

The Wisdom of Women

by Liesl Garner

“Ask for help,” I was told.
Then it was reiterated,
and repeated, rephrased,
reformulated and projected
again. The speaker finally
got down to my level and said,
“Because I know you, I’m going
to say this one more time... Don’t be afraid
to ask for help.” Am I some kind
of ninny? Am I really that thick-skulled
that I need so much prodding?

Apparently so. In the last year
I have suffered in silence, I have
been overwhelmed, struggled to maintain,
smiled through tears and said
I was fine when I was far from it.

What makes me think I need
to do this all alone, when all around me
are women who would be there for me
in a heartbeat if I’d just open my mouth
and say, “Help!” The squeakiest, tiniest
little voice would do it. Am I not totally there
for others when they display that kind
of vulnerability? Do I not embrace it,
and congratulate them for their bravery
to admit they need a hand? A phone call
in the midst of a hectic day – a cry out
for a moment of sanity, for some input,
for a rational voice, for calm, for a hug.

We can do this. We are wiser than this.
Wiser than to think we need to suffer
in silence when all around us are women
who have been there – or are there right now
going through the same stuff. Raising kids
and running a business, balancing the books,
putting dinner on the table, and staying up late
to help with homework. Along the way, we forget
to breathe. Our shoulders are up to our ears
with stress, and something inside us tells us
we should know how to handle all this. Stop!

Breathe. Steady yourself and reach for the phone.
Call me, I may already be calling you. Wisdom
seeks company. Women, let us be wise.
Let us seek company with one another, seek
comfort, counsel, calm – a cup of coffee!