gift -- Jesus Christ -- who came to reunite every single person (regardless of race, status, or whether male or female) back to Himself. God wants relationship with you so much He was willing to go through the pain of major loss so that you could be brought back to Him, forgiven and comforted by God Himself. And in the process He kicked death in the teeth! Now, no one has to die forever. There is life after death with Jesus Christ.

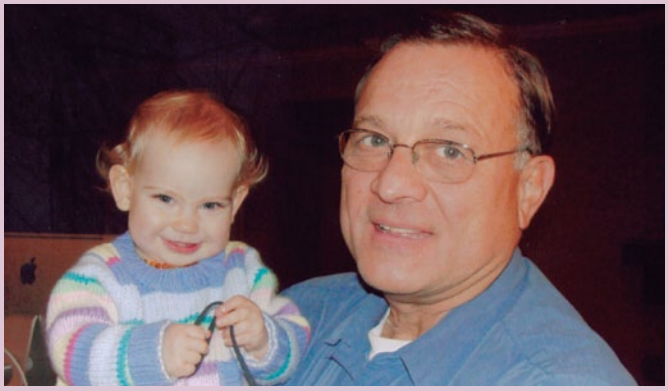
I don't know if you have pain in your heart or a song on your lips, but I hope you have Jesus in your life. If you do, I know you will make it through whatever tough things come your way.

My mom did, I did, and you will too.

Tips on Mourning

1. Expect that your emotions are raw and going to go up and down.
2. Commit to adapt to what's new and adjust as you go along.
3. Decide to be a survivor!
4. Exercise. Walk. Run. Dance. Make your body move.
5. Talk to people who care. But if they don't get what you're going through, don't let their words settle in on you. Move on.

Be patient -- with yourself and your family. There is no quick fix.



David Knapp is a long-term missionary with New Tribes Missions, a father to eight and grandfather to twenty-five. His book, *I Didn't Know What to Say*, is forthcoming. Find out more at www.griefreliefministries.com

P.S. You Have Everything!

by LaShondra Riddle

A friend once ended a letter to me with "P.S. You Have Everything!" As I read the last line, I began to cry.

Her words reflected a lesson God had been teaching me during that season of my life. Before then, I had spent my life caught in the trap of comparing myself to others. And in every area, I seemed to come up short. I was the fat girl. The poor girl. The black girl. The girl whose father left when she was two. The girl who guys didn't want to date or kiss or marry. The girl who couldn't have people over to her house because she was ashamed of the poverty she lived in. I always felt "less than," as If I had nothing to offer.

But then one day, the Lord brought me to Revelation 2: 8-9. It says, *"These are the words of God who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again. 'I know your afflictions and your poverty—yet you are rich!"* Yet you are rich!! God was saying that I was rich! Why? Not because I had a lot of money or possessions, but because I had the **only** thing worth having, and that is Jesus.

That is the same thing my friend was telling me in that letter. I have EVERYTHING because I have Christ.

AND SO DO YOU! Paul writes in Philippians 4:11-12, *"I have learned to be thankful whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being thankful in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want."*

What is the secret to being thankful in every circumstance? The secret is understanding this: To have Jesus is to have EVERYTHING!! Unfortunately, many people in the world can not honestly say that about themselves. And they are the ones with a great poverty.

So during this holiday season, Rejoice! Again, I say, Rejoice in the Lord always! For you, my dear sisters in Christ, have EVERYTHING if you have Jesus. For Jesus is the only thing worth having. And I can say from experience -- He is all you need.

LaShondra Riddle is an Atlanta native, currently interning with Beauty From Ashes Ministries in Fort Myers, FL where she works to rescue women and children trapped in the sex trade. Her love for God and for people has led her to pursue her number one passion in life: to use her voice to fight injustice and break the chains of oppression.

DO-IT-YOURSELF FROM THE TIPS HANDYMAN!

to make your life easier!

by David Knapp

You have heard the saying, “An apple a day keeps the doctor away.” Well, believe it or not apples can also help keep your need for a handyman to a minimum.

Vinegar is a simple household item that comes from apples. Many home repairs can be done with the simple use of vinegar. Here are just a few of the uses for vinegar you can use.

UNCLOG and deodorize your drains: *Use a funnel and simply pour half a cup of baking soda plus one cup of vinegar down the drain. When it stops foaming, flush the drain with HOT water. After five minutes of running the hot water, flush the drain with COLD water.*

If the drain is just slow, pour half a cup of table salt followed by two cups of boiling vinegar into the drain. Then flush with hot water, followed by cold water. No handyman needed now!

Remove SMOKE smell in your house: *This works whether the smell is from cigarettes or burnt toast. Simply fill a small bowl three-fourths full of vinegar and set it out in the room. In a day or two the smoke smell coming from sofas and curtains in the room will be gone. So if your uncle comes to visit you and smokes his cigar in your home, you can get rid of the smell after he leaves by simply waving a large cloth moistened with vinegar around the house. It will absorb the smell in minutes.*

MILDEW stains be gone: *White vinegar applied full strength to mildew stains will erase them without strong chemicals.*

INK PEN marks on clothes or the wall: *Use a cloth or sponge wet with white vinegar to dab the ink spot repeatedly till it disappears.*

Clean and DEODORIZE: *Kids’ lunch boxes or stinky lockers can be disinfected and deodorized by mixing half vinegar and half water in a spray bottle, spraying them down, then wiping with a paper towel.*

Don’t tell your handyman about these little secrets. He may not appreciate that you don’t call him as much because you already took care of the problem.

We are ***Reach UP women*** and we can do it!!!

Given to you by: