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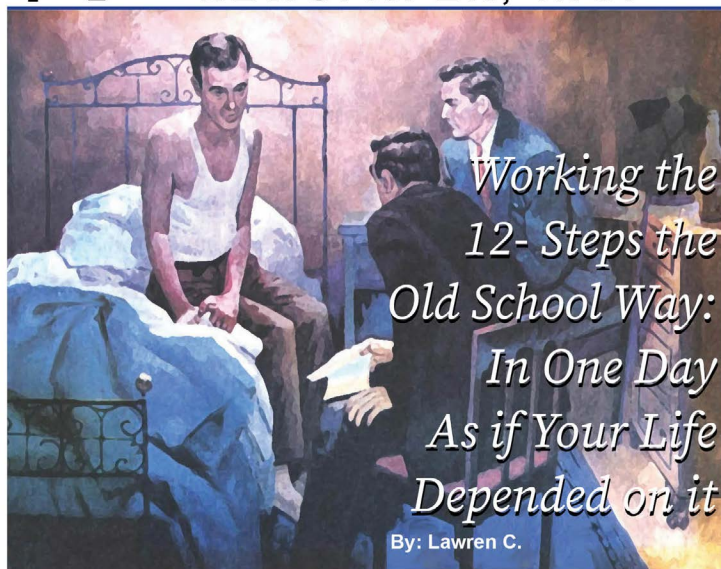
KEYS TO RECOVERY — NEWSPAPER, INC. —

We have been committed to bringing Truth, Hope and Solutions to our readers since 2014. Check out our website for all of our back issues

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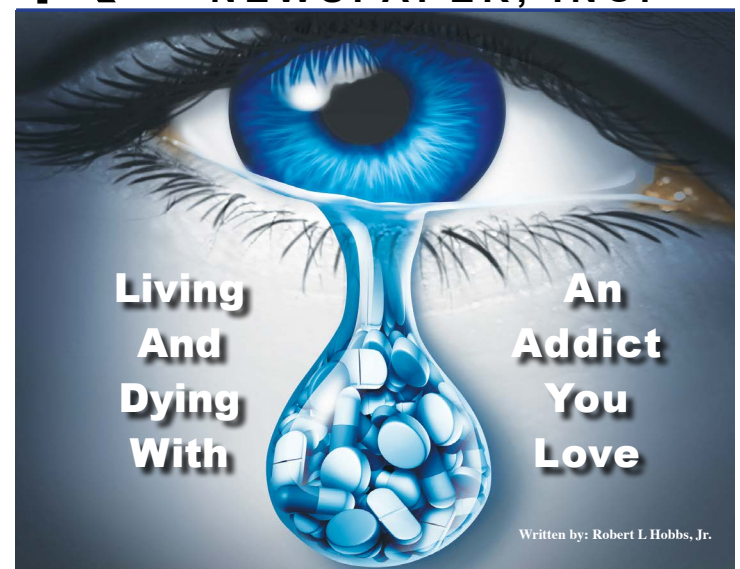
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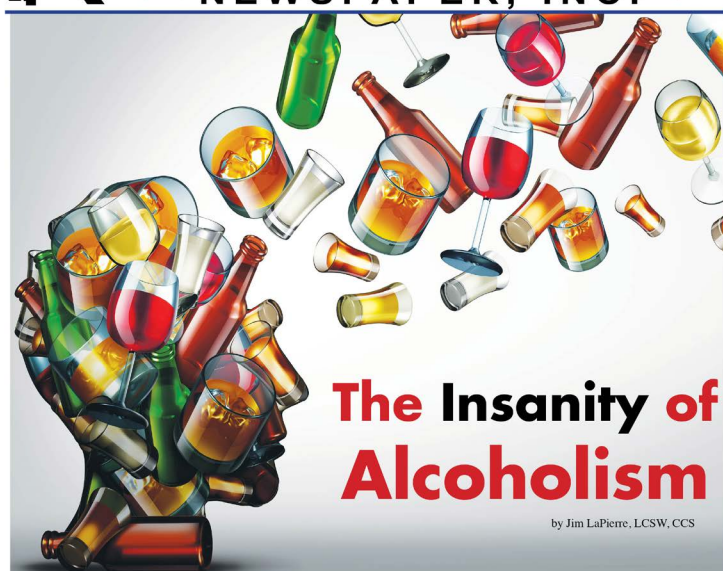
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October 2014

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Cinderella's
Healing Journey
Page 4

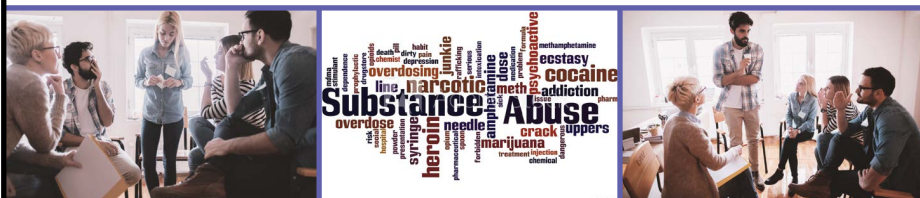
Life is Magic
Use Your Wand
Page 6

Not Goodbye
Only Thank you
Page 8

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Contents

Editors Column	Page 3	M & J Marshall
Grace Lost and Found	Page 4-5	Mary Cook
Sunlight of the Spirit	Page 6	Darrell Fusaro
Quit to Win	Page 8	Catherine Lyons
Be The Change	Page 11	Unknown
Matters of The Heart	Page 12	
The Journey Continues	Page 14	Leslie Gold
Food For Thought	Page 16	Annie Kuni
Book, CD, Video Reviews	Page 18	The Crew
Classified Ads	Page 20	
Resource Guide	Page 22-23	
Holiday Story	Page 24	Rev. Leo Booth
Freedom From Bondage	Page 26	Marilyn L. Davis
Addiction & Recovery	Page 28	Jerry Moe
Chronic Pain	Page 30	Peter Przekop
Provider Directory	Page 32	
The Hope Interviews	Page 34	Steve Jones

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About Us

Provider Directory - page 32

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As I sit down to write my last editors column for Keys to Recovery Newspaper, I am reminded of the beginning of this dream. This picture was taken when we received our first batch of printed newspapers, after about 9 months of preparing for the big day. We were so happy and filled with hope for the journey in front of us.



We have no regrets only great memories. This was truly a God inspired dream. For almost 10 years we were blessed to be able to publish a newspaper filled with recovery, solutions and hope. We met some of the most wonderful, and kind people along the way, and learned so much about all addictions and disorders. We traveled to recovery conferences and conventions, and we attended numerous open houses and anniversaries of treatment centers, and sober livings.

We want to thank each and every person who ever read Keys to Recovery Newspaper, and passed it along to others. Thank you to our writers, who submitted such valuable information and solutions month after month, year after year. Thank you to our advertisers who supported us to the very end. Thank you to everyone who ever delivered our newspapers. Without our readers, our writers, our advertisers, and our delivery people, there would have never been 10 years of Keys to Recovery Newspaper.

I am overwhelmed with all the outpouring of love and support for this last issue, which will remain on-line (along with ALL of our back issues) for years to come. This current issue is our largest ever! We ran some of our past favorite articles along with our new favorites.

Thank you to my handsome husband Marcus Marshall for your unconditional support and love. Thank you Mom, for your support and the example you have set for your family, you are my Hero! Thank you Dominique for your valued opinions, and for giving us the greatest gift, Zoe. Thank you John Paul for all your help getting the newspapers from the printers to us. Thank you Bishop Hamilton, you keep us inspired with God's word everyday!

In closing I want to remember my friend Jason Levin, who instilled the love of printing a recovery newspaper, you are missed beyond what my words can express. Not a day goes by without a thought of you entering my day.

Today, I woke up and knew that God was blessing me with the ending of this chapter of my life. I have no idea what is next for us, but I know that it will be about those I love, about recovery and being of service to those God places in our lives.

I look forward to the future knowing that:

God is Good all the time.

And all the time God is Good.

Thank you & God bless you! - Jeannie Marshall, President & Co-founder

Hello to one and all, we are truly indebted to each of you, for all the support that you have extended to us over the years. I have been truly blessed to have been a part of such a true journey, reflecting the various proven methods, that has helped so many achieve recovery from drugs and alcohol. Thanks to my beautiful wife Jeannie, who introduced me to the 12 Steps along with its principals back in February of 2012, I was given the opportunity to embrace sobriety after 40 years of addiction. The catalyst that energized me within my first two years of sobriety, was working at Cri-Help Treatment Center and starting Keys to Recovery Newspaper with my wife, and our Co-Founder Beth Dewey-Stern back in October of 2013.

I was privileged over the years to talk with many professionals, who possessed vast knowledge of the various forms of proven techniques, which has helped many who were addicted to drugs and alcohol, as well as numerous disorders. When I look back over the last 10 years of my sobriety, coupled with being a part of Keys to Recovery Newspaper, my self-esteem and confidence have been elevated regarding what I can, and will accomplish later in life. My perspectives and perceptions have been forever changed for the good, one of my favorite scriptures in the Bible states in Matthew 19:26 "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible".

By seeing and experiencing all the different miracles within the Recovery Community throughout the last 10 years, I acquired true admiration for those that continually trudge the road of Happy Destiny. Many have become owners of Sober Livings, Addiction Specialists, Drug Counselors, Psychiatrists, Psychologists, Clinicians, and many other professionals throughout the Recovery Industry. Historians have stated that due to the lack of knowledge, entire civilizations have perished. I am so thankful to the forefathers of the 12 Steps and its principals, who had such determination and drive, which resulted in millions of individuals with different forms of addictions, find long term sobriety like never before in all of History!

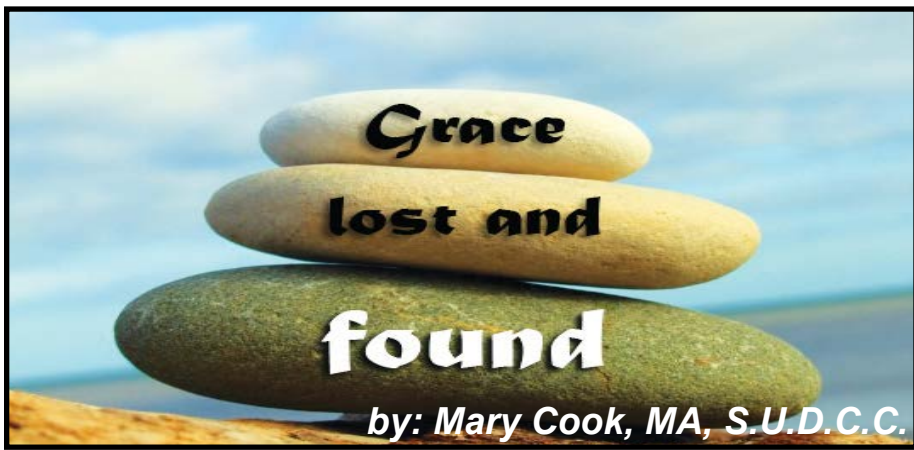
Since I was blessed to have been introduced to the Recovery Community, my life has been so mind altering in respect to who I truly am. I will miss having Fundraisers, such as the one which hosted Alonzo Bolden, who made us all laugh so hard until we cried.

We will miss the Anniversary/Award Dinners, that gave recognition to just a few of the incredibly talented individuals, who have demonstrated love and true dedication in helping so many.

This will be my very last Editors Column, Jeannie and I appreciate being able to share our thoughts, aspirations, and gratitude for being able to help spread the message of Hope and Recovery to so many. I enjoyed coming together with you all monthly, for reasoning and reflecting for the last 9 years.

May every one of you be protected, uplifted, and guided by God daily. - **Marcus Marshall, Vice-President & Co-founder**





CINDERELLA'S HEALING JOURNEY

My first introduction to psychology and spiritual healing was in childhood, from reading fairy tales. They tell us that we all have trials and tribulations, and often traumas. We all have a quest in front of us, and it involves facing and fighting dragons, solving riddles, finding the best response to life's obstacles and stress, and experiencing the rewards of transforming our lives. These stories, taken as metaphors, offer a blueprint for healing.

The heroes and heroines do not waste time bemoaning, complaining, despairing, and blaming those that treated them horribly, whether it was abusive stepmothers, abandoning parents, evil characters turning people into ugly beasts, etc. Heroic characters don't waste time in defensive entitlement, vengeance, codependency, or re-enacting their own victimizations. They remain in the present moment and take responsibility for their destiny. Spiritual masters also focus on positive energy, lessons and transformation, rather than negative energy, judgment, helplessness or destructiveness. Twelve step programs tell us to identify problems and get active in solutions.

The old tale of Cinderella offers a wonderful healing journey which applies equally to men, because we use it as a metaphor symbolizing what recovery teaches us.

Cinderella starts off with a father who loves her, and a deceased mother. Then she gets a stepmother and two stepsisters, all of whom have forgotten their Heavenly heritage, and therefore their inner treasures and inner vision, and are relying on their ordinary human mind to guide them. Thus, they are full of fear, that results in the defenses of arrogance, anger, false pride, envy, selfishness and spite. We see that Cinderella's father's love and generosity cannot transform the step-family's character defects, because they lack inner awareness of love, and they are attached to their negative energies, believing they protect them. This parallels our lack of trust in divine will and spiritual love, and losing ourselves in short-sighted, petty human willfulness and defensiveness. How often do we think, feel, or act like Cinderella's step-family? How often do we feel that we are not enough, and we don't have enough, and something outside us must correct this?

When Cinderella's father dies, the step-family becomes abusive, greedy and dishonest as well, disinheriting Cinderella from her father's estate and making her the servant housekeeper for the three of them. It's interesting to me that Cinderella ends up as a maid, because recovery tells us to "clean house", which means to clear our inner thoughts, feelings and actions of all negative energy. The easiest response to another's anger or harm to us, is to return anger and harm. Recovery tells us to "pray for them because they're sick", not to join them in sickness. We can take positive care of ourselves without defending or offending behaviors. Cinderella is a master of cleaning house. At a time when most of us would have nothing but negative energy for our unfair circumstances, Cinderella despite grief, deprivation, abuse and hardships, is hard working, joyful, kind, humble, altruistic, positive, loving, respectful, compassionate, has her own identity and knows her divine heritage.

We see that Cinderella has an inner awareness of love, that is not dependent upon a loving parent's physical existence. She also doesn't waste time with anger or judgment, trying to determine what's wrong with her step-family, or how she can win their approval, or attempt to recover what they have taken from her.

Instead, she accepts rather than resists all these changes, and remains clear in her higher truth. Recovery says, "what we resist persists." This is because resistance increases the energy of what we resist.

Cinderella's song "A dream is a wish your heart makes," emphasizes her focus on heart rather than mental energy, and an intuitive knowing that current circumstances are temporary, and spiritual love prevails.

Cinderella embraces the mystery of her life. She doesn't need to know why her circumstances are the way they are, or when or how they will change. This suggests a complete faith in divine will, unlike most of us who are obsessed with these questions and their possible answers.

Cinderella doesn't seek anything from the "empty wells" of her step-family, but instead befriends and helps the animals around the chateau, including freeing a mouse from a trap. This is a foreshadowing of her own ultimate freedom from her stepmother's attempts to trap her. When we give positive energy to where it can be received, it is always reciprocated. The animals help Cinderella in many ways, including being willingly transformed temporarily by a fairy godmother into a coach, coachman, footmen and horses, so that Cinderella can attend the royal ball and meet the prince. Spiritual beliefs include miracles and blessings, because with spirit all things are possible.

The prince and his kingdom represent worldly goods that evolve naturally from the persistent demonstration of inner wealth and goodness. The prince also has his own identity because he won't marry just to give his father grandchildren. But he feels authentic love when he sees it in Cinderella, because he knows it within himself. And Cinderella attracts his love because she's been demonstrating love all along, rather than waiting for external love to rescue her, fix her or complete her.

Cinderella's losing one of her glass slippers, and the spell breaking at midnight, indicates her transition between her old and new life. It's also a test for her to see if she maintains her inner truth, despite the apparent view that she experienced love with a soulmate and lost her chance for fulfillment in this regard. How many of us would spend hours recounting this disaster as an unfair final devastation. Yet Cinderella does not invest energy in resisting her circumstances, and continues to exhibit a higher perspective. She doesn't empower her human mind to tell her what's right, nor attach emotionally to specific plans, desires or expectations. She listens to her heart, and "lets go and let's God" work through her. When we make commitments to personal growth, we are always tested, and we will be shown what we must surrender in order to evolve. The point of life, unlike the small human perspective, is not to capture pleasure and avoid pain. We can't avoid pain. It's an inescapable and valuable part of life's teachings. We can't capture pleasure, because everything is meant to change. We can't attract outward positive change, until we identify and surrender what blocks internal positive energy.

When the grand duke arrives at stepmother's chateau, to see whose foot might fit the glass slipper, stepmother locks Cinderella in her attic bedroom. Once again Cinderella's altruistic love for her animal friends results in their assistance to set her free. The mouse that Cinderella rescued from the trap, frees her from her locked room. And when stepmother trips the duke, so he drops the slipper and it shatters, Cinderella produces the remaining slipper. My thought about the glass slipper is that it represents Cinderella's ability to see clearly because she is enlightened, and her leaving a slipper at the royal palace, indicates her readiness to move to a higher place of earthly existence as well.

The end of the story is the wedding between Cinderella and the prince, and once again she loses a slipper. This time she retrieves it with the help of the King. This suggests a confirmation that the King accepts Cinderella's new rightful place in the kingdom, and that Cinderella is adjusting to this outward manifestation of her inner reality.

The marriage is a metaphor and celebration of spiritual energies integrating into and transforming daily life. The end of Cinderella's healing is accepting the blessings of wholeness and holiness in all aspects of her life. Thus, marrying the prince is Cinderella uniting with her own full potential. Having an important place in the kingdom is Cinderella's broader ability to inspire others through her example, which is the pinnacle of spiritual evolution and the last step of recovery programs.

Cinderella's focus is on the present, not past or future. Her song represents her trust and faith that inner riches yield a rich life. She doesn't concern herself with how this will happen. That is her Higher Power's domain. She knows just to do her part. Cinderella's step-family demonstrates character defects and defense mechanisms that exist within all of us humans. The story reminds us to practice surrendering them as they arise, and instead demonstrate spiritual principles.

Cinderella also exhibits forgiveness; in that she consistently gives rather than withholds or tries to get something. She understands and accepts her step-family's free will, and right to live and think as they please, and she chooses to live and think differently. She does not think in terms of inferiority or superiority, but rather "live and let live." When we fail to heal and release the harm others cause us, and withhold forgiveness, we are strengthening the negative energies inside us, and repeatedly attracting conflict.

So, what does this teach us about healing? The human mind desires a life without trials and tribulations. But the soul sees pain as a powerful motivator to re-examine ourselves, and problems as necessary steps to enlightenment. Our soul knows that we are here to learn and grow, not to be complacent or hedonistic. Our false-self chases after fleeting illusions of happiness in people, places and things. Our soul uses our highest gifts, talents, personality traits and interests to guide us on a path of deep, evolving happiness and fulfillment.

We heal through daily conscious contact with a loving Higher Power, practicing spiritual principles in all our affairs, and living by the vision of our soul. When we detach from the cravings of earthly life, cease empowering our mind to guide us, stop resisting, denying, fearing, fighting and judging change, humble ourselves before the great unknown and the Creator, walk through our pain and darkness knowing it as only that, rather than our identity or life, and put everything in our Higher Power's hands for the highest good, then we will be healed. If we wish our life to be more like Heaven than Hell, we must cause the least amount of harm in thought, feeling, and action, and feel the maximum amount of love in all that we think, feel and do.

WWW.MARYCOOKMA.COM Mary Cook has a Master's degree in psychology and is a substance use disorder certified counselor in private practice. She has 45 years of clinical and teaching experience. Mary is available for telephone consultations.

Contact her at 310-517-0825. She is the author of "Grace Lost and Found: From Addictions and Compulsions to Satisfaction and Serenity", at Amazon: www.amazon.com.

A Note from Mary Cook:

Dear Jeannie, you are the bright shining star of recovery! I've never known anyone with your breadth and depth of humble gratitude, sweet serenity, joyous benevolence, compassionate wisdom, and healing, transformative love. I honor you and your service to recovery in all that you are and all that you do. Thank you for letting me be a part of your magnificent mission. Love you always, Mary

Our Note to Mary Cook:

Dear Mary, you have always been my light, shining truth and love since we worked together with Jason. Thank you for your support, month after month and year after year. Every article that you have written for our readers, has been filled with hope and solutions for healing. You will always be in our hearts. Love and Friendship Always, Jeannie.



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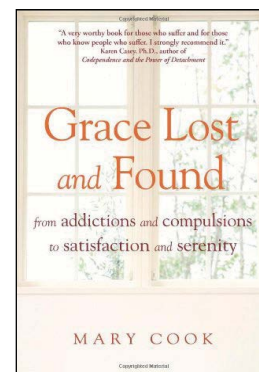
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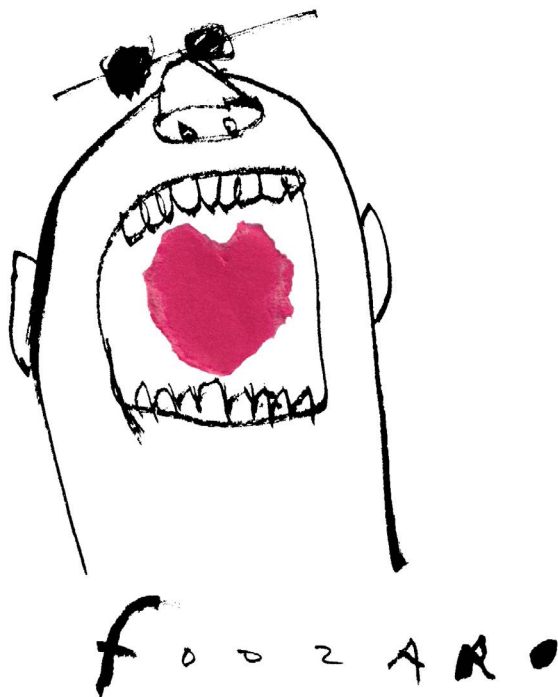
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LIFE IS MAGIC USE YOUR WAND

Recovery occurs when we say kind things to ourselves. You could even say that success begins when we say kind things to ourselves. "Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof." (Proverbs 18:21) The esoteric or spiritual meaning of this biblical text reinforces the fact that, the words we speak (or thoughts we think) create our reality and by knowing this we hold the key to life. Life is an inside job. William James who is considered the father of American Psychology shared this great news as, "Human beings, by changing the inner attitudes of their minds, can change the outer aspects of their lives."



By becoming aware of this we realize that we are no longer victims of circumstance, and no longer have to wrestle with life, but rather we have been ignorant wizards. For most of our lives many of us chose to ignore the truth about our Divine nature, and the power of our spoken word. We somehow could never actually believe that we're wizards and that our word is our wand.

How we think and feel about ourselves is always reflected back to us in our circumstances. "As within, so without" is an ancient maxim to heed. The moment I was introduced to this concept as a reality, it was a relief. It meant that I no longer had to struggle attempting to manipulate others in order to get what I wanted in life. With the knowledge that my thoughts had power, all that was required of me was that I watch my thoughts, and watch my words. We all get to choose the thoughts we entertain and the words we speak. We all can choose to erase thoughts and words of limitation as they arise, and replace them with thoughts and words that encourage and uplift.

This isn't just a psychological exercise to cultivate a good mood so that we can endure life.

Utilizing our word as our wand is the way we transform life. Emmet Fox sums it up perfectly, "Bless a thing and it will bless you, curse a thing and it will curse you." Each morning I set the intention that I will use my words, audible or not, to bless and uplift the people I meet, and conditions that arise. This doesn't mean that unkind thoughts don't arise. They do and will. But setting that intention in the morning, I am hyperaware that I have the power of choice as to which ones I will entertain, and which ones I will erase.

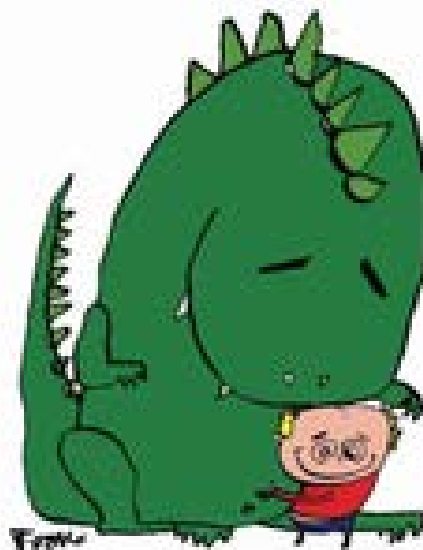
In "A Mini Course for Life" by Gerald Jampolsky, M.D., Dr. Jampolsky recommends asking yourself often, "Is this communication (verbal or non-verbal) loving to the other person, and is it loving to myself?"

Thinking with love and joy towards life attracts all that we could need and desire. The Course in Miracles states, "We make life difficult because we insist that there must be more that we need to do. The truth is that we need to give so little, to receive so much." Simply appreciate life as you trust your desires to God and choose to bless people, places, and things. You will discover how little is your part, and how great is His. The key is to remember that life is magic and you're a wizard; use your wand!

Artist Darrell Fusaro, a decorated US Coast Guard veteran, co-host of the internationally popular weekly podcast, "Funniest Thing! with Darrell and Ed", and author of the books, "What if Godzilla Just Wanted a Hug?", and "Break Out of Your Box: Be Your Heroic Self". For more information visit: www.ThisWillMakeYouHappy.com

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NOT "GOODBYE" ONLY THANK YOU

Why is it that all good things must come to an end?

I have had difficulty the past few days, getting my last words down for this share and article for my column "Quit To Win." I keep hearing and have swirling in my head, that old song by 'The Jackson Five' called "Never Can Say Goodbye." Seriously!

I have always had a big problem with saying "Goodbye."

Then, you see, it came from when I was deep in my gambling addiction days, I learned a bad habit called "Self-Sabotage." I would always sabotage anything good in my life, including relationships. It was from those feelings of low self-esteem and not thinking I was worthy.

*So come often to visit and read
the back issues as you continue
to support them.*

But, for the past several years, I've felt a genuine and authentic connection with all of you, my readers of this column. I am grateful and have much love for all of you!

I have appreciated the emails of support and encouragement from many of you! (As I get a little choked up) and why I won't say "Goodbye," I will say a big THANK YOU.

I want to thank Jeannie, Marcus, and Beth, too, profusely for allowing me to share a part of my recovery journey with you. I have shared this in the past, and many times over, how vital the "Keys To Recovery" newspaper has been as a lifeline to those looking for a better way of life, from all types of addictions.

We actually need more publications like "Keys," Not Less! I could not be more honored for the opportunity they gave me to help educate, and inform the public and readers of my column about such a cunning addictive disease, and share how I continue to maintain recovery from it.

When we have statistics like 2.9% of our population are now problem gamblers, and approximately 1 percent of the adult population in the United States has a severe gambling problem. It's no wonder why every 1 in 5 addicted gamblers try suicide, feeling it is their only option to quit gambling. And why we need MORE, not LESS, vital publications with resources like "Keys To Recovery" to reach and save more lives.

Marcus and Jeannie have supported my advocacy work, and recovery through thick and thin (lately, thinner due to my health concerns), which includes my books and recovery writing. I will be forever grateful, and it has been a privilege to do so. Since my day job is in media and book marketing, I am privy to the fact that many newspapers, magazines, and publications around the country have been struggling for many years. So that is thanks to technology and the internet.

Always remember the words written within "Keys to Recovery" will stand the test of time. From all of us, the columnists and contributors, all the way to Jeannie and Marcus Marshall, this is a legacy we leave for all of you. So come often to visit and read the back issues, as you continue to support them.

Lastly, it has been a challenging year for me. From health challenges to learning "Keys to Recovery," won't be continuing in 2023.

The biggest heartbreak was the loss of my dear friend, mentor, and fellow writer, Marilyn L. Davis. Many knew her well as she had contributed many articles here. Even though she passed in June of this year, I still pick up the phone and want to call her. Just a tough year.

But, no, I will not say "Goodbye," I will leave you with thank you for all your kind support, and until we meet again!

Catherine Townsend-Lyon is the author of her debut memoir; "Addicted To Dimes," a gambling recovery advocate, coach, and ghostwriter. She runs "Lyon Media Services" helping authors market their books throughout social media. Catherine advocates about gambling addiction and has shared her story on Addictionland.com, Facing Addiction.org, and Heroes in Recovery.com. Catherine writes and shares her recovery journey from gambling addiction along with resources on her website/recovery blog www.betfreerecoverynow.com. Catherine resides in Phoenix, Arizona, and continues to help and sponsor those from gambling addiction.



Email: LyonMedia@aol.com. Call (602) 633-3991.

Our Note to Catherine Townsend-Lyon:

Thank you so much for your support over the years. We learned so much about gambling addictions from you. You have been a trusted friend and we will continue to grow from your words. This is not goodbye, just a change in our relationship. We look forward to a long and blessed friendship. Love Jeannie & Marcus Marshall.

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by: *Unknown*

I WISH YOU ENOUGH

This was sent to me by my mom, to be published in the last issue of Keys to Recovery Newspaper. We would like to express this to our writers, our readers, our advertisers, our supporters, and everyone who helped to make this possible... "We wish you enough."

At an airport I overheard a mother and daughter in their last moments together. They had announced the daughter plane's departure and standing near the gate, she said to her daughter, "I love you, I wish you enough."

She said, "Mom, our life together has been more than enough. Your love is all I ever needed. I wish you enough, too, Mom." They kissed good-bye and she left.

The mother walked over toward the window where I was seated. Standing there I could see she wanted and needed to cry. I tried not to intrude on her privacy, but she welcomed me in by asking, "Did you ever say good-bye to someone knowing it would be forever?" "Yes, I have," I replied.

Saying that brought back memories I had of expressing my love and appreciation for all my Mom had done for me. Recognizing that hers days were limited, I took the time to tell her face to face how much she meant to me. So I knew what this woman was experiencing.

"Forgive me for asking, but why is this a forever good-bye?" I asked.

"I am old and she lives much too far away. I have challenges ahead and the reality is, her next trip back will be for my funeral," she said.

"When you were saying good-bye I heard you say, 'I wish you enough.' May I ask what that means?"

She began to smile. "That's a wish that has been handed down from other generations. My parents used to say it to everyone." She paused for a moment and looking up as if trying to remember it in detail, she smiled even more.

"When we said 'I wish you enough,' we were wanting the other person to have a life filled with enough good things to sustain them," she continued and then turning toward me she shared the following as if she were reciting it from memory.

"I wish you enough sun to keep your attitude bright.
I wish you enough rain to appreciate the sun more.
I wish you enough happiness to keep your spirit alive.
I wish you enough pain so that the smallest joys in life appear much bigger.
I wish you enough gain to satisfy your wanting.
I wish you enough loss to appreciate all that you possess.
I wish you enough "Hello's" to get you through the final "Good-bye."



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POST ROMANTIC STRESS DISORDER

Originally Published in the Holiday 2014-2015 issue of Keys to Recovery Newspaper, while John Bradshaw was still alive.

Recovering addicts are at a great risk for Post Romantic Stress Disorder (PRSD). In my soon to be released book, Post Romantic Stress Disorder, subtitled: New Discoveries Related to lust, "being in love" and attachment, I describe the sexual breach that lovers feel when they inevitably fall out of love, as well as the many other breaches they will feel when the in-love romance programs wanes.

One of the exciting recent research discoveries, made by the anthropologist Helen Fisher, using FMRI's of the brains of people in-love and those experiencing unrequited love, was that the brain in love has a unique blood-flow circuitry, which is different from the brain in lust or the brain circuitry supporting attachment (the program that is triggered as lovers decide to settle down together). The attachment program is especially present when one or both partners desire to have offspring. Fisher has established that lust, in love, and attachment are three distinct innate brain programs. The purpose of all three programs is to move us to meet a partner, mate, and create a family in order to nurture offspring.

The in-love romance program evolved to help us meet and select a compatible sexual partner. Fisher's research found that the Romance Program lasts 17 months (other research puts the time span of the innate buzz at 12 to 18 months). The Romance Program did not evolve to insure long-term compatibility. It evolved to insure that each of us would find a desirable emotional and chemical match. Part of the intensity of being in-love comes from the chemical dopamine, which triggers testosterone, the source of the sex drive. Couples in-love often engage in "amazing sex." When the "in-love program" wanes each party returns to their normal testosterone level. This results in the sexual breach. What had been a regular and ritually automatic sexual embrace end with a "let's just cuddle." Dr. Jay Wagoner describes a breach as moving from what had been a safe haven that created a sense of union, transformed into a lonely moment of I. The "we" union has been replaced by an I and I. A reasonably healthy person who has built some degree of self-esteem and is not dependent on the sexual love of the other, can move on and accept the challenge of attachment and mature love.

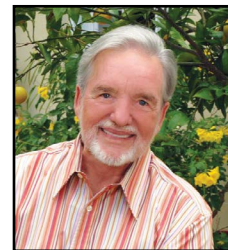
Elsewhere in my writings, I've presented the root of addiction as toxic shame. When the affect of shame is toxic, a person feels flawed and defective. Addicts cover this absolutized feeling with their addiction, no matter what it is. Addicts move towards darkness and isolation, because they are so afraid of being exposed as the imposter they think they are. The first step in healing addiction is to come out of hiding. To show oneself to the other wounded addicts, like in embracing the 12 steps of A.A. In chapter 6 of the revised edition of my book, *Healing the Shame That Binds You*, I show exactly how a shame-based person can recover their fractured sense of self. But even after taking a first step and admitting powerlessness over a certain substance, person, activity, or thing, and abstaining from a substance altogether (like in using alcohol, cocaine, and any inherently addictive substance) only a first order change has been achieved. The "disease" of the disease has still to be grappled with. The "disease" of the disease is the toxically shamed personality. Recovering addicts have severe difficulties in relationships.

They are sitting ducks for Mother Nature's Black Magic, the in-love program that is clinically described as an "altered state of consciousness." Person's in-love are drunk; they fill up their inner loneliness with their beloved, especially sex with their beloved. Once the sexual breach takes place, most addicts (as well as 50% of the population) believe they no longer love their spouse, and often throw away what could have been (if given more time) a perfectly good marriage. At this point many turn to love and sex addiction. Many addicts begin their addictive life as sex and love addicts. Alcohol or drugs only fuel and exacerbate the depth of their addiction.

I'm 49 year sober now and in the beginning I was told to avoid relationships, especially with any other addicts. After several painful breakups, I started dating non-addicts (so called "civilians" in AA). Thankfully, I'm happily married and I've avoided hurting others.

If you're a recovering addict of any kind, your greatest danger is getting into a relationship. The therapeutic slogan that says, "we don't have relationships, we take hostages," is a strong warning to all recovering addicts. Part II of my book, Post Romantic Stress Disorder, offers you a model for building your sense of self, and offers exercises to hone your skills for communicating and arguing effectively. Most addicts are from mild to severely dysfunctional families. I present several ways to deal with what I call the family of origin "blockade", and your wounds from the past. If you don't deal with issues (abuse, abandonment, neglect and enmeshment) from the past, you will remain an adult child. All couples have some childish conflicts; recovering addicts who fail to work on their "inner wounded child" issues will have them all the time. There is lots of hope if you're willing to work for it.

John Bradshaw, called one of the greatest philosophers and communicators of our time, continues his research and writing. His newest book, "Post-Romantic Stress Disorder: What to Do When the Honeymoon Is Over", Released November 2014 In his books, John deals with the unprecedented opportunity to live, teach and leave a legacy of virtue. Besides his work, John's passions included his family, friends, sports, fishing and exploring the World with his beloved artist/wife Karen.



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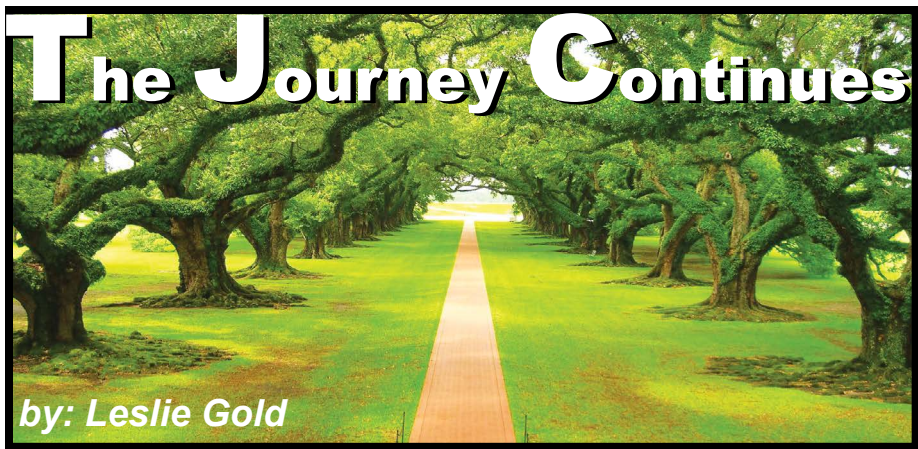
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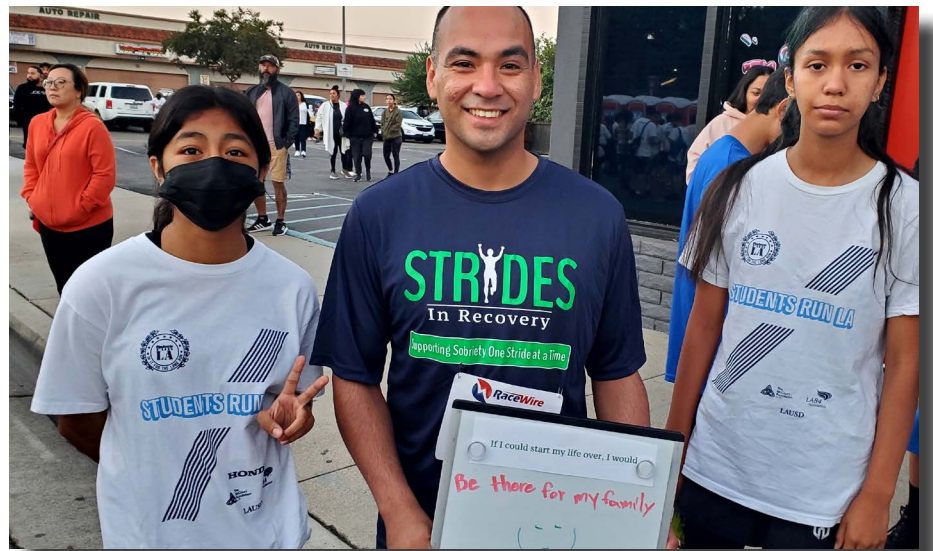
A Strides in Recovery team member sharing his story about being in a gang and going to prison, and then encouraging the students to stay in school.

“How many of you wish that when you were a teenager, someone had inspired you to make more positive life choices?” I asked several of our teams. Every hand went up. I continued. “You can be that role model for a young runner.” Our team members eagerly embraced that opportunity.

On October 23, our teams from LA CADA, Fred Brown Recovery Services, and Impact House came together to be those role models. Students Run LA (SRLA) is a nonprofit, which helps 3000 at risk youth in nearly 200 middle and high schools train for the Los Angeles Marathon. As part of their training, this organization hosted a 5K/10K run, bringing together their teams, friends and family of the students, and community-based supporters like Strides in Recovery.

Our team members were given white boards with various prompts, and asked to first write a response to whichever prompt meant the most to them. Then, they walked among the groups of students and shared their messages.

Here are some examples of what they wanted the students to know.



We are proud of our teams for inspiring the next generation to stay focused on positive goals. It's all about being of service and paying it forward.

Leslie Gold is the founder and executive director of Strides in Recovery, a Southern California non-profit which brings the healing power of goal-oriented group exercise to addiction recovery communities. Participants in Strides in Recovery programs enjoy improved self-confidence, empowerment, self-discipline, camaraderie, stress reduction, health & wellness, pride in accomplishment, and so much more. Leslie is an RRCA certified running coach who has trained hundreds of people in early recovery to cross the finish line of events ranging from 5Ks to the Los Angeles Marathon. To learn more, visit StridesInRecovery.org



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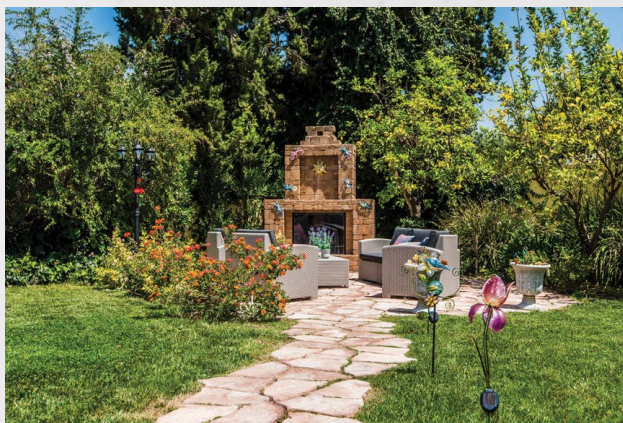
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CLOSING THE CHAPTER

In light of this being Keys to Recovery's last edition, I thought it would be appropriate to explore the idea of goodbyes as related to eating disorders. Ending chapters can be hard – many people avoid endings altogether. We see this in therapy all the time with clients who “ghost” or skip their last session. We as a society have normalized not addressing difficult and uncomfortable topics like endings, and themes of goodbye and endings in all aspects of mental health treatment, including eating disorder recovery exist and deserve to be explored.

If you work towards ED recovery long enough, you'll eventually reach a place where you are in a “maintenance phase” of change. This means that you are now in cruise control with most recovery behaviors. You don't have to work hard anymore to eat consistently, embrace body neutrality, and have a balanced relationship with food and exercise. For the most part there are two camps of how to approach eating disorder recovery once you get to the maintenance phase of treatment – being “recovered” versus “in recovery.” It's the difference between closing the chapter of ED in your life versus leaving the label on. It's a personal choice that depends on what feels right to you.

We as a society have normalized not addressing difficult and uncomfortable topics like endings...

Referring to yourself as “recovered” means that you see yourself as moving on from your eating disorder, and closing that chapter in your life altogether. The benefits feeling and referring to yourself as recovered are: moving forward, re-establishing your life outside of ED, figuring out your preferences now, and feeling like it's not such a big part of your life when it most likely was the most important thing that took up the most brain space for a long time.

Referring to yourself as “in recovery” means that you see yourself as still very active in the maintenance phase of recovery, and might always be. You're not struggling anymore, but you don't feel like ED still isn't a part of your past or present story. The benefits of feeling or referring to yourself as in recovery are: it keeps you aware of relapse and can be preventative, decreases shame around the ED, and keeps you active in therapy and self-work.

One of the biggest hurdles to moving on from the eating disorder dominating your life is figuring out (and making peace with) who you are outside of the ED. This is a big question that can be scary for a lot of people, especially since the ED usually develops in adolescence or young adulthood when you're supposed to be figuring out who you are developmentally.

It's normal for this process to feel stunted when you start to emerge from the ED later on. It also means that you might need to go back and work through this naturally in recovery and therapy, since the ED most likely hijacked this process or made you overly care about things like food, clothing, presentation, body image, etc. as part of your personality at the time.

Goodbyes can be scary with an eating disorder. From finding out who you are without the ED, to figuring out what role you want ED to continue to play in your identity and recovery narrative. There is no right answer, and you're allowed to change your mind along the way. The most important step is the first step forward towards the finish line.

Annie Kuni is an LMFT. She co-founded Gemmed to provide eating disorder support groups for teens and adults. She can be reached at www.gemmed.ngo

Our Note to Annie Kuni:

Annie, you are one of our newer friends. Thank you for writing articles for our eating disorder column, month after month. Year after year, you have given our readers great information, filled with solutions and suggestions that work! Thank you for your work in this recovery field, that has been overlooked for far too long.

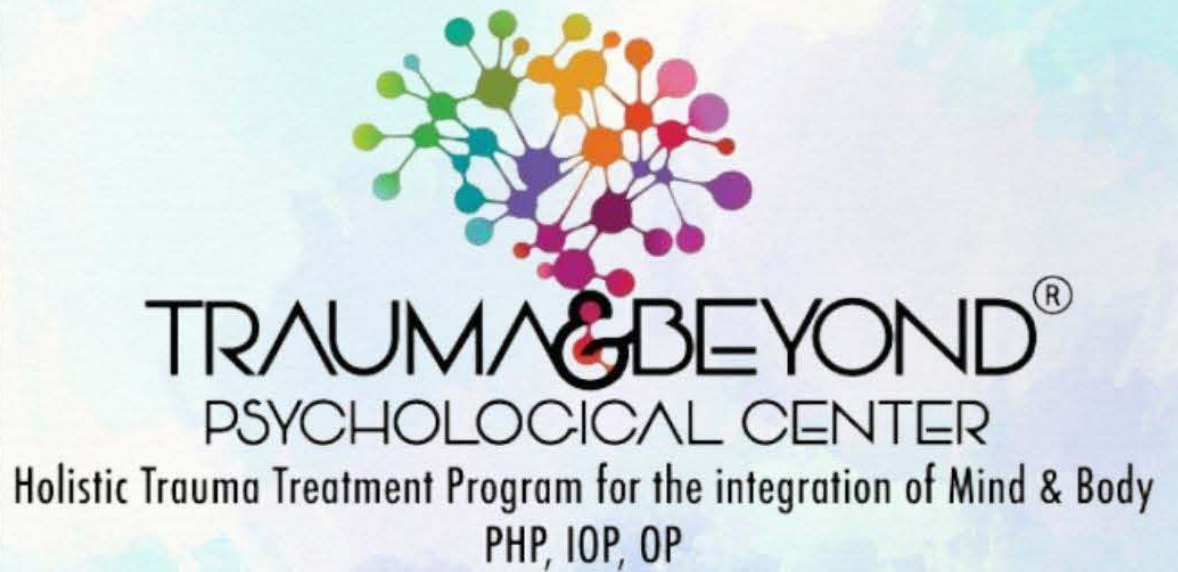


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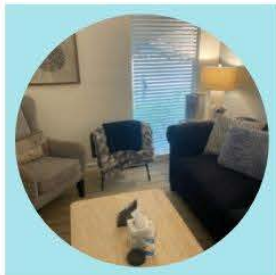
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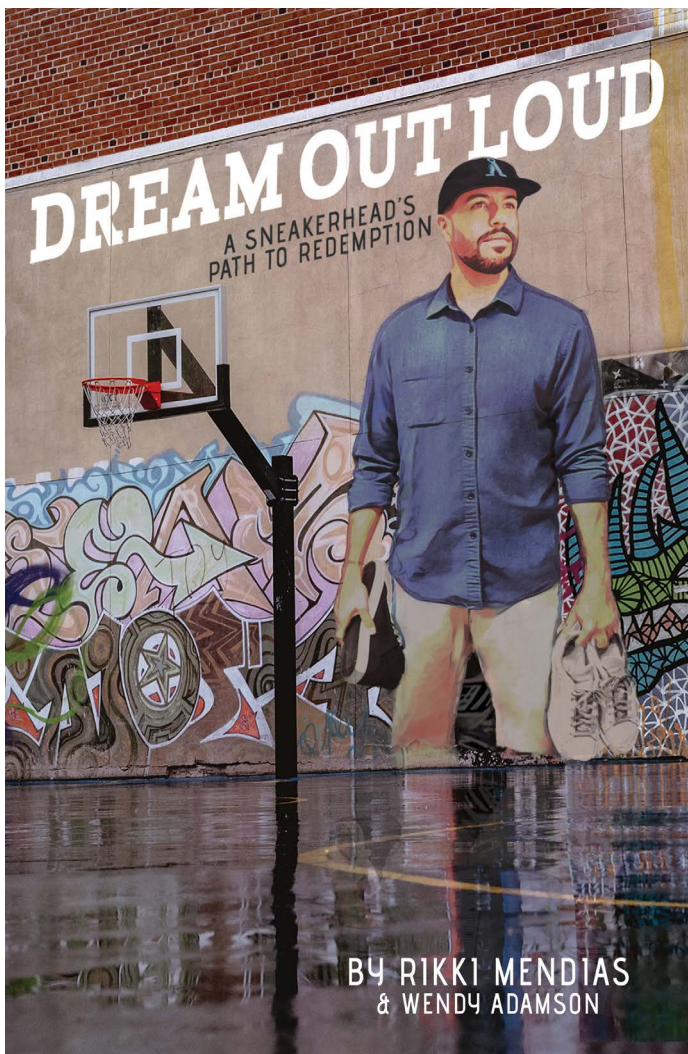
DREAM OUT LOUD: A Sneakerhead's Path to Redemption. Written by Rikki Mendias & Wendy Adamson. Published by Ingramspark,

I was blessed to be able to read "Dream Out Loud" before it was ready for release, and felt so honored to be asked to review it. Rarely do you get the opportunity to see inside a family from all sides, We watch a family destroyed and rebuilt, and we witness miracles unfold before our very eyes.

In Wendy Adamson's book "Mother Load", she writes the same story but from a different perspective. Reading "Dream Out Loud" after I read "Mother Load", was like seeing a book in 3-D. Rikki tells the story of growing up in addiction and seeing his family ripped apart, feeling his fear as a child and helpless to make it stop.

When a stranger bought Rikki a couple pairs of shoes, and seeing what made him feel good, slowly turned into a "Sneaker Heads" obsession is amazing. I read his book in one sitting, it was that captivating!

Reading how Rikki turns his painful youth into a "Path of Redemption" by creating "Hav A Sole" is inspiring, and nothing short of miraculous. I give this book 5 stars, and name it my favorite book of 2022. Available at Amazon.com.

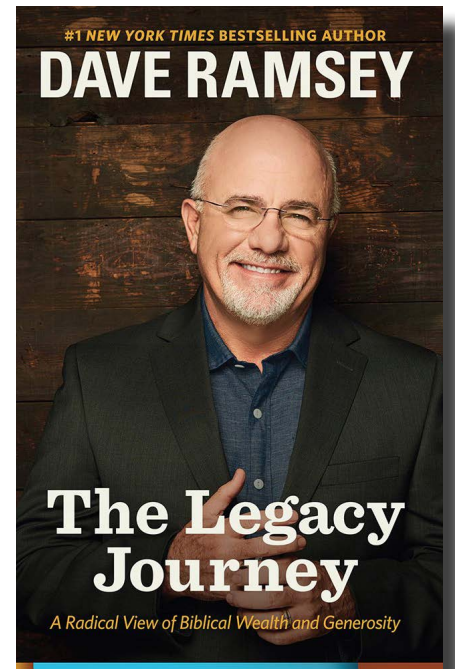


THE LEGACY JOURNEY, A Radical View of the Biblical Wealth and Generosity; written by Dave Ramsey. Published by Ramsey Press.

In "The Legacy Journey" Dave's newest book has many powerful messages. He takes a deep dive into God's word, revealing the truth on money, wealth and how to build your personal and family legacy. It's time to address the toxic messages in our culture that say we should be ashamed of the success God's has given us. You can live and leave a lasting legacy. Start your journey today! The Legacy Journey shows God's Ways of; Handling Money, Why So Many Are Against Success, Five Guidelines to Setting Good Goals, When Enough is Enough, How to Leave a Legacy Worth Leaving, and How to Safe Guard Your Legacy.

Dave Ramsey's book show you how to start your legacy. So many want you to believe money is evil, but the Bible tells us that the Love of Money is Evil, money isn't evil only the worship and pursuit of it to the exclusion of moral action is.

Dave Ramsey gives a good explanation of how the Bible does link work to money and wealth, but doesn't say to be a workaholic or to work to the exclusion of other values like spiritual growth. For example the verse "Is it not easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to get into heaven?" is followed by people asking how so many who seemed blessed due to their wealth could get into heaven. The chapter doesn't say the rich cannot get into heaven, simply countering the belief that wealth is a sign of grace. Dave quotes many scriptures to show us that it is important what we do with the money we have, to always be ready to help others, maybe by giving money or in many other ways. When in doubt ask God, He will show you what to do. I give this book 5 stars Available on Amazon.com.



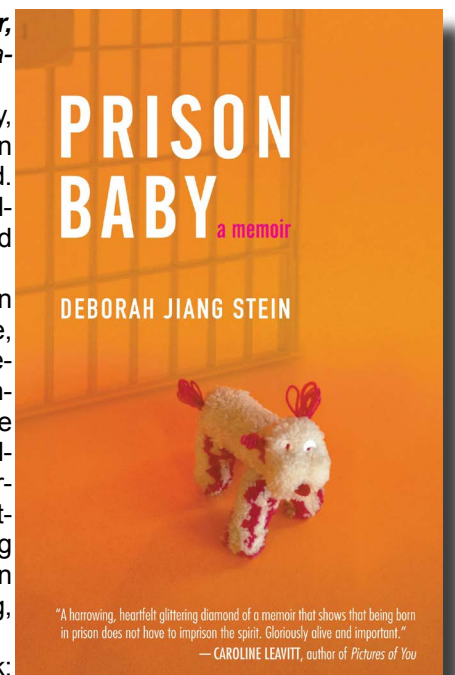
PRISON BABY, a Memoir: Author, Deborah Jiang Stein. Published by Beacon Press.

Deborah Jiang Stein tells her story, from her birth in a prison, to redemption from a tortured soul, leaving no part untold. She is fearless in her exposure of her feelings, her experiences, her thoughts, and her life.

Deborah did the work needed to begin the healing, then she found her purpose, and ultimately a way to continue the life-long healing of herself, while helping others. Her endless visits to prisons, where she helps women start the process of healing themselves, by talking about her journey, and asking them to put it down in writing (unPrison Project - a nonprofit -Building capacity for women and girls in prison www.unprisonproject.org), left me thinking, "What more can I do".

I cried when I read this line in her book: "Every human being is worthy of love no matter what's happened, where we come from, or where we've been". She also writes about something very close to my heart, HOPE, and the belief that no one is beyond help. She goes on to talk about the entrapments of finding happiness, the "When I" objectives that never end, and do not always bring what we had hoped for. The peace and contentment Deborah finds, after working so hard to fight the darkness, is inspiring. She talks about the "NOW", about gratitude, and about living life on life's terms. I learned so much from my reading of this book, but my most valuable take away: not to let my purpose overwhelm my life.

Healing is a life long process. Learning to live with sorrow and grief, allow us to move forward and live in the moment of our day to day joy. Deborah Jiang Stein is a spiritual warrior, and my new hero. I hope to meet this incredibly inspiring woman some day. Please take the time to read this book, your life will be better for it. I give this book Five Stars. Available at Amazon.com.



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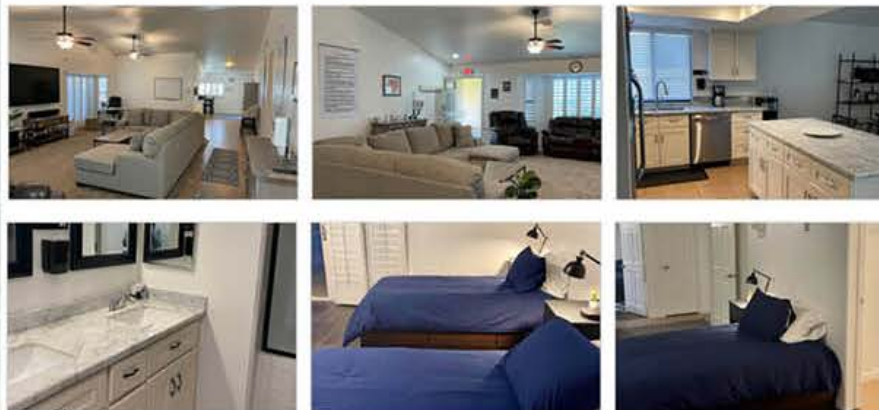
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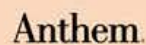


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Vital Services Resource Guide

Keys to Recovery Newspaper, Inc. publishes this monthly "Vital Services Resource Guide" FREE as a community service to assist those in need of help or information. You are welcome to submit listings and volunteer needs.

RESOURCE GUIDE

12 Step Recovery Info Line: Phone meeting info & recordings of recovery (951) 262-3623, Lisa Moss (818) 293-2222.

Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) World Services: P.O. Box 459, NY, NY 10163, www.alcoholics-anonymous.org (212) 870-3400.

A.A. San Fernando Valley Central Office: (818) 988-3001.

A.A. LA Central Office: 4311 Wilshire Blvd., #104, Los Angeles, CA 90010, www.lacoaa.org (323) 936-4343 (800) 923-8722.

A.A. 8752 S Broadway, L.A., CA 90003, www.aa.org (323) 750-2039, info for Spanish Speaking.

A.A. San Gabriel / Pomona Valley - Central Service Office, www.aasgvo.org (626) 914-1861.

A.A. Santa Clarita Central Office: www.aascv.org (661) 250-9922.

Al-Anon Family Groups: www.al-anon.alateen.org (888) 425-2666.

Grupo Al-Anon: FE Y GRATITUD DE NEWHALL, 22505 Market St, #102 Newhall CA.

Al-Anon/Alateen: LA County www.alanonla.org (818) 760-7122.

Al-Anon/Alateen Spanish: LA County, (562) 948-2190.

A.C.A. (Adult Children of Alcoholics): World Service Organization: www.adultchildren.org (562) 595-7831.

Adult Children/Codependents: 12 step & recovery meetings, Thurs & Suns 6pm 8742 Mulberry Dr., Sunland, CA. Lisa (818) 293-2222.

Alsana Eating Disorder Helpline: For individuals, families, and providers to receive support, answers to questions, and resources. Monday – Friday, 6am – 6pm PST. Call or text: (314) 807-3065. www.alsana.com/helpline/

Anaheim Alano Club: 202 W. Broadway, Anaheim, CA 92805. Meetings 7-days a week (714) 535-0900.

California Depart. of Health Care Services: www.dhcs.ca.gov (800) 735-2922 for deaf and blind.

California Hispanic Commission on Alcohol & Drug Abuse: www.chcada.org (916) 443-5473.

CEA-HOW: Compulsive Eaters Anonymous – HOW www.ceahow.org. World Service Office (323) 660-4333.

CEA-HOW: Compulsive Eaters Anonymous: www.valleyhow.org (818) 503-7484.

CEA-HOW: Compulsive Eaters Anonymous; HOW: San Fernando Valley Intergroup, (818) 667-6722 or e-mail: sfvalleyhow@aol.com or Bryce at (818) 621-2130.

CEA-HOW: NEVADA Compulsive Eaters Anonymous: 12-Step Recover. Las Vegas www.ceahow.org (702) 393-6570.

Cocaine Anonymous: World Service Office www.ca.org. (800) 347-8998 or (310) 559-5833.

Clutterers Anonymous: (866) 402-6685.

Co-Dependents Anonymous: (CoDA) L.A. (323) 969-4995.

Co-Dependents Anonymous: (CoDA) San Fernando Valley (818) 379-3300.

COMMUNITY REFLECTIONS INC.: Prison Outreach, Homeless & Veteran Care, LiveScan, Prop 47, Legal Services, Etc. 10020 S. Western Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90047 (323) 674-4376

COSA for friends & family of Sex Addicts: www.cosa-recovery.org (866) 899-2672.

Crystal Meth-Anonymous: (CMA) (855) 638-4373

Debt-Anon Family Groups: A 12-Step recovery program for those affected by a problem of compulsive debt in a relative or friend. www.debtanon.org

Debtors Anonymous: offers hope for people whose use of unsecured debt causes problems and suffering in their lives and the lives of others. Visit www.debtorsanonymous.org.

Eating Disorder Support Recovery Groups free & open to the public. Thurs at 7 pm. Center for Discovery, 21650 Oxnard St. # 2375, Woodland Hills; 8484 Wilshire Blvd., #510, Beverly Hills; 4281 Katella Ave #131, Los Alamitos; 1000 Quail St., #290, Newport Bch; 11455 El Camino Real, #360, Del Mar. for info visit www.centerfordiscovery.com

Eating Disorder Support Recovery Group. FREE. Drop in. Open to the public. Wednesdays from 6-7pm. EDCC (Eating Disorder Center of Calif) 520 S. Sepulveda Blvd., #208, Los Angeles, 90049.

Greysheet Anonymous: Recovery 12th Step for all eating disorders. Greysheet.org, (310) 245-6441, cell (310) 445-7709, Linda L. Meeting Saturday, 8:45-10am. Farmer's Market Community Room.

Emotional Anonymous: www.emotionsanonymous.org World Services (651) 647-9712.

Family Support Group: FREE of charge. Have a loved one suffering with mental health and/or substance abuse? Parents & spouses invited to join group, Wed. 6:30pm-7:30pm. At Awakenings, 28720 Roadside Dr., #200 Agoura Hills. For info call (805) 574-0936.

Food Addicts Anonymous: www.foodaddictsanonymous.org World services (772) 878-9657.

Food Addicts in Recovery Anonymous: (FA) www.foodaddicts.org (781) 932-6300.

Gamblers Anonymous: (GA) www.gamblersanonymous.org (626) 960-3500.

Problem Gambling: 24-Hour Help Line (Calif.) (800) 522-4700.

International Obsessive Compulsive Disorder Foundation: (OCD) www.ocfoundation.org (617) 973-5801.

LGBTQIA+ AA Meeting: Saturdays, 6:30 PM, Thousand Oaks, CA (800) 560-8518. www.laventanatrement.com

LifeRing Secular Recovery, Lifering.org, (800) 811-4142

Love Addicts Anonymous: (LAA) www.Loveaddicts.org

MADD Mother Against Drunk Driving www.madd.org (877) MADD-HELP

Marijuana Anonymous: www.marijuana-anonymous.org World Services (800) 766-6779.

Marijuana Anonymous: www.marijuana-anonymous.org Los Angeles (310) 494-0189 or Van Nuys (818) 759-9194.

Narcotics Anonymous (NA): www.todayna.org Regional Office (800) 863-2962.

Narcotics Anonymous: www.nasfv.com (818) 997-3822.

Nicotine Anonymous National & World Services: www.nicotine-anonymous.org (877) 879-6422.

Nicotine Anonymous So. California Intergroup: www.scina.org (800) 642-0666

Nar-Anon Family Groups: www.nar-anon.org/naranon (800) 477-6291 or (310) 534-8188.

National Council on Alcoholism & Drug Dependence Headquarters: (NCADD provide help & info and other alcohol/drug related services). www.ncadd.org (800) 622-2255.

National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence: SFV www.ncadd-sfv.org (818) 997-0414.

Our House Grief Support Center: WLA & Woodland Hills, CA (888) 417-1444 www.ourhouse-grief.org.

Overeaters Anonymous: www.oa.org World (505) 891-2664.

Overeaters Anonymous: Meeting Hotline 24 Hour (323) 653-7499. **Overeaters Anonymous LA Intergroup:** www.oalaig.org (323) 653-7652.

Pills Anonymous: (PA) www.pillsanonymous.com

Rageaholics Anonymous: www.rageaholicsanonymous.org

Recovering Couples Anon: www.Recovering-Couples.org (781) 794-1456.

RumRadio.org: comprehensive 12 Step sponsorship informational resource website (512) 267-4707.

Secular Organization For Sobriety: (323) 666-4295.

Sex Addicts Anonymous: (SAA) www.saa-recovery.org (800) 477-8191.

Sexaholics Anonymous (SA): www.sa.org (866) 424-8777.

Sexaholics Anonymous (SA): www.sasocal.org (310) 491-8845.

Sexual Compulsive Anonymous: www.sca-recovery.org (800) 977-HEAL.

Sexual Recovery Anonymous (SRA): www.sexualrecovery.org (323) 850-8565.

S-Anon: (Friends & Families of Sex Addicts) www.sanon.org (800) 210-8141.

SHARE: www.shareselfhelp.org (310) 846-5270.

SUPPORT GROUP: Free & open to anyone supporting a loved one through their mental health and/or substance use recovery. 1st and 3rd Thurs. of each month, 7:PM Thousand Oaks, CA (800) 560-8518 www.laventanatrement.com

Survivors of Incest Anonymous: (877) 742-9761. www.siaawso.org

TEEN LINE: (800)TLC-TEEN (in CA) (310) 855-HOPE, Teens helping teens. www.teenlineonline.org

The Other Bar: FREE 12 step based peer recovery network for lawyers & law students (800) 222-0767; www.otherbar.org

Workaholics Anonymous: www.workaholics-anonymous.org (510) 273-9253.

INFORMATION & REFERRAL SERVICES

Dimondale Adolescent (310) 791-3064.

www.SunshineCommunity2015.org Social Services, (626) 297-6112, Resource Services to Children in Foster Care, Emancipated individuals, Single Women age 18+ with children & much more.

www.Foundation2recovery.org, Prevention, Education, Treatment (561) 981-6214.

24 Hour DayCare, Referrals and Crisis Intervention Services (310) 669-5933 or (310) 427-4022.

The Sober Living Network referral service (800) 799-2084.

Sober Living Network (310) 396-5270.

San Diego Sober Living Homes Assoc: (858) 483-5866.

INFO LINE community service referrals, shelter, food, medical, (800) 339-6993 or simply dial 211.

AVYFS, Antelope Valley Youth & Family Services (661) 949-1069.

Council of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (CADA) Drop-In Center (805) 962-6195, www.cadasb.org

CCBCDC: California Certification Board of Chemical Dependency Counselors www.CaliforniaCertificationBoard.org

CADCA Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of American (800) 54-CADCA.

CCPG California Council on Problem Gambling www.calproblemgambling.org (800) 522-4700.

CENTER FOR LIVING&LEARNING - employment & supportive services (818) 781-1073 www.center4living.lle.org

FOOD AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services, Info on General Relief, Aid to Families w/Dependent Children (AFDC), Food Stamps, MediCal and other forms for financial assistance, (800) 339-6993.

FOOD BANKS

APLA's Necessities of Life Program 7336 Bellaire Ave., N. Hollywood, CA. Thursday 10:30am to 4:pm, (213) 201-1600.

As You Are Church, 7855 Lindley Ave., Reseda, CA. Wednesdays & Fridays, call for hours, (818) 758-1700.

Catholic Charities/Guadalupe Community Center 21600 Hart St., Canoga Park, CA. Once a month, or on emergency basis. Food recipient must register (818) 340-2050.

Congregational Church of Chatsworth 20440 Lassen, Chatsworth, CA (818) 882-3474.

First United Methodist Church 18120 Satcoy St., Reseda, CA - Wed. 11:00am to 1:30pm, (818) 344-7135.

Los Angeles Food Bank (323) 234-3030.

Manna, Ministry to the Poor 6642 Reseda Blvd., Reseda, CA. Every Saturday, (except the first Saturday of each month) 11:am to 12:15pm, (818) 776-9696.

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church 8520 Winnetka Ave., Winnetka, CA (818) 341-1629.

Salvation Army Glendale Corps: Monday -Friday Food Pantry. 320 West Windsor Rd., Glendale, CA 91204 (818) 246-5586.

Shepherd's Nest, Feeding the Homeless 9237 Crebs Ave., Northridge, CA (818) 557-6247.

SOVA Food Pantry, Jewish Family Services (open to all in need) 16439 Vanowen St., Van Nuys, CA (818) 988-7682.

West Valley Pantry, 7304 Jordan Ave., Canoga Park. (818) 346-5554.

West Valley Food Pantry (Prince of Peace Church) 5700 Rudnick Ave., Woodland Hills (818) 346-5554.

DISABILITY SERVICES

Job Accommodation Centers, Toll Free (800) 526-7234 (voice & TDD).

ACCESS Paratransit Referral Service, transportation voucher program, (800) 431-7882.

Social Security & Medicare Eligibility, Info (800) 772-1213, TDD (800) 288-7185.



WAS RUDOLF AN ALCOHOLIC?

This article was originally printed on the December 2015 issue of Keys to Recovery Newspaper.

Was Rudolf an alcoholic? I realize this is a silly question because everybody knows that Rudolf did not exist. If he did not exist then he could not be alcoholic. This I know. However, playing along with the Christmas song, I think it might be helpful to consider some aspects of the story.

Firstly, he had a shiny nose and it glowed. I've met many alcoholics who had red noses...indeed even in recovery they maintain the red nose look. But I've also met many more alcoholics who had normal noses...assuming we can define what a normal nose looks like!

The plot begins to thicken when we hear that all of the other reindeers used to laugh and call him names. Hmmm. Again, we are not told what they called him.

"Hey, lamp face, Schnoz, Fireball." – "Tomato face." And, of course, for those who were not imaginative: "Big nose."

But they didn't just call him names they wouldn't let him play in any reindeer games. He was isolated. They didn't like him. And he was obviously very lonely.

I think I know how he felt. Before I got sober people called me names. – "The drunken priest." – "A waster, in robes." – "Lush."

And they didn't want me in their company. Certainly, the experience of my alcoholism fits this part of the Rudolf story.

And let's remember that hurtful names create shame. That feeling that we are not good enough. Damaged goods. Unworthy. Dirty. Shame creates that self-torture that prevents us ever being able to love, and accept who we are.

Then something happened. Remember: What it was like. What happened. And what it is like now. Rudolf received an intervention from none other than Santa himself.

"Rudolf with your nose so bright, won't you guide my sleigh tonight?" Change. Do something different. Take what you thought was a deficit and make it into an asset.

I wonder how many alcoholics, when they got sober, used the "ism" of their alcoholism in a positive way. Developing and affirming their creative personalities. Disciplining their compulsive behavior in a productive way. Searching for a different "spirit".

I know the Rudolf story is fiction, but it has some telling messages for the alcoholic. What we are not told about in the story is how quickly Rudolf responded to Santa's request. Personally, I doubt if he immediately walked to the front of the reindeer team. He had to think about it. Ponder the implications of "standing up" and proclaiming his difference.

"My name is Leo. And I am an alcoholic."

If I'm right, it took Rudolf some time to face his fears and challenge those who had ridiculed him for many years. In short, I doubt that he got the message from Santa on first hearing.

I know many alcoholics who don't get it, the first time.

But the Rudolf story brings hope. He did eventually get it. He grew in self esteem. He used his difference in service. Wow. What an important recovery message.

"Then all the reindeers loved him, and they shouted out with glee, Rudolf the red nosed reindeer, you'll go down in history".

Now Rudolf is loved and accepted; more, he was acclaimed. He would go down in history. Somebody who was special. But what about you? You are reading this column, but what are you thinking about?

- A crazy relationship that is hurting your recovery?
- How to use prescribed drugs for a sickness?
- Your sober but without a job?
- Realizing that you have physical sobriety, but are spiritually empty?

What are you thinking about? Because you, I suspect, are also like Rudolf. Have you heard that you are special?

This is my message to friends and church people today. Recovery involves confidence. It can affirm a belief in God, but also a belief in ourselves. It is not only about not drinking, but realizing our uniqueness. Discovering that emotional sobriety that Bill Wilson wrote about in the AA Grapevine (1958): "Then we can be free to live and love; we may then be able to Twelve Step ourselves and others into emotional sobriety."

Back to Santa's message: Go to the front. Believe in yourself. Let your light shine. What you thought was so shaming will take you to glory.

And that is the message at this holiday season. We are special. And this is certainly true for the alcoholics who are in recovery.

We may not become famous in the eyes of the nation or the world, but to many of our families, friends and colleagues, we truly are wonderful. And an example of change.

Was Rudolf an alcoholic? If we allow ourselves to be poetic for a few minutes, I think we can see in the story, the connection to our recovery. The stigma. The fear. The ridicule. And then the progressive transformation. Now I understand why so many people love the Rudolf song. Occasionally I've been known to get the recovery group to sing it before I tell my story...and they always sing it with gusto. It's as if they know they are singing about themselves.

I see the smiles. I see the tears. But always I hear the hope in all the voices coming together.

I suppose that is the main message that we receive this month in all the holiday festivities: Hope.

Since I have become a Unity minister I've been really aware of the belief that "wherever I am, God is...and all is well". My hope is based on the possible; people do change, they do get sober; healing is real.

As we already discussed, Rudolf made a decision to use his apparent defect and bring it into service. One alcoholic taking time to share with another alcoholic. Shared suffering brings healing, one day at a time.

Spiritually I want to take this time to wish you all a blessed "holiday", and regardless of where you are on your spiritual journey, know that you are special.

Leo Booth, a former Episcopal priest is today a Unity minister. He is also a recovering alcoholic and Spiritual advisor for New Found Life – in Long Beach, California

For more information about Leo Booth and his speaking engagements visit www.fatherleo.com or email him at fatherleo@fatherleo.com.

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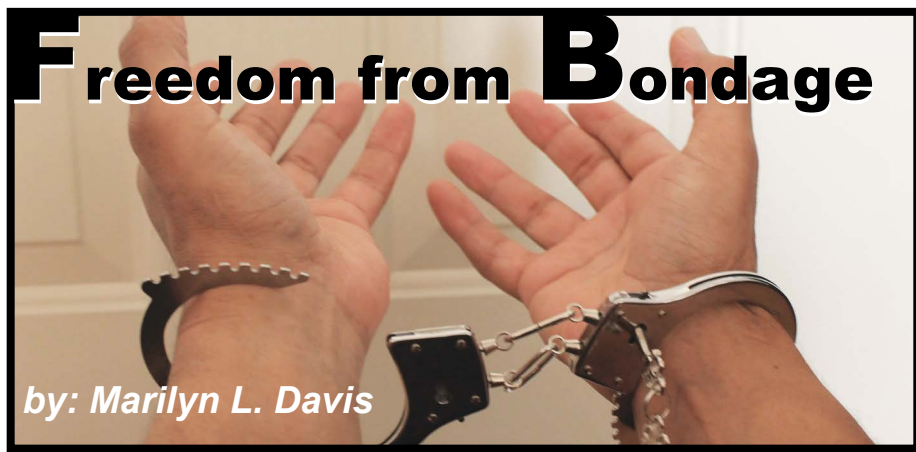
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I CAN'T WE CAN

ORIGINALLY PRINTED IN OUR JULY 2017 ISSUE

“A fine glass vase goes from treasure to trash, the moment it is broken. Fortunately, something else happens to you and me. Pick up your pieces. Then, help me gather mine.” - Vera Nazarian

We all find ourselves at a crossroads when we make the decision to put down the drugs and alcohol. We either have to stop our use, face our fears, make changes, and create a better life, or succumb to the temptations and the familiarity of addiction.

In this decision, we are all alike. However, what got us to this point differs as much as someone who has blue eyes, compared to someone with hazel eyes.

What are some of the differences that influence our recovery paths?

1. Not everyone can comprehend information at the same level or the same pace.
2. Not everyone is initially willing to be introspective and objective.
3. Not everyone can see the severity of their own addictions when compared to others.
4. Not everyone is motivated by the same goals or in the same manner.
5. There is not just one type of recovery supportive meetings.
6. Differences must be respected.
7. Some short and long-term effects of specific drugs may hinder progress.
8. Not all people have a “Criminal Mentality”.

When we are new in recovery, it's imperative that we find people who respect and can work with our individual differences. Whether this is a sponsor, accountability partner, or therapist doesn't matter.

Too often people have good intentions when they share their experience, strength and hope. Unfortunately, they may also have unrealistic expectations of the how well or quickly another person “gets it”.

What was easy for one person, may be difficult for another. I don't do math. Oh, sure, I can add and subtract, but much beyond that and I'm clueless. Algebra, trigonometry, and calculus - shoot I had to look up how to spell calculus - 'nuff said.

I only remember the word PI, because I can think blueberry or cherry. However, there will be others who relate to the image and actually understand it. I'm not one of them.

So when we're sharing about our character defects, self-defeating behaviors, or adopting spiritual principles, it may make sense to us, but it could just sound as daunting as the numbers or PI.

We're In This Together: So how do we share, help, and encourage people? I think it needs to be about the person seeking help, not us. So, I always start with some basic questions, but realize that there may not be common ground in the answers.

1. What motivates you to change? Consider: if someone hasn't been to jail, there is no incentive for them even if you've been there 27 times.
2. Why do you want to change? Consider: if someone doesn't have a family, how could “getting my family back” be a reason to change?
3. What consequences or outcomes scare you the most? Consider: Whatever losses you've faced may not be the same as someone else.

If you were born with a silver spoon, or had great enablers, losing your Porsche may be a significant loss for you; losing a bed at the homeless shelter may be a greater loss for someone else.

We're all Fragile in the Beginning, Meet Them Where They Are: We all present somewhat differently in the beginning.

1. Some of us are just not going to show vulnerability.
2. Some of us are going to front “okay”.
3. Some of us are going to posture as a victim.
4. Some of us will present arrogant or dismissive of suggestions.
5. Some of us are aggressive.
6. Some of us are willing to try any suggestion to get out of the hell of addiction.

Even with these seeming differences, each of us was scared.

I wish we would sometimes remember more how we felt, what we thought, and what behaviors we still operated on from day one. Because that's when we're meeting someone else where they are more likely to be, than where we are.

Again, ask questions.

1. How are you feeling today?
2. What thoughts have bothered you today?
3. Do you have any needs today?

But just as importantly, ask, “What have you done well, today?”

Don't take away a person's sense of importance when they accomplish something that is old for you, but new for them. Don't dismiss it as trivial - oh, I'm sure you do not consciously dismiss it, but are you giving them enough credit for maybe reading the meditation book and getting the message. Yes, you can say, “Good job”, but to show genuine interest in their accomplishment, why not ask them to explain to you what the message meant. Not in a challenging manner, but from genuine interest.

Who knows, there might be a nugget of universal truth in it that you forgot when you read it 1, 5, 10 years ago. Could happen, you know.

I can't tell you how many times, I've been comforted by someone with 15 days. They noticed that I was frowning, and asked me if I was okay. Before I belabor my workload, or writing deadlines, I'll ask if they want an honest answer. Usually, they do, so I might then say, “It's a day of pressures, and I'm not dealing with all of them well.”

Sometimes, I'm thanked for the honesty, and we can talk about sharing even the crappy days. I think it's okay to let people know that recovery isn't all grins and giggles, but when we share the burdens, whatever they are, with another person, they get lightened. Then, I thank them for taking a minute to listen, and then ask them how their day is going - and to be honest.

I tell them that they have practiced the principles of service and brotherly love when they listened, and I hope I was considerate and caring when they shared their day.

And a hug at this point helps us both. If we're fortunate, someone else walks by the men's recovery home where I work, and we get a group hug - you should foster this each chance you get.

Working with people is one of the most rewarding experiences I've ever had. Watching them change, become their best selves, and seeing them reap the rewards of their hard work is gratifying. And it's their hard work, all I ever did was cheer them on and offer some suggestions.

My sponsor has less time than me. She's my second in 28 years. My first sponsor moved away. While we stay in touch, I appreciate facetime.

So, we can learn from those with more time, or even less, if the relationship is about mutual respect, care, understanding, and helping the other grow emotionally, spiritually, and mentally.

So are you sponsoring, being an accountability partner, or are you trying only to teach and not learn? Ponder that question.

Writing, and recovery heals the heart.

Marilyn L Davis was the Editor-in-Chief at From Addict 2 Advocate and Two Drops of Ink. She was also the author of Finding North: A Journey from Addict to Advocate and Memories into Memoir: The Mindsets and Mechanics Workbook, available on Amazon, at Barnes and Noble, Indie Books, and Books A Million.



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ADDICTION & RECOVERY THROUGH A CHILD'S EYES

ORIGINALLY PRINTED IN OUR JUNE 2015 ISSUE

All too often alcoholism, drug addiction, and other addictive problems become a family legacy. It is essential to spare children from unnecessary years of silence, suffering, and shame. Effective prevention measures can introduce children to a path of help and healing. Youth can find their voice, build strengths, and deepen their resilience. They can connect with others who know all too well the horrors of this disease, and the secrecy that envelops their families. They can climb aboard the health and wellness train, even if loved family members aren't ready and able to do so. Today there is hope.

The alcoholic and drug addicted homefronts are armored by denial, delusion, and steadfast adherence to the strict "no talk" rule. Consequently, children don't always understand what's happening in their families. If no one explains to them what is going on, children will often make up a story for it all to make sense. Unfortunately, these stories can be way off base, especially when youngsters believe it's their fault. Without intervention, these stories can turn into life scripts ("I'm no good." "I always mess stuff up") which thwart healthy growth and development.

When children from families challenged by addiction learn about this insidious disease in an age-appropriate way, it can sometimes be a mixed blessing. They often feel a sense of relief and comfort when they learn to separate the person they love, from the addiction that consumes them. Finally it's beginning to make sense. As seven through twelve-year-olds understand that their loved ones are trapped by alcoholism and other drug addiction, children often break through any remaining denial. Like many adults, it's especially tough for them to come to grips with the fact that they can't make their addicted family member better, as these kids would do virtually anything to see their loved ones get well. On the bright side, they do come to realize that it's not their fault and they are not alone.

TREATMENT AND RECOVERY: In an effort to build upon hope, we introduce children to the super heroes T&R, "Treatment" and "Recovery". T&R are the arch nemeses of addiction. They help people get better and come in many forms, including treatment, counseling, 12 Step meetings, therapy, and a turn to faith and service to others. Once an alcoholic/addict asks for help or accepts it though a form of intervention, T&R come to the rescue and provide a safe haven to ward off the disease.

Children and families can truly heal if they make T&R an essential part of their lives on a daily basis. Through counseling and educational support groups, at both community and school locations, children from addicted families can learn to be kids. They can have fun, develop new interests, and engage in a multitude of activities. They can learn new ways to help care for themselves and stay safe. They are able to communicate their thoughts and feelings to people they trust. They can feel good about themselves and develop strengths, even if their loved ones continue to be stuck in their disease. They can celebrate who they are and move forward despite what is happening in their families.

ONE LITTLE GIRL: Rosa was an adorable young girl who stole my heart the very first moment I met her. She had bright blue eyes, curly blond hair, and a radiant smile that could magically light up the room. Underneath this façade was a scared and confused child. Her mom was initially resistant to the idea of letting her daughter participate in the children's program. "Look, she's only seven. She is so little. Let's just let her be a kid," Kelly told me at our first meeting. She had only been at the treatment center for eight days, as her alcoholism had gotten completely out of control.

It was only when her physician, primary counselor, and family counselor all spoke to Kelly about the importance of the Kids' program that she finally relented.

Rosa took to the group immediately and had no difficulty sharing her mind. I'll never forget what she had to say during our second meeting. "I don't want my mommy to be sick anymore," she told the group. When asked how she could tell when Mommy was sick, she said, "That's way easy. She stays in bed, sleeps a lot, is very grumpy, and yells at me." Rosa took a deep breath and stated, "She forgets about me. My mommy forgets about me." All the other children rallied around her when Rosa started to cry. She was learning that mom got hooked by addiction, and that it wasn't her (Rosa's) fault. She was learning that she is not alone. She was learning that T&R can help mom get better.

CONTINUING CARE: Kelly's continuing care plan included a weekly kids' group for Rosa, while Mom was concurrently in an AA Meeting. Kelly was again resistant to this notion. Her initial reluctance was about the guilt and shame she carried about how her disease had hurt her daughter. "Rosa loves her meetings, but I get scared that she won't love me anymore if she keeps talking about my disease," Kelly related with tears in her eyes. "No way," I responded. "Let her do her own T&R so your family can heal. You are her only parent and she adores you. Please let her be part of the healing." With fear and trepidation Kelly took another courageous step by allowing her daughter a safe place to continue learning and growing.

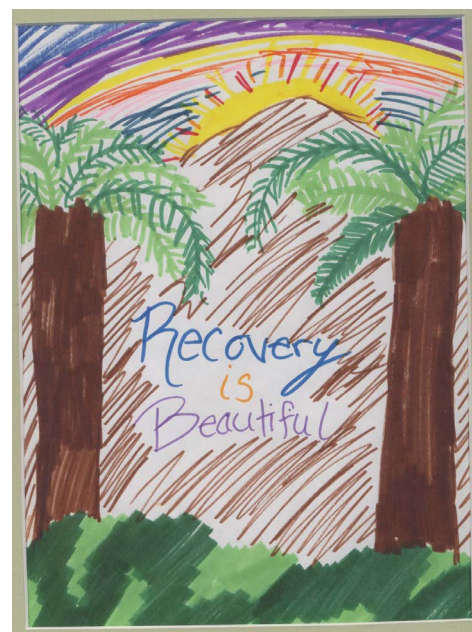
Kelly and Rosa faithfully participated in continuing care for six months. They grew closer together and Rosa was so proud of her Mommy, something she mentioned on a regular basis. Even when Kelly became exhausted with all the balls she juggled in the air as a single parent, Rosa would remind her, "T&R keeps addiction away from us. We gotta do T&R. Let's go to our groups."

A FORK IN THE ROAD: Eighteen months passed, and I hadn't had any further contact with this family. One day Rosa, now a fourth-grader, came home from an afterschool program, took one look at her mother, and declared, "You've been drinking that yucky stuff again." Despite Mom's vehement protestations, Rosa asked, "Well, what's in that glass?" Mom quickly and defensively replied, "Diet Coke." Before Kelly could get there first, Rosa took a big sip, ran to the sink, and spit it out. With hurt, anger and disappointment surging through her body, and a look of horror on her face she silently glared at Mom, went to her room, and slowly shut the door. Mom, apparently dumbfounded, was not sure what to say or do. She sat on the couch and sobbed, as the realization that she was trapped by addiction again painfully pierced her heart.

Rosa came out twenty minutes later carrying her backpack and clutching her favorite Care Bear. Her backpack was full of her favorite clothes along with some prized treasures. She slowly walked towards her mom and softly said, "Please call Grandma now. Mommy, I can't live here anymore. If you keep drinking that stuff you will get sick and die." Mom collapsed on the couch as a result of her daughter's simple yet poignant words. Rosa wasn't done yet though. "Mommy, I love you, but I don't want to be here when that happens."

Before Rosa got to the door Mom took her daughter and held her ever so tightly. Within minutes Mom was on the phone. Within an hour she was back in treatment.

AFTERWARDS: Kelly recently received a ten year medallion at her homegroup of Alcoholics Anonymous. The most important person in her life, Rosa, had the gift and blessing of watching this celebration unfold. As Kelly built a solid foundation by working the steps, she got to a place where she could address growing up in an alcoholic family herself. She lovingly gave her daughter the gifts she never got as a child, a sober parent and a place for Rosa to grow, and heal. Rosa, a veteran of Alateen, is completing her first year of university. Due to the inherent risks, she has yet to pick up a drink or drug. There's a closeness and bond between these two of shared experience, gratitude, and joy. Together they are changing the family legacy. Today there is hope.



Jerry Moe, MA. is the National Director of Children's Programs at the Betty Ford Center. An Advisory Board Member of the National Association for Children of Alcoholics (NACoA), he is the author of many books. Jerry has lectured, trained, and consulted around the world.

The Betty Ford Children's Program is for 7 through 12 year-olds who come from families hurt by alcoholism and other drug addiction. With locations in Southern California, the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex, and Denver, Colorado, no child is ever turned away due to an inability to pay. For more information go to www.bettyfordcenter.org



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by: Peter Przekop

ADDICTION & CHRONIC PAIN

ORIGINALLY PRINTED IN OUR MAY 2016 ISSUE

A FEW FACTS & DEFINITIONS TO HELP YOU UNDERSTAND: Both chronic non-cancer pain (CNCP) and addiction account for tremendous suffering. When they occur in combination, the suffering is dramatically magnified. As many as 25% of Americans suffer from CNCP, and as many as 60% of Americans with addiction suffer from CNCP. People with CNCP are at risk for developing addiction, while people with addiction are at risk for developing CNCP. A discussion of the relationship between addiction and CNCP, and successful treatment is relevant and long overdue.

What is CNCP? CNCP is pain that has been present for three months or more. There is a tremendous amount of misunderstanding that surrounds CNCP, and this has contributed to a lack of adequate treatments, much of which leads to more suffering.

FACTS ABOUT CNCP: Understanding some facts about CNCP will help to clear up some of the misunderstanding.

1ST: CNCP is very different from acute pain. The purpose of acute pain is to make us aware of tissue damage. There is not a similar purpose when pain becomes chronic.

2ND: in CNCP, a relationship between any observed anatomic abnormalities and the presence of pain, has never been established.

3RD: in CNCP, there is little relationship between observed anatomic abnormalities and the intensity, severity, and effects of pain. For instance, many people with chronic pain have no apparent injuries, and most people with observed anatomic abnormalities have no chronic pain.

4TH: CNCP should be considered a disease in and of itself, that is distinctly separate from acute, cancer, and end of life pain.

5TH: CNCP must be treated as a distinct disease entity that has specific signs and symptoms.

6TH: CNCP is a disease of the brain, mind, spirit, and body, and in order for treatment to be adequate, all four components must be effectively treated.

7TH: all four components become reorganized and become less functional in CNCP. Structural and functional changes in the brain are paralleled by maladaptive changes in the mind, spirit, and body.

8TH: CNCP can be adequately treated. This is true even when combined with addiction.

9TH: medication alone is not an adequate treatment for CNCP, since it only addresses symptoms.

10TH: successful treatment must go beyond symptom control, and must treat the whole person's experience and all factors that contribute to suffer.

11TH: successful treatment occurs when people are willing to change their lifestyle, and eliminate what they may attribute to CNCP and their suffering.

12TH: for most people with CNCP, especially in those who also have addiction, pain began long before the onset of CNCP. For most people with CNCP and for most with addiction, painful experiences predated either diagnosis. *This makes it necessary to reconsider how pain is defined.*

PAIN REDEFINED: Many life experiences are painful. Painful experiences that are associated with negative emotions create pain in our body. For instance, the loss of a loved one, betrayal, or rejection all cause physical pain and painful memories. We often do not acknowledge the physical pain because we become focused upon the story (narrative) in our minds. We ignore the uncomfortable feeling which really is pain. However, our brain, mind, spirit, and body remember them, and as the memories accumulate, they make one increasingly susceptible to the development of CNCP and addiction. Thus, pain can be thought of as "any sensation we experience that is associated with a negative emotion"

THE PROBLE: The failure to recognize what has been explained in the above two sections, has led to much misunderstanding about CNCP. It also helps explain

why opioids have not been successful in treating CNCP, although they have become the mainstay of treatment. This, in turn, has led to an epidemic of opioid prescribing, misuse, dependence, addiction, overdose, and death. It is worth reviewing how this came about.

In the 1990s, there was a strong movement to aggressively treat chronic non-cancer pain. It was reasoned that opioid pain medications may be effective for CNCP, since they were reasonably effective for acute pain, cancer pain, and for palliative care. Two publish papers provided very weak evidence in support of opioids for CNCP. These papers combined with aggressive marketing by pharmaceutical companies, gave great impetus to the use of opioids for patients with CNCP. This trend has increased for over 20 years, and has resulted in over 500,000 deaths, and millions of visits to the emergency room. The now epidemic level use of opioids to treat CNCP has occurred, despite a lack of evidence for their use. Clinical trials have failed to demonstrate long-term benefits, even in a very selective subject pool in which difficult patients have been excluded, and the downside of their use continues to grow.

PREDISPOSING FACTORS: A number of research groups, including our own, have begun to uncover factors that predispose one to the development of CNCP. These studies have shown that the more stress one has experienced in a lifetime, the more susceptible one is to developing CNCP. Either one major stressful event or the accumulation of many stressful events, can lead to the development of chronic stress. That is, the inability to turn off the stress response. When stress becomes chronic, the brain reorganizes and can cause symptoms of depressions, anxiety, catastrophic thinking, negative emotions, an unhealthy lifestyle, and poor self-care. All of these factors predispose one to CNCP and also the development of addiction.

CNCP AND ADDICTION OCCUR DUE TO A SIMILAR BRAIN DYSFUNCTION: CNCP and addiction appear to occur due to a similar brain dysfunction that leads to their development and maintenance. The entry point occurs when the brain/mind becomes overwhelmed with negative emotions, and is no longer able to adequately manage these emotions. Thus, an acute physical injury can lead to CNCP, if one becomes overwhelmed by the associated negative thoughts and emotions, and they persist. In similar fashion, people go from casual substance use to addiction, when they become overwhelmed by persistent negative thoughts and emotions. In both cases, the brain/mind can no longer manage painful thoughts and emotions. The area of the brain that adequately handles these experiences reorganizes and becomes dysfunctional, and the area of the brain that lets us know that we enjoy life, also reorganizes and becomes dysfunctional. One then becomes overwhelmed by invasive negative thoughts and emotions, and loses any sense of wellness.

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN CNCP AND ADDICTION: There are many similarities between CNCP and addiction, and an examination of these similarities will give a clearer understanding, of how people who have both diseases should be treated. First, the development of both diseases requires a strong environmental component. No one is born guaranteed to get either disease. One may be predisposed, but the signs and symptoms will not manifest unless there is a significant negative environmental influence. This environmental influence leads to chronic stress.

Second, in both diseases, there is a significant bias in attention (so called attentional capture). In addiction, this is seen by an inordinate amount of time spent, and attention directed towards using and obtaining substances. In CNCP, there is a significant biased attention towards the signal of pain and the past, present, and future effect of pain. Third, people with either disease show significant impairment. In both CNCP and addiction, there it is a dramatic impairment in thinking, and realizing the extent of the problems the disease causes. Thinking is impaired, irrational, and often nothing more than a reaction to uncomfortable feelings. People with addiction often do not recognize the effects the disease has on themselves and others. In CNCP, people perceive themselves to be much more ill and disabled than they actually are. Fourth, in both diseases, people develop tolerance. In addiction, there is tolerance to the effect of substances. In CNCP, there is tolerance to the brain's ability to shut off the pain signal. Fifth, people with either disease develop symptoms of withdrawal. When substances are abruptly stopped, those who are addicted experience withdrawal. When pain patients experience a pain-free moment, they wonder when the pain will come back. Sixth, people with either disease have increased and prolonged negative emotional states, each of which add to the continuation and the severity of the disease. Seventh, in either disease, there are significant cognitive, emotional, spiritual, and physical deficits.

ADEQUATE TREATMENT FOR THOSE WITH CNCP AND ADDICTION: In order to stop the cycle of suffering, both diseases must be treated. When treatment is inadequate, people continue to relapse. Treatment must consider the whole person and all of the painful memories that contribute to the development of the disease, and the disease risk factors. Each person must be treated as a unique individual. Chronic stress must be stopped. The cognitive, emotional, and spiritual deficits must be treated as well as the body. People must learn and practice daily healthy lifestyle skills. They include improved coping to reduce stress.

CNCP is a complex disease, but recent advances have led to successful treatment even when combined with addiction.

Peter Przekop, D.O. Ph.D., The Pain Free Kids Foundation, Betty Ford Center, Loma Linda University School Of Medicine, Departments of Pediatrics and Psychiatry. Author of *Conquer Chronic Pain: An Innovative Mind/Body Approach*. Email: pprzekop@llu.edu.



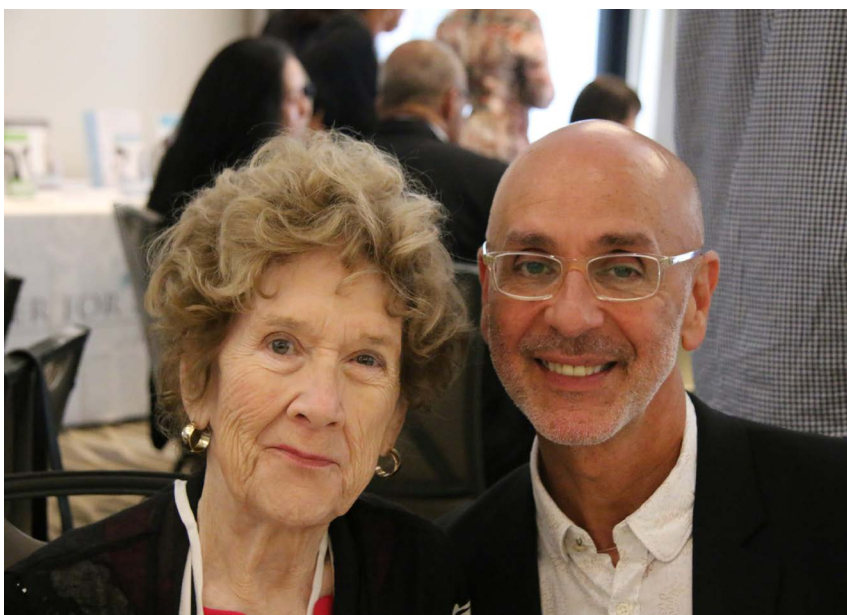
Dr Joanne Barron & Dr. Allen Glass 2016



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Roz & Richie Anneberg 2017



Peggy Albrecht at our 2017 awards



Monica Phillips on behalf of Peggy Albrecht & Jack Bernstein 2018



Lynne Pedersen & Danny Trejo were presented the award in 2019



Lynne Pedersen presented the award to Candy Finigan in 2022

Ryan Leaf was presented the award in 2022



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FROM GUNS AND NEEDLES TO RECOVERY AND REDEMPTION

ORIGINALLY PRINTED IN OUR JUNE 2018 ISSUE

Patrick O'Neil is the author of the memoir *Gun, Needle, Spoon*. For the past 17 years he has worked in the recovery community as a recovering addict/alcoholic, a drug and alcohol counselor, a college instructor, and a narrative therapist.

Jello Biafra said in an interview, "...we hate hard drugs," and yet, you were a road manager for the Dead Kennedys. How did you hide your heroin use from the band?

I'd shoot on a daily basis, but not a huge amount, just enough to keep me well. I'd get loaded elsewhere when the band weren't around. Years later, in County Jail, East Bay Ray came to visit me and he said, "I never knew you had a problem." A lot of people were lost in the early punk scene to drugs so, that could be where Biafra was coming from.

Your acerbic observations in 'Gun, Needle, Spoon' are often very funny. Was that intentional?

I use a lot of humor to self-deprecate, to lower the tension level. Even at the worst moments of my life I found the humor in it all. I remember panhandling, for drug money, with a gas can and this guy took me to a gas station, and he made me fill it up. Now I had a gallon of gas but no car! I couldn't say, "No, no. I don't want the gas." Situations like that. That's funny!

You have a gift for writing sharp, engaging dialogue. Did this start with prose or screenwriting?

I wrote some bad film scripts in art school. My dialogue was kinda stiff so I started an exercise: walking out every day, in Hollywood, and memorizing conversations. I'd write them down and play with the dialogue: making it funny, pathetic or sad. I did that for about a year and had a totally different ear for dialogue after that.

You wrote about 'Romancing that first hit on a joint.' Was that your first 'this is it' moment?

I was always romancing these 'great times.' People use that word 'partying,' but it's not always a party. I remember being up all night on cocaine, staring out of the slits in the window thinking the cops were coming, and then doing *more* coke! But heroin was the 'Aha' moment. Heroin did exactly what I wanted it to. Then I went to New York, to escape the San Francisco dope scene, but everywhere you go is where *you* are. I chipped dope and drank myself to death thinking I was clean. We like to call that 'Keith Richards clean.'

You wrote about witnessing your mother's attempted suicide, twice. Do you see a connection between those childhood events, and your substance abuse/eating disorder?

Absolutely, it was prime time: eleven or twelve years old and it was a defining moment. I felt I was unloved, as if my mother didn't want to be alive, that she would rather be dead than be my mother. I had an undiagnosed learning disorder; I was dyslexic; and I was bulimic—binging and purging. Then the drugs kicked in—pot, acid. My Dad got a professorship at Harvard and didn't want to be married anymore—he just left. Then the bottom fell out of my life. So I retreated into art.

I was the youngest nationally published cartoonist in America; I was on the Dinah Shore show. But all that phased out after punk rock and drugs.

Did armed robbery become an addiction in and of itself?

There was an intense sense of 'I'm that guy and the rules don't apply to me.' And there's the rush, the fear, that feeling of time standing still.

Did you feel, increasingly, that your luck was running out?

Yes. There was a time when we were checking out a multiplex, and there were a ton of undercover cops in the parking lot. A guy with an ear piece walking around...stuff like that. We got the hell out of there—fast. Whether it was real or not, I just had those insights. I also dreamt of cops shooting me. I would wake up at night, gasping for air—covered in sweat. I knew they were coming, but it was paying for my drug habit. I just didn't see any way out.

You tell your girlfriend that you will 'live forever.' Did you really believe that you would never die from an overdose?

I OD'ed maybe seven, nine times and that is how I lived my life: "I am not going to die from this. It's not going to happen." If the emergency workers showed up—after they'd pumped me full of Narcan—I would come to and they'd say, "You just OD'ed" and I'd say, "No I didn't!" And I'd be lying there with IVs in me and my chest hurting from the CPR. I definitely had a feeling of invincibility.

At what point did you experience that pivotal moment? Where you realized that you were 'done'?

That would have to be in jail. The state of California was trying to give me twenty-five to life which really meant *life*. I thought to myself, *do I really want to spend the rest of my life in prison? I don't even want to spend another minute in here.* That was an absolute moment. I questioned my whole existence. I was looking back at eighteen years of doing the same thing and *this* was the result. I realized that if I got out that day, I would have nowhere to go. My family didn't want me. I had no money. I'd burned all my bridges. That was definitely my bottom, the lowest I could go.

You wrote: "Incarceration is the biggest waste of time, the most depressingly violent environment." How did you adjust to that environment?

A lot of old-school guys told me that if you stay out of the mix, incarceration is a lot less of a problem. If you're not into gambling, drugs or a part of the gangs you can just do your time. There's nothing they want from you. So I joined this writing group. I just wrote—all the time. One day I read a story out loud and it was a total ice breaker. That's when I first got that feeling: *Oh, yeah. Writing's cool.*

You were going through a rough time one day but then, you received some unexpected news. Could you talk about that?

I walked out of the rehab (my workplace, in Los Angeles) to where my car was. And there was no car—nothing. It had been towed. I was so pissed—fuming. I walked to the bus and then the rain came pouring down. I got on the bus and it was totally crowded. The air conditioning was on so I was freezing, my clothes were all wet, and then...my cell rang. A number I didn't recognize—Sacramento. I almost didn't answer it. A voice on the other end said, "Hello, is Mr. O'Neil there?" "Yeah!" "I'm calling from Governor Brown's office. We're calling to tell you that we are going to give you your pardon." My eyes welled up. I looked across the aisle and there was this badass, tough, *cholo* dude looking at me and I thought, *I'm going to cry in front of this guy, but it doesn't matter.* I just told them that this was the best news I'd had all day. I hung up and...nothing mattered. It didn't matter that the car had been towed. Everything that felt really traumatic, huge and horrible ten minutes before that phone call just, disappeared. It was the culmination of everything. Doing the right thing. It was pretty amazing. It was like: *The government thinks I'm doing okay; the same government that wanted to put me away for life.* Gifts of recovery, man. Gifts of recovery.

Patrick has taught writing workshops in numerous correctional facilities, and lives with his wife Jennifer and two rather large Maine Coons in Downtown Los Angeles. For more information visit: patrick-oneil.com.

Steve Jones is an author, screenwriter, and playwright. He's the co-author of the addiction/recovery memoir 'Smile Now, Cry Later' published by Seven Stories Press, New York. (www.stevejoneswriter.com.)

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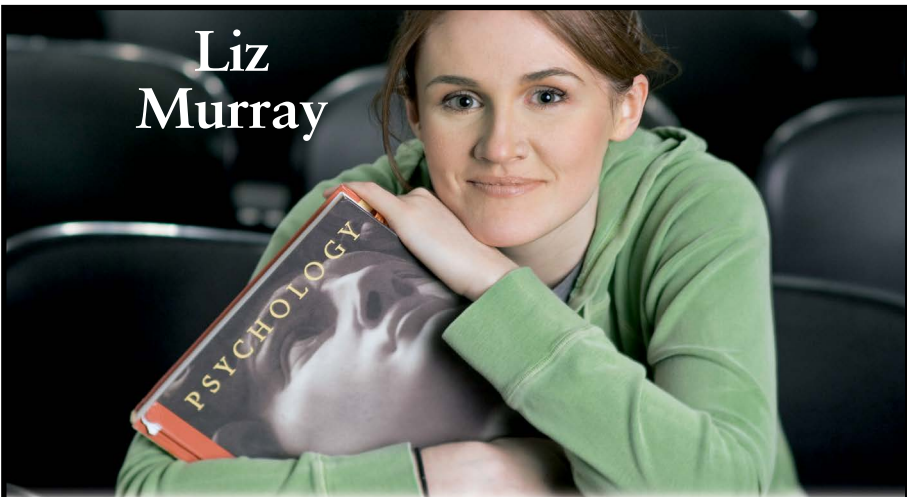


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Outpatient Alcohol & Drug Treatment, Domestic Violence, Parenting, Anger Management, Drug & Alcohol Testing.



We accept PPO and Private Pay

3025 N. Lincoln Ave., Altadena, California

www.AltadenaRecoveryCenter.org

House in the Hills

Transitional / Sober Living for Women in Recovery In Woodland Hills, Calif.

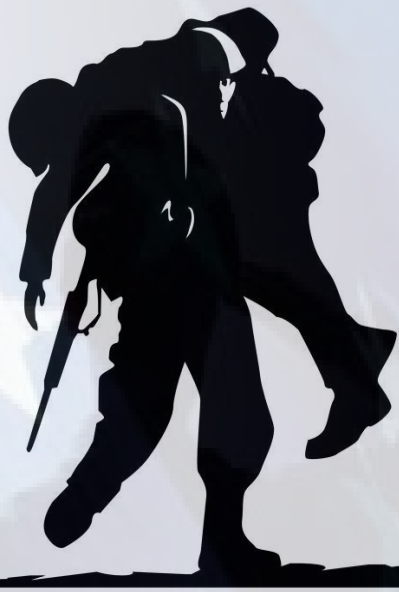
818.264.8545

Our core philosophy lies in the belief that recovering addicts/alcoholics must safely reconnect with the outside world, aided by a healthy, balanced, structured & secure environment as their Support System and Home.



The Sober Living Network

www.HouseintheHills.org CCAPP



WOUNDED WARRIOR PROJECT®

877.TEAM.WWP (832.6997)

WHO WE ARE: Every warrior has a next mission. We know that the transition to civilian life is a journey. And for every warrior, family member, and caregiver, that journey looks different. We are here for their first step, and each step that follows. We believe that every warrior should have a positive future to look forward to. There's always another goal to achieve, another mission to discover. We are their partner in that mission.

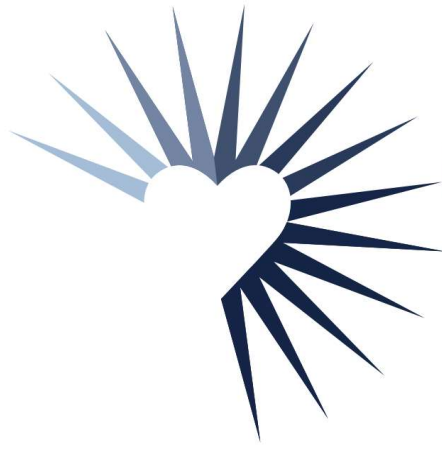
WHO IS A WARRIOR? Veterans and service members who incurred a physical or mental injury, illness, or wound while serving in the military on or after September 11, 2001. You are our focus. You are our mission. Here, you're not a member – you're an alumnus, a valued part of a community that's been where you've been, and understands what you need. Everything we offer is free because there's no dollar value to finding recovery and no limit to what you can achieve.

WHY NOW? More than 52,000 servicemen and women physically injured in recent military conflicts. 500,000 living with invisible wounds, from depression to post-traumatic stress disorder. 320,000 experiencing debilitating brain trauma. Advancements in technology and medicine save lives – but the quality of those lives might be profoundly altered. The numbers speak for themselves, because not every warrior can. With the support of our community of donors and team members, we give a voice to those needs and empower our warriors to begin the journey to recovery.

WWW.WOUNDEDWARRIORPROJECT.ORG



**WOUNDED WARRIOR
PROJECT®**



CHILDREN *of the* NIGHT

CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT NATIONWIDE CASE MANAGEMENT

NO COPS / NO FBI

Confidential Social Services
Rescue from Pimp
Suicide Intervention
Rape Intervention
Drug Overdose Intervention

Anonymous Crime Reports

Housing Referrals for
All Ages & All Circumstances

Medical Services
Mental Health Services
Psychiatric Evaluations /
Psychotropic Medications

Public Health Insurance
Social Security/
Disability Benefits

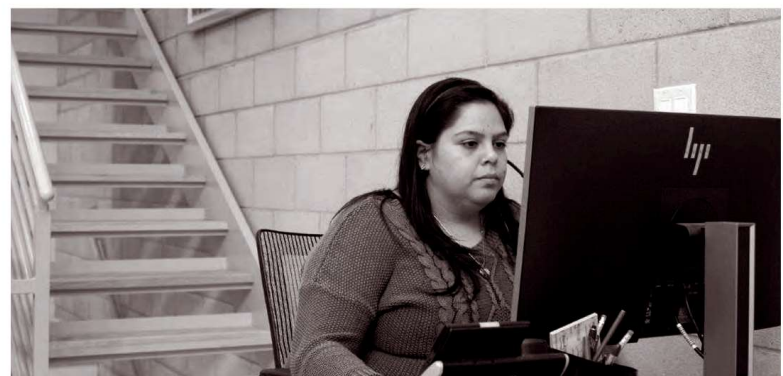
Transportation

Advocacy with Social Workers,
Probation Officers & Courts
Court Accompaniment,
Court Intervention

Resumes
Jobs

Training / Vocational Schools
Community College

FAFSA (Financial Aid for School)



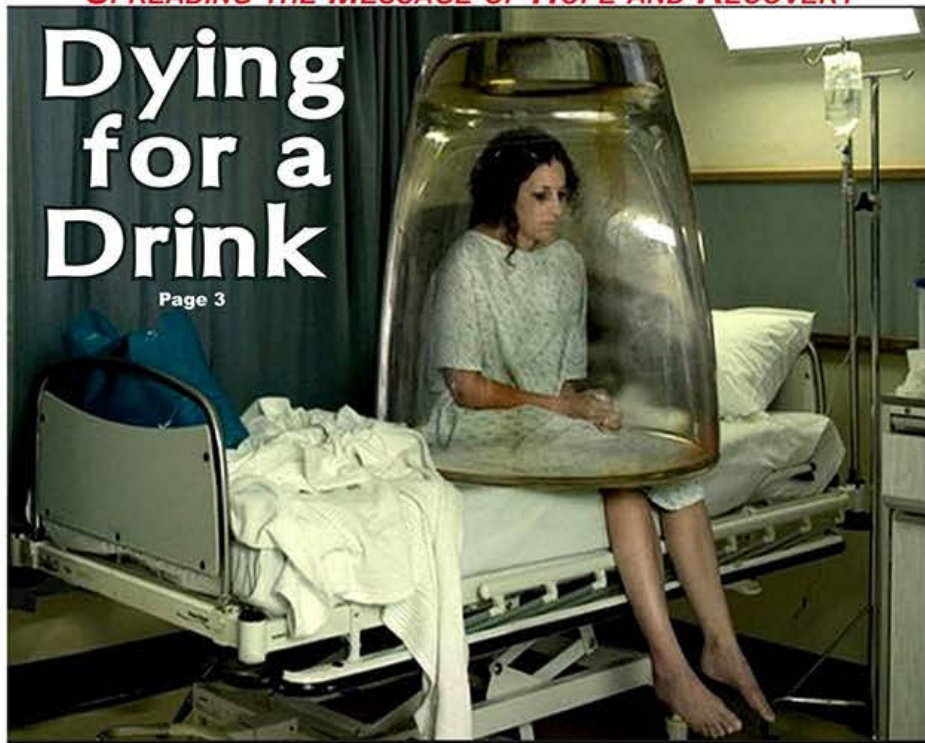
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www.childrenofthenight.org

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October 2014
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Mary Cook

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