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Virtue Revisited

“Freedom works only in a culture already committed to virtue; it cannot work otherwise.” Aristotle

by Mary Lou Logsdon



Freedom is a word we Americans like to bandy about. Freedom to carry guns, to practice our faith, to speak, to assemble, to pursue happiness. Our freedoms are many; any attempts to limit them are met with strong resistance. While we are committed to our freedoms, I wonder if we are committed to our virtues.

Even the word virtue has a quaintness about it, smelling a bit like rosewater as it sits upright on a straight backed chair, drinking tea from a hand-painted cup nestled in its matching saucer. Virtue partners with vice as though on a teeter-totter: more virtue, less vice; more vice, less virtue. In our straight-laced parlor, vice is relegated to the spittoon in the corner, out of sight, left to others to clean up.

I find myself considering virtue as an antidote to election year antics. When I was growing up, adults were encouraged to model good behavior so that kids would learn by example. We would occasionally hear, “Not in front of the children!” Now I see people acting like “naughty” children, seeing who can be meaner, cruder, more antagonistic. When leaders act like children, where do children go for role models? I vote for re-engaging virtue in the national conversation.

Ben Franklin was a proponent of developing and practicing virtues. He saw virtuous behavior as the path to excellence, enumerating virtues he thought would keep him on the right track. He began with 12—the first was temperance, the last chastity. A Quaker friend suggested he also address his pride, especially apparent in his flamboyant conversations. He listened and added humility, expanding his list to 13.

Like Aristotle, Franklin believed that excellence is not an act but a habit. To build his virtue habit, Franklin listed his virtues on a ledger with columns corresponding to days of the week. Each week he would work on a specific virtue, tallying his use of it at day’s end. After 13 weeks he began again at the top of the list. It was his daily inventory.

What virtues might be on my list? Kindness. Patience. Generosity. That would be a good trio to begin. It is not that I think myself unkind, but I wonder how often I really practice kindness – to my family, friends and strangers. I have a dear friend who is a model of kindness. For instance, she has discovered my favorite retro-candy is Dots, the chewy domed primary-color candy I ate at the local movie house during Tarzan matinees. Every once in a while, when I drop by or pick something up or meet for a walk, I find a mini box of Dots in my pocket. I break into a smile. Not because I desperately want the Dots, but because I am so enchanted with her kindness. And I feel seen. Maybe the heart of kindness is seeing and being seen. I would like to build the virtue of kindness.

Aristotle defined virtue as a point between the absence and excess of a trait. He says the place of greatest virtue lies not in the exact middle, but at a golden mean sometimes closer to one extreme than the

other. With regard to kindness, the middle lies somewhere between rudeness and over-indulgence. Generosity lies between miserliness and being profligate, patience between being short tempered and totally available. I see that same golden mean in my own gifts and deficits. While being orderly and organized is a strength, it can tilt toward perfectionism and become obsessive and strangling. Virtue lies somewhere in the middle of extremes.

Aristotle also says that virtue is acting “at the right times, about the right things, towards the right people, for the right end, and in the right way. . . . the intermediate and best condition, and this is proper to virtue.” (Nicomachean Ethics) It takes an inner knowing and a sense of balance to choose how to act now, in this circumstance at this time.

Virtue is more like a principle than a rule or a law. Laws are loaded with “shalt nots.” They feel like fences, walls, barriers. Principles are expansive with elbow room and a sense of spaciousness. Laws are limited and cumbersome as they try to detail all conceivable conditions. Principles look toward possibilities. Laws define the legal good. Principles seek a common good. Peter D.O. Smith in “Virtue Ethics: An ancient solution to a modern problem” says, “A rules based system can only adapt to new circumstances by adding new rules, something that becomes intolerable in the long run.” To move beyond a rules based system we must commit to virtue.

A few more of Benjamin Franklin’s virtues are frugality, sincerity, moderation. Don’t those have a lovely ring to them?

Julia Annas, in *Intelligent Virtue*, explains that virtues are a template for flourishing, in that to become a virtuous person is to become a flourishing person. It is a move away from hedonistic happiness to the prosperity of living well. This is a radical shift from the idea of happiness that depends on outside circumstances or goods, to an inner sense of well-being. Rules are imposed from the outside, virtues are lived out from the inside.

I am drawn to the virtue of restraint. There are many, many places to practice this polite virtue: in conversation, in activity level, in online posts. Restraint offers me the opportunity to listen before I speak—to really listen, to consider how what I am saying or posting might sound to someone who thinks differently from me, to stop to breathe before I add one more thing to my calendar or buy another sweater or eat the rest of the cookies. Restraint might let me check out what I am feeling before I splash it on everyone else.

What might our campaign season look like if it were seasoned with a bit of restraint, humility, temperance, frugality, or moderation? What if we were to curtail our freedom just long enough to grow the virtues that can support it. I think I will commit myself to kindness, patience, generosity and restraint during this election year. What about you?

Mary Lou Logsdon is a spiritual director and retreat leader. She teaches in Sacred Ground’s Spiritual Direction Training Program and can be reached at logsdon.marylou@gmail.com or 651/583-1802.

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From Mozart to Motown Music Reignites Memory

by Eleanor Ann Leonard

"Music is my sanctuary. Music kept me alive." Sir Elton John, in a recent CBS News profile, could have been speaking for all of us. But most of us are more likely to take music for granted because, well, it's just always there.

Natalie Angier, in a February 8, 2016 New York Times article, wrote, "We marry to music, graduate to music, mourn to music." In other words, music is a fundamental part of our lives and has always been, as evidenced by the archaeological finding of carved bone flutes dating back about 40,000 years.

Our immigrant ancestors carried rudimentary instruments with them: pennywhistles, jaw harps, ocarinas, harmonicas. Pioneers made music with whatever was on hand: washboards, whiskey jugs, stovepipes, bones, combs and tissue paper, spoons. Native Americans maintained community with singing accompanied by drums, flutes, rattles and whistles made of animal hides and bones. They all created their own music.



What changed?

Electricity and the phonograph changed everything. With Thomas Edison's 1877 invention we no longer had to be in the same space as the musician. As technology advanced,

boundaries disappeared and today we have access to as much music as we could possibly want, sometimes what we don't want: intrusive music stalks us in restaurants, supermarkets, even public bathrooms. An individual's relationship with music is personal. Yet no matter how steadfastly we



hold to our preferences, music has the power to reach into the psyche and take us by surprise.

A poignant scene in the 1994 movie, *The Shawshank Redemption*, portrays music's transcendent

power. Shawshank Prison inmate Andy (Tim Robbins), having reached a level of trust with the warden, expands the prison library through donations of books and music. Looking through a box of record albums in the warden's office, he pulls out Mozart's opera *The Marriage of Figaro* and places it on the phonograph. He stands as though expecting a miracle. As a soaring lyrical soprano duet fills the room, his body, his face, and his eyes react to the music; he is being transported somewhere outside the prison. He makes a decision: he locks himself into the warden's office and turns on the public address system sending the sopranos out to every corner of the prison.

In the yard, men pause and turn their faces toward an elevated rusty speaker. No one moves. As the singing continues, we hear a voice-over, Andy's fellow-inmate and closest friend, Red (Morgan Freeman): "I have no idea to this day what those two Italian ladies were singing about....I like to think they were singing about something so beautiful it can't be expressed in words and makes your heart ache because of it. I tell you those voices soared higher and farther than anybody in a grey place dares to dream. It was like some beautiful bird flapped into our drab little cage and made those walls dissolve away. And for the briefest of moments, every last man at Shawshank felt free."

That need to feel free even "for the

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Art Exercises Help Boost Self-Esteem

by Katie Oldenburg

Every day, we're bombarded with so many ideas about who we should be and how to look and act that we often lose sight of who we truly are. We all struggle with self-acceptance every once in a while, and need to remind ourselves to love who we've become. Creative Arts Therapist Mallory Denison says art can be therapeutic in helping people to become more compassionate with themselves, and ultimately with others. "People who work on tapping into their true, authentic selves may find themselves happier," she explains. "Connecting inward is an absolutely core exercise for people who want to work on their self-esteem, self-worth, confidence and happiness." Try one — or all! — of these simple art exercises to tap into the inner "you" and freely express who you are without fear of judgment.

1. Tapping Into Your Inner Child

How To Do It: Choose art materials you feel comfortable with. These could be things you used during art class in elementary school (crayons, markers, colored pencils, glue, etc.). Turn on music that you typically listen to when you're in a good mood, and maybe even make an art playlist. Before diving into the project, give yourself the permission to create without judgment — you aren't trying to become the next Picasso; you're just trying to let out your inner child. Spend 20 minutes playing with the materials. Choose a color you like and start making marks on the paper. After 5 minutes, take a step back and see if any images form and focus on that area to highlight it. Once the 20 minutes is up, flip the paper over and write down a description of your piece, what came up for you during the time you worked on it, and how you felt before and after.

Why It Helps: Allowing yourself to 'play' in this exercise will hopefully connect you to the inner child we all have within us. Think about when you were young and were free to imagine and create. There was something carefree about that time and a good reason for that is because we didn't judge ourselves. Giving ourselves the gift of tapping into that inner child can truly open us up to a world where we feel more comfortable with who we are and express that realness, free of judgment.

2. The Project: Vision Board

How To Do It: You will need the following materials: magazines, scissors, glue, a large piece of paper or poster board, a writing utensil and piece of paper. Take some

time to jot down the things that you would like for yourself in the future. Take a look at where you are now and determine what from your current situation would you like to maintain for the future and what you would like to change. Once you've placed yourself in this mindset of focusing on your future goals, flip through magazines and select images/words that represent the goals. If you do not have an idea of what you want for yourself for the future that is okay! You can still do this exercise and get a lot out of it. For those of you who do not have specific goals, spend time flipping through magazines and select images and words that stand out to you. You don't have to understand in the moment why that particular image or word is speaking to you. Begin to compile the images/words on the poster board to create your vision board.

Why It Helps: Just the simple act of taking time out to focus on what you want out of life can relieve some stress. It can allow you to focus on what it is you're longing for, and what it is you feel you need out of life. Creating the vision board can help you to visually focus on your goals. This exercise is based on the law of attraction, which states that we bring into our lives the things we think about the most, and the board is a daily visual reminder of the things we want for ourselves. By seeing these things, we think about them, and if we believe in the law of attraction, this means we're more likely to obtain these things. It is also a really great gauge for your progress by saying "this is where I want to be, so what am I doing right now that will help me to get to these goals, and what am I doing that's hindering me from making these things happen?"

3. The Project: Inner vs. Outer Self Mask Making

How To Do It: Head to a local craft store for supplies. Pick up a couple of blank masks, paint, a glue gun, glue sticks, feathers, beads, flowers, tissue paper, ribbon, and any craft item that appeals to you. Before beginning any project, it is important to focus on what your goals are for the exercise. For this project, you will do this by writing on a piece of paper. Split the paper into 2 columns, one column labeled 'Inner Self' and the other labeled 'Outer Self'. Take some time to think about and write down what characteristics each of these selves has (the inner self is who you are when you are alone, the outer self is what you show to other people in different situations) and what type of emotions these

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Dry in the High Desert

by Emily Roiphe Carter

At the age of 55 one should be running out of "re-boots," the do-overs, the "new starts," the major moves should be done with, and instead one should be beginning to observe what one has made of one's life, using amassed experience in a new way, approaching what's called "wisdom."

Then there's the economy. It's the economy, that implacable arbiter of who gets what and when, that decides when enough is not yet enough, and it's that same economy that's decided that I should move to Gallup, New Mexico for my husband's new job. It's a place that's new to me, a place that lets in strangers slowly, a place surrounded by 200 million-year-old rock formations of jaw-dropping beauty. This is the kind of huge geographical and cultural change I used to make in my twenties, on the



demented reasoning that I would only be an alcoholic where I was, not somewhere else. At 55, that idea seems laughable. Time does bring knowledge, it seems, and knowledge, just like alcoholism or appendicitis, is portable. If you have it in one place, you'll have it another.

The 12 steps, too, are infinitely portable. If I didn't have them with me, I

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Calendar

March, April, and beyond

Women in Recovery

Wednesday, March 23rd author Gloria Englund will discuss *Resilience as a Path to Recovery*. What are the characteristics of a resilient life? How do we discover them and keep them part of our daily experience of recovery? Women in Recovery meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of the month between January and October. Refreshments and fellowship begin at 6:30pm, followed by programming at 7pm. For additional information, directions, and a list of past and future speakers please visit <http://www.theretreat.org/women-in-recovery> or call The Retreat at 952-476-0566.

Conscious Living Expo

April 2, 10am – 5pm

Admission is free and will include 30+ exhibitors, workshops and demonstrations in the areas of alternative health, nutrition, wellness, sustainability, green products, alternative energy and more. Plug-in Connect Electric Car Club will be exhibiting electric cars including a Tesla. Free Chino Books to the first 100 attendees. Café Racer Food Truck. Tempeh Tantrum samplings. Lots of give-a-ways and exciting raffle prizes. Lake Harriet Spiritual Community 4401 Upton Avenue South, Minneapolis, 55410.

A Night with Janis Joplin

Ordway Center for the Performing Arts
Mar 29 - Apr 3

Like a comet that burns far too brightly to last, Janis Joplin exploded onto the music scene in 1967 and became the queen of rock & roll. Share an evening with the woman and her influences in the new musical, A NIGHT WITH JANIS JOPLIN, featuring such unforgettable songs as "Piece of My Heart," "Mercedes Benz," and "Cry Baby." Ordway Center for the Performing Arts at 345 Washington St., St. Paul, MN. Phone 651-224-4222 or <http://www.ordway.org/night-janis-joplin/>

Spring Festival:

An Arts and Crafts Affair
Friday through Sunday April 8, 9, 10

Over 400 of the nation's top arts-and-crafters gather at Canterbury Park in Shakopee. Unique hand-crafted treasures, gourmet food, entertainment and family fun. Advance tickets available at www.hpifestivals.com or at the event. \$9/adult \$8 senior, under 10 free. See ad below for coupon and hours.

Minnesota Twins Home Opener

Target Field
April 9

The Minnesota Twins officially start their season at Target Field against the Angels on April 9! Come experience baseball at the best sports stadium in North America.

The First Annual

Stevie Ray Vaughan Tribute Show

April 17, 4-8pm at the MN Music Café
Featuring: Ken Valdez, The Groove Merchants, Crooked Dice, Jimi Primetime Smith, Brian Naughton, Ross William Perry, Cole Allen, Alex Rossi, Joyann Parker from Sweet Tea, Joey Flip and many more special guests! Tickets \$10 each, open to all ages. Go to www.CrookedDice.org to purchase tickets and get free music from Crooked Dice! MN Music Café, 499 Payne Ave, St Paul, MN 55130. Free Parking, (651) 776-4699

Gopher State Roundup:

Acceptance Is The Key
May 27 – 29, 2016

An occasion to share the fellowship and to carry the message of AA; with Al-Anon and Alateen participation. XLIII Annual Roundup! <http://www.gopherstateroundup.org/>

Minneapolis-Saint Paul

International Film Festival
St. Anthony Main Theaters
April 12-May 3

The Minneapolis St. Paul International Film Festival is the most ambitious and best attended film event in the Upper Midwest. Over its three-week run, the Festival presents an exciting and diverse slate of some 300 narrative, documentary and short films from over 60 countries, hosts many visiting filmmakers to introduce and discuss their works, and includes an array of events, panels, discussions, and parties. The Festival takes place on the five screens of the St. Anthony Main Theatre, set along the banks of the Mississippi River in downtown Minneapolis.

Exploring 12 Step Spirituality: Second Sunday monthly through May - Explore centering prayer meditation and deepen your practice of Step 11. 9am – noon at the Colonial Church of Edina, Fireside Room, 6200 Colonial Way, 55436. Sessions include: Centering Prayer Instruction, Two 20 Minute Sessions of Silence, and reading from the Big Book. Presenters share personal experiences; Group Discussions. Free will offering of \$10/session for rent, snacks, printing, coffee is appreciated.

The Dan Anderson Renewal Center, Hazelden, Center City, MN. 12-Step-inspired weekend retreats focus on some of the common issues faced in recovery: forgiveness, practical spirituality, healthy relationships, grief, and loss.
Apr 1 - 3; Growing Your Recovery through Art and Words
Apr 8 - 10; Releasing Resentments,

Finding Forgiveness

Apr 14 - 17; Shoemaker Alumni Reunion
Apr 22 - 24; Embracing Healthy Sexuality in Recovery

Ongoing

Overeaters Anonymous

Monday 10-11am 3rd floor, handicapped accessible. Minnehaha United Methodist Church, 3701 50th St. Mpls, 55407. For more info call Ana 651-592-7510

Basilica of St. Mary Lecture Series

based on the book Being Sober and Becoming Happy by Dr. John A. MacDougall. All lectures at 6:30pm at the Great Hall, top floor of Basilica School, north of the Basilica on W. Laurel Avenue. The Basilica is located at Hennepin Ave. and North 17th Street in Minneapolis.
Tues. Apr. 12: Hope
Thurs. Apr. 14: Finding Joy in Life
Tues. May 10: Becoming Happy
John MacDougall is the Spiritual Care Coordinator at The Retreat, in Wayzata. All lectures are free; no need to sign up.


Hazelden's Second Sunday Retreats

The second Sunday of each month everyone in recovery is invited to Hazelden in Center City, MN for an inspirational day of workshops, fellowship, sharing and fun. Second Sunday is open to anyone 18 years or older involved in a 12-Step program. Cost is \$20/person and the day includes a buffet lunch and information packet.
9 a.m. - Register at the Cork Center
9 a.m. - Introductions and orientation
10-11 a.m. - Lecture
10:30 -12:45 - Small group discussions
12:45 - 1:30 p.m. - Sunday buffet
1:45 p.m. - Small group discussions or Meditation group
2:55 p.m. - Relaxation group
For information call 800-257-7810.
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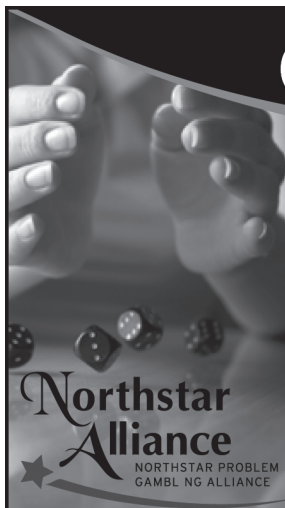
Pancake Breakfast: 3rd Sunday of each month, 10am-12:30pm; The Recovery Church, 253 State Street, St. Paul, MN, www.therecoverychurch.org. Pancakes, sausage, juice and coffee (free refills on pancakes and coffee). \$5 per person/10 and under \$2.50 at the door (No one turned away due to lack of funds!)

The Recovery Church offers worship services Sun. at 9 & 11am., 253 State St., St. Paul, 55107. Fellowship between services. Devoted to expanding spirituality & the 12-Step experience. All invited. 651-291-1371 or www.therecoverychurch.org.

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Happily Ever Now: Four Ways To Be In Love In The Present Moment

By Jennifer Grace

We all know that Happily Ever After doesn't always pan out. Cinderella and Prince Match.com don't always ride off into the sunset, and well, that doesn't mean it was a complete failure after all.

Many times people come into our lives for a moment of time to help us grow and expand; then their duty is done.

Unfortunately we often get so caught up in obsessive future planning of the "what if's" and the "might be's", that we miss the magic of the moment. Which essentially is all that really exists.

What about this...Happily Ever Now.

Being present with your partner.

Dropping all of the wondering and worrying about if this relationship will or will not last, and instead appreciating the fact that the person is actually here, now, standing right smack in front of us.

The art of being in love in the present moment, takes a bit of cultivation, a slowing down, and it takes mindfulness.

Here are 4 powerful ways to get your relationship back to the here and now.

Pinch Yourself: Be grateful that in this moment you are together, notice who they

are and how they contribute to your life. Take time to appreciate their strengths, their flaws, their attractive qualities, and their shortcomings.

Let it Happen: If you have just met, allow your love story to organically tell itself. Stop trying to force the relationship into the next level without enjoying the stage you are in together now.

Avoid Social Media: When your partner is trying to connect with you...limit your attention to social media. Leave the phone in the car during date night; shut the computer down when the sun goes down so that you can be present and available for some evening magic!

Be Authentic: Take time to authentically communicate with your partner about how you feel, especially when something is on your mind. Take a risk and allow yourself to be vulnerable by communicating without blame or judgment, your true needs and wants.

Happily Ever Now is a quite a magical place to be by simply being present and learning to relax about the future. Fairytales can and do come true, but who wants to get to "The End" that fast anyway!

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The opinions and facts presented in this publication are intended to be diverse and represent those of the writers and/or contributors, and are not necessarily those of The Phoenix. We seek writers and interview subjects who are willing to gift you with their honestly held convictions and insights. We seek to attract advertisers who offer products and services of integrity. But we urge our readers to research, and trust their instincts.

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Dry in the High Desert from page 1

would have found this whole relocation full of exactly the kind of stresses and temptations that would have, in former time, lead to a big ol' life-maiming relapse. No one knows me here. I can be anyone I want. I could be someone who could take a social drink now and again, for all anyone here knows. I could say to myself, "there are large dry areas here on the Navajo owned lands and the nearby Zuni pueblo especially, but that's for "real" drunks — those poor Native folks must have different metabolisms or something and the white man's poison works faster on them. Me, I'm from European stock, my Scotch Irish ancestors practically invented the stuff. In fact, it's part of my cultural duty to take a quick nip now and again (never mind that my dominant half is Jewish). "Cunning baffling powerful" says the big book of Alcoholism, but it forgot to mention "patient." The hamster in the dark room of my brain hasn't stopped running on its sharp-spoked little wheel, not for a second.

And yet there are also a thousand reasons not to drink today. First off is the idea of time. There is so much of it in evidence. The mesas are so ancient and calm that the idea of drinking because you had a bad day becomes a bit ludicrous. Then there is the idea of my real culture—not the one I make up when I want to justify a yen for Scotch Whiskey. It's a culture made up of the common sense and trust of the 12 steps, as well as the eagle eye for self delusion instilled in me by my rationalist father.

Housing is not easy to find here, and I can't drive, so I spend a lot of time stuck in our hand "motel-suite" off of route 66 waiting for my husband to come home and walking our dog past what seems to be the only liquor store for miles. This isn't great. On the other hand one of my husband's co-workers invited us to her pueblo for the night dances, and told us "welcome to New Mexico!" and were generally more hospitable to us in one evening than anyone had been in the past eight years we'd spent in New England. The dances show how to be yourself no matter how much the world around you changes, and the songs show what stories are part of you no matter what other stories the world wants to tell.

This is land where the geology is evident: the high desert, where you live at an elevation that makes the stars seem closer. It's got something to say, I tell myself, but I won't hear it if I lose hold of the 12 steps I have walked on until now. They've kept me from getting lost in far more confusing and cluttered landscapes. I'll trust them now. Those stars have never steered me wrong.

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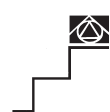
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MONDAYS

Overeaters Anonymous: Monday mornings, 10-11am. 3rd floor, handicapped accessible. Minnehaha United Methodist Church 3701 50th St Mpls 55407. For more info call Ana 651-592-7510

Understanding Eating Disorders, Treatment, and Recovery: Second Monday of each month, 6-8:30 p.m. The Emily Program staff provides answers to common questions and concerns of families and friends “new” to eating disorders, treatment and recovery. 2265 Como Ave, St. Paul, 55108. Free, drop in. Visit www.emily-program.com or call 651.645.5323.

Buddhism and 12 Steps at Mind Roads Meditation Center in St. Paul near St. Catherine’s College, St. Thomas University and Snuffy’s Malt Shop @ 2046 St. Clair Avenue (Cleveland Ave. is the crossroad) 7.8:15pm. meditation and one step/ month. Ongoing. Open to all. Visit www.mindroads.com.

Eating Disorders Anonymous: second and fourth Monday of every month, 6.7:30pm in Little Falls at St Gabriel Hospital in the Rose Room, 3rd. St. entrance. JoAnn at 320.232.9576, or edalittlefalls@hotmail.com

Friends and Families of Suicide: a place of support and comfort where those that have lost a loved one to suicide will be comfortable talking about their own loss as well as hearing about the losses of others. Meets the 3rd Monday of every month 7-9pm, Twin Cities Friends Meeting, 1725 Grand Ave., St Paul, 55105. For info email ffosmn@yahoo.com or call Tracy @ 651.587.8006.

Debtors Anonymous: a group of men and women who use the 12-Step program to solve problems with debt and other money issues.; www.daminnnesota.org 952-953-8438. Monday, 7-8:30 p.m., St. Mary’s Greek Orthodox Church, 3450 Irving Ave. S., Mpls, 55408. (from the south parking lot use the door next to the flag)

Bloomington Codependents Anonymous: 7p.m., men&women at Unity South Church, corner of 1st Ave. and American Blvd. For more info go to: <http://www.unitysouth.org/calendar.aspx> or call 952.469.3303

Support group for married and divorced fathers. Parenting, partnering, and anger management issues. Mondays, 7 to 9 p.m. in Hopkins. Call Kip 763.783.4938.

Nicotine Anonymous: 7-8pm, 1655 Beam Ave. Maplewood. Maplewood Professional Bldg. St Johns Watson Education Center, 2nd Floor, #20, Room 4. 952.404.1488 or 800.234.81MN.

Eating Disorders Anonymous: St. Paul, MN, Mondays @ 6:45:7:30 PM at Hamline Midway Library, 1558 W. Minnehaha Ave., St. Paul, MN 55104. Venita Johnson 612.964.2387 or eda.diverse@gmail.com for more information.

TUESDAYS

Families Anonymous (FA): First and third Tuesday evening of each month, 7pm. Support group for families and friends of those dealing with drug, alcohol or other behavioral issues. Is someone you love destroying family harmony by using drugs or alcohol? Free help exists! Join us at St. Timothy Lutheran Church: 1465 N. Victoria Street, St. Paul, MN 55117, or contact Dave E: 612-701-5575.

Debtors Anonymous: a group of men and women who use the 12-Step program to solve problems with debt and other money issues.; www.daminnnesota.org 952-953-8438. Tues, 7-8 p.m., Dayton Ave. Presbyterian Church, 217 Mackubin St., St. Paul, 55102. (1 block n. of Selby and 2 blocks e. of Dale. Meets in the parlor.

Recovery International Meeting at Mary Mother of the Church, 3333 Cliff Road,

Burnsville, rm 9 at 3pm. It is a proven self help method to deal with mental illness including depression, anxiety, anger, mood disorders and fears using cognitive behavior therapy. Contact Rita at 952-890-7623.

Emotions Anonymous - For those dealing with emotional stress, depression, etc. 7:30pm at Christ the King Lutheran Church, Room 106, 8600 Fremont Ave., Bloomington. Take Penn Ave. south to 86th. Turn left and go to Fremont, just east of 35W. Brian at 952-888-6029.

Nicotine Anonymous: 7-8pm at St. Columbia Church/School, 1330 Blair Ave., St. Paul, 55104. Sherry for more info at 651-644-8682.

Overeaters Anonymous Roseville: Meetings are held from 9:45 – 10:45 a.m. at St. Christopher’s Episcopal Church, 2300 N. Hamline Ave., Roseville, Room 218 Call Janie 651.639.4246 for more info.

A.C.A., 5:30-7 p.m., Dakota Alano House, 3920 Rahn Rd, Eagan (Hwy 13 & Cedarvale Shop Ctr). 651.452.2921.www.dasinc.org/

A.C.A. 7pm, Saint Michael’s Lutheran Church 1660 W City Rd B (at Fry). Roseville. Open to all. Step and Traditions meeting.

Get a Fresh Start! 12-Step AA group, open meeting Tues., 7pm, at Kingswill Church, 1264 109th Ave NE, Blaine. Denny, 763.757.6512.

Eating Disorders Anonymous: 6:30-7:30pm, Zimmerman Evangelical Church, 25620 4th St. W, Zimmerman, 55398. Jodi A.: 763.244.6803 or eda.zimmerman@gmail.com for more info.

WEDNESDAYS

Eating Disorders Family & Friends Support Group: Open to the public, 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month, 5:45 p.m. – 7:15 p.m. at The Emily Program, 2265 Como Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55108. 8.5

Overeaters Anonymous: St. Paul Midway: Wednesdays 7–8 PM, Hamline United Methodist Church. Two blocks east of Snelling & Minnehaha. Park in south parking lot, use south entrance to education building. Press buzzer. For more info contact Susan at 651.295.7854.

Adult Children of Alcoholics: Wednesdays @ 7 pm. St. Mary’s Episcopal Church, 1895 Laurel Ave, St. Paul. Meets downstairs, sign in the lobby. For more information call Mary at 612.747.0709.

Transitions: 7:30:9:30p.m. Support to men and women who are transitioning from incarceration to living in the community. Trained facilitators and peers provide emotional support in a safe, openly honest environment to discuss discouragements, frustrations, temptations. One of the trained facilitators is a woman. The Men’s Center, 3249 Hennepin Ave. S. Minneapolis, 612.822.5892. tcmc@freenet.msp.mn.us

Women’s CoDA Group: Women’s Only Co.Dependents Anonymous Group. Meets every Wednesday at noon at Colonial Church of Edina, 6200 Colonial Way (Fireside room, S. end of bldng). For more information, call Valerie at 612.741.5281

Workaholics Anonymous: for people who are chronically preoccupied with work. Meets every Wedn. 12–1pm in the east bldng at Fairview Riverside Hospital, 2450 Riverside Ave. Mpls. Take elevator inside main hospital entrance to level B, follow signs to east building and dining room E. - 952.985.1368.

Marijuana Anonymous, Bloomington, 6-7 pm, Minnesota Valley Unitarian Universalist Church 10715 Zenith Ave S. (2 Blocks south of Old Shakopee Rd, on the East side of Zenith) Contact: bloomingtonma@hotmail.com

AA Meeting: 6:30 – 8:30pm St. Christopher’s Episcopal Church, 2300 N. Hamline Ave., Roseville. Call 651.639.4246 for more info.

Atheist/Agnostic Alcoholics Anonymous, 3249 Hennepin Ave S., #55 (Men’s Center,

in the basement) Mpls, 7 . 8 pm., Open to Men and Women. For more info write tcAgnostic@gmail.com

THURSDAYS

Downtown women only non-smoking Alanon Step Group. Noon, 2nd floor First Baptist Church on 10th St. and Harmon Place. Parking and entry in back. Ring office buzzer for entry. Andrea, 612-868-9982.

Red Book ACA/ACOA: Recovery Church, 253 State, St. Paul, 7:30-9pm. For more info call Deb @ 651.291.1371 or Bruce at 651.407.6336.

Recovery International Meeting, St Phillip Lutheran Church, 6180 Highway 65 N, Fridley at 7pm. It is a proven self help method to deal with mental illness including depression, anxiety, anger, mood disorders and fears using cognitive behavior Therapy. Ken, 763-571-5199.

CoDA Group: Co-Dependents Anonymous 12-Step Support. 6-7:30pm at Unity North Church, 11499 Martin Street NW., Coon Rapids, MN 55433. SW corner of US Hwy 10 and Hanson Blvd. Call Chris @ 763.438.3583 for more info. Also check www.coda.org

Adults with ADHD Support Groups: (first time free) Every Thursday morning 10am . noon and every Thursday evening (except last Thurs of the month) 7pm 8:30pm. LDA Minnesota, 6100 Golden Valley Road, Golden Valley, MN 55422. Tel. 952.922.8374 or www.ldaminnnesota.org

Eating Disorders Family & Friends Support Group: Open to the public, 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month from 5:45 p.m. – 7:15 p.m. at The Emily Program, 5354 Parkdale Drive, 2nd Floor, St. Louis Park, 55416.

A.C.A.: 6:30pm Prince of Peace Lutheran Church 200 Nicollet Blvd #E Burnsville. Step meeting, open to all.

FRIDAYS

Recovery International Meeting at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 4100 Lyndale Ave S., Mpls at 7pm. It is a proven self help method to deal with mental illness including depression, anxiety, anger, mood disorders and fears using cognitive behavior therapy. Ruth 612-825-4779

Eating Disorders Anonymous: 5:45-6:45pm, Grace University Lutheran Church, 324 Harvard St SE, Mpls on U of M East Bank Campus. Free parking in Lot AA across street. Open. edaminnneapolis@gmail.com, 612.305.8367

Women’s AA Meeting. TGIF Meeting. 6:15 pm at Epworth United Methodist Church, 3207 37th Ave. S., Mpls. Handicapped accessible. Meeting consists of lesbian, bi, and straight women, many of whom have maintained long term sobriety. Chris A. 612.722.1936.

SATURDAYS

Spenders Anonymous: Our purpose is to stop spending compulsively and work toward serenity in our relationship with money. 1-2 pm at Bethany Lutheran Church, 2511 East Franklin Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55406; street parking or in the church lot; enter through the gate on Franklin and ring the bell; <http://www.spenders.org>

Northeast Minneapolis CoDependents Anonymous (CoDA) Group: East Side Neighborhood Services, 1700 2nd Street NE, Minneapolis, MN 55413 (corner of 2nd Street NE & 17th Avenue NE). Park in lot behind building and use rear entry door. Saturdays: 1-2pm. For more information contact Ralph W. at rwwink@aol.com or 612-382-0674.

CoDA Group: Shoreview, Shepherd of the Hills, 3920 North Victoria Street, 1 blk north of 694. Please enter from the back/north side of building off of Gramsie. Door “G”. Follow signs to room #265. 9-10am. Dana, Shoreviewcoda@gmail

Overeaters Anonymous Newcomer Meeting: Third Saturday of the month,

1pm.2pm. Sumner Library, 611 Van White Memorial Blvd., Mpls, 55411. For more info contact Allison @ 612.499.0280, Gene @ 952.835.0789 or visit www.overeaters.org.

Overeaters Anonymous Courage to Change Meeting: Saturday mornings 8-9a.m. at St Christopher’s Episcopal Church, 2300 Hamline Ave N. Roseville. Contact Donna with questions at 651.633.3144.

Clutterer’s Anonymous: St. Christopher’s Episcopal Church, 2300 N. Hamline Ave., (Hwy 36) room 220, Roseville. 12 step support group meets the first, third and fifth Sat. of the month, 10–11:15am. www.clutterersanonymous.net

Debtors Anonymous: a group of men and women using the 12-Steps to solve problems with debt and other money issues.; www.daminnnesota.org 952-953-8438. 9-10am, Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church, 4120 17th Ave. S., Mpls, 55407 (meeting rooms 7 & 8. Enter sliding glass door facing parking lot.)

Guided Himalayan Meditation: Step 11: Learn to relax, learn to control your thinking and emotions, improve your sleep, acquire peace, serenity, improve ADD and PTSD. For people in recovery. \$1. New Brighton Alano. 2284, County Rd I, Mounds View. Saturdays, 9:29.10:29. Call Roger @ 763.350.0629

Overeater’s Anonymous: 8.9 a.m., Falcon Heights Community Church, 1795 Holton Street, Falcon Hgts. Lisa 651.428.3484.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder Support Group: 1st and 3rd Sat. of the month, 11am -1pm Central Community Center, 6300 Walker St., rm. 215, St. Louis Park, MN. Call Burt at 612.722.1504.

Choosing Healthy Sexual Boundaries, Saturdays 10am-noon. Concerns about your sexual behavior? Receiving negative feedback about your sexual choices? Safe, non. confrontational, non.judgemental place to talk with other men re healthy sexual boundaries. The Men’s Center, 3249 Hennepin Ave. S., Mpls, 612-822.-892.

Adult Children of Alcoholics & Dysfunctional Families: Saturday, 10a.m., ACA Club Fridley, Moon Plaza, Boardroom in the lower level of Unity Hospital, 550 Osborne Road, Fridley. Please see www.acafridley.com for additional information.

Men’s & Women’s Support Group: Meetings every Saturday (including holidays) at 8:30a.m. Prince of Peace Church, 7217 W. Broadway, Brooklyn Park. (north entrance.) Informal, safe place to share experiences of joy and concerns. We promote growth & positive change to meet the challenges of our lives. Call 763.443.4290.

Debtors Anonymous: Using the 12-Steps to solve problems with debt and other money issues.; www.daminnnesota.org 952-953-8438. 10:30-noon, Wooddale Church, 6630 Shady Oak Rd., Eden Prairie, 55344. (enter front door #1, lower level rm. 147)

South Side Men’s Group: Saturdays, 8:20 to 10 a.m. Support for men working toward positive personal change. Creekside Community Center, 9801 Penn Ave. S. Bloomington. Visit www.southsidemensgroup.org.

SUNDAYS

Double Winners Anonymous. A closed meeting of alcoholic women who combine recovery with Alanon. 5:30pm. Wesley Rm, Lake Harriet United Methodist Church, 4901 Chowen Ave. S., Mpls. Take doors from pkng lot and turn left down the hall. LeeAnn J at 763.234.1054 or Margaret K at 612.823.8279.

Big Red Book ACA, 11:15am at the Cavalier Club, 6123 Wooddale Ave., Edina, MN 55424. Call Therese S. at 952.927.6761 for more info.

Eating Disorders Anonymous: 5-6:30pm in Eden Prairie at Wooddale Church, 6630 Shady Oak Road, 55344. Room 291. Contact Nikki: nikkihaven@gmail.com or call 612.227.4079.

Art Therapy – Top 10 Benefits

by Joan French

In my therapy practice I treat clients of all ages who enter treatment for a number of different reasons. I consider my general approach to be Experiential, employing a broad range of interventions. As part of my offerings – I include art therapy. Many clients I encounter haven't heard of it, and are unfamiliar as to how it might be able to help. I felt it was important to highlight the benefits of using art in therapy, so I've composed this, 'Art Therapy – Top 10 Benefits' list:

1. Art Therapy can provide a forum to express strengths and genuineness.
2. Through viewing one's own creation – one can improve the skill of self-observation.
3. What cannot be said with words – may be more easily expressed through the art.
4. Metaphors and stories emerge through the art – which can provide a 'voice' for material which may be difficult to express.

5. Art Therapy is active & physical, fun, and stimulating.
6. Emotions and art are closely connected; making art can aid in uplifting one's mood.
7. Making art activates the whole brain and can foster integration of emotional, cognitive, and sensory processes.
8. Emerging and recurrent symbols expressed in the art can help to make unconscious material conscious.
9. Art can make the hidden – visible in an external & tangible way.
10. Art making provides an experience which is stress & anxiety reducing, relaxing, and decreases worry.

If you are interested in finding out more information about Art Therapy, please visit the American Art Therapy Association and Art Therapy Blog websites.

Sobriety Travel Plan: Don't Leave Home Without It

By M. Keith Dennis

As I prepared for my first Spring get-away since becoming a recovering alcoholic, I accepted that I can't do the things I did before or stay in the type of places that appealed to me when I was drinking. Regardless of where I was going I had to build my sobriety into my travel plans; I realized that I needed to take steps to ensure a sobriety-and-travel mix.

Fundamentally, I believe it's possible to vacation and have fun just as I did when drinking. Sure, there will be temptations and cravings that go beyond the normal



"No Thank You" at each situation I anticipated an encounter with alcohol.

Page 'friends of Bill W' for help: I was reminded that there is help available among fellow travelers if I get the urge by having the

airport personnel page 'friends of Bill W', which informs all AA or NA members within the sound of the announcement that a fellow alcoholic is in need of immediate support. The announcement can ask that people meet at a particular gate or place in the airport that is easy to find.

Stick to daily plan: My sponsor also suggested I have a daily plan to avoid dead time by planning activities and events to attend to stay busy. Obviously, the goal is to minimize the places where alcohol is available. I also carried a copy of the list of AA meetings in the area and packed my Big Book and other reading material for my daily meditations.

Stay connected: Another helpful recommendation was to extend my cell phone call plan for the country I was visiting so I could stay connected with my sponsor. I know it's not if but when I need to call someone during times of temptations.

Because the hotel I stayed at had a bar I took the initiative to tell the bartender and hotel staff that I didn't drink, I was a recovering alcoholic, to prevent me from acting on the impulse to experiment. This felt proactive and empowering.

Admittedly, no strategy is fool proof in preventing a relapse but having a plan increased the chances that I would return home from my trip as I left — clean.



stress of traveling. But what might those temptations be? What might come up for me along the journey that I'm not expecting? Just like having a travel plan for the trip that includes flights, accommodations, and what to do when I'm there, I wanted to have a vacation sobriety plan. Here are the key ingredients of my travel plan:

Visualize Trip: It started before I left home. My sponsor suggested I take time to imagine every aspect of my trip - from waiting to board my plane, handling the temptations from the bars at the airport, drinks available on the plane and lastly, maintaining my daily routines to stay busy. Then I mentally practiced saying

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QUOTE

Sometime we feel that if everything isn't perfect, we cannot be grateful for anything. We easily fall into all-or-nothing thinking. When we do, we miss the sunrise and the other forms of goodness that surround us."

Anne Wilson Schaefer

12
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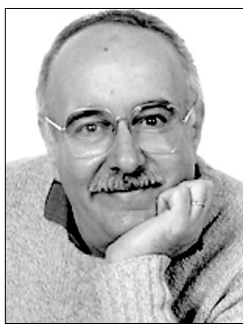
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I was raised with the philosophy that the land is a gift to be cared for and nourished before it is passed on to the next generation. It is a relationship where there is communication and kinship. It is with joy and good, honest sweat that we work these fields to produce the most nutritious and flavor filled vegetables and fruits that you can find. -Norm the Farmer

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by John Driggs, LICSW

Most of us don't think about our circumstances. We are like fish swimming in a body of water that is getting ever more poisonous. We don't see how sick we are becoming simply due to the toxicity of the water. We adapt to living with environmental hazards and minimize toxicity. After all, other fish swim in the same waters we swim in. When we eventually do get sick we blame or pathologize ourselves and don't see the option of jumping to another pond. Few of us take seriously the harmful aspects of our culture and how we are poisoned by our culture. Few of us see the option of being involved in a healthier culture and living a more satisfying life. As the quote above points out, we are our circumstances.

Make no mistake, there are many harmful aspects of our culture and its toxins seem to be getting worse. Most of us are aware of this reality at some level by tuning in the evening news but we choose to tune it out. We mistakenly believe that we are not harmed by what doesn't directly affect us. We believe that somehow living

Cultural Savvy

Staying Healthy in an Often Unhealthy Culture

in the greatest nation on earth means we are above harm. Just the opposite is true. Our nation ranks near the bottom of all international family health standards and we pay considerably more for health care than most developed countries do. We are even getting less healthy. Suicide rates for teens have more than quadrupled over the last thirty years, rates of narcissism and social phobia among our electronically adept college kids are considerably increased

possible to become cultural savvy and involved in a healthier culture. Studies show that being in a culture with higher social involvement brings higher degrees of happiness and well-being. For example, being active in a well-functioning 12-Step group can literally save our life. Working for a company that is family-friendly and has good employee benefits can vastly affect our life satisfaction and well-being. Getting socially involved in our communities

work in another context. Being culturally savvy means knowing what the rules are for our cohort group, knowing how these rules personally affect us and knowing what our options are if we choose to not follow the rules. Such awareness doesn't come from the outside; it comes from within by knowing and reflecting on our hearts and the hearts of our loved ones. It is not driven by social media or peer pressure; it is driven by an inner sense of who

“I am me plus my context.

If I cannot change my context, I cannot change me.”

— Ortega y Gasset, Political Philosopher (1883-1955)

since the electronic age began and social distrust indexes in the age of mass shootings has vastly skyrocketed. It's not that there are more bad people in our country; it's just that many of us are blind to how culture affects us and we don't think to embrace healthier ways of relating to one another.

We don't have to be blind. It's very

and neighborhoods can significantly improve our health and relationships. Even having a group of close personal friends can cushion us from the hard knocks of life and promote longevity. Meeting with friends once every three weeks has the same health benefits as quitting smoking; we are social creatures and our context very much determines our health and happiness. In fact, having a positive context can allow us to thrive and overcome the most adverse aspects of our culture. Let's consider being cultural savvy and choosing a healthier context to live in.

What does it mean to be “culturally savvy?”


Culture is an assumed pattern of ways people in a group ought to relate to each other. We all live in many different cultural groups at the same time. People in one group may have quite entirely different rules than people in another group. Our work environments vary from person to person just as our family systems do. What works in one context does not necessarily

we are and what we want out of life.

Often such savvy may prompts us to live outside the norms of customary culture, sometimes referred to as living in a counter culture. Choosing to live differently needs to be a continuing process of reexamination and correction as fluidity and honest self-examination are the hallmarks of cultural savvy. When we are culturally savvy our relationships are way more important than our external success. And yet, it's important to note that being culturally savvy doesn't mean that we are always right.

What are examples of culturally savvy in action? Some of us parents may decide that our children playing sports in traveling athletic teams is too much pressure on our kids and too much of a loss of quiet family time together. Instead we might decide to informally play more sports at a community center and have more family dinners together. Some college students may choose to go to less expensive schools and select careers in fields that provide jobs with more personal meaning and perhaps less financial reward. Such kids may choose to work in public service jobs of their own creation than work endless hours away from their families chasing the “good life.” Some families may choose to spend less time

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Women in Recovery offer Connection

Their backgrounds are unique, their stories vary and their recovery programs may differ, but they are all women in recovery that come together to heal, transform and most importantly to connect.

Women in Recovery (WIR) is a monthly speaker series held on the fourth Wednesday of the month at The Retreat in Wayzata. Their mission is to create a caring community that provides education, spiritual insight, and growth opportunities for women in all 12-Step recovery programs.

Each month, WIR gathers to learn and grow around issues of universal concern to women in all forms of recovery. From relationships to health and wellness, from finances to dating and sexuality, speakers look to cover topics that expand and deepen the personal healing and transformation we all seek.

By providing an opportunity for women in recovery to connect with each other and build relationships, WIR nurtures, renews or transforms not only personal programs — but lives. WIR invites more women to join them as their journey into the Great Reality continues, “healing our pasts and blessing our futures.”

On Wednesday, March 23rd author Gloria Englund will share her insights about *Resilience as a Path to Recovery*. What are the characteristics of a resilient life? How do we discover them and keep them part of our daily experience of recovery? Gloria will address what self-care practices can help you discover and preserve the factors of a resilient life: balance, meaningful connections and joy.

Women in Recovery meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of the month between January and October. Refreshments and fellowship begin at 6:30pm, followed by programming at 7pm.

For additional information, directions, and a list of past and future speakers please visit www.theretreat.org/women-in-recovery or call The Retreat at 952-476-0566. Women in Recovery is sponsored by The Retreat — a community based recovery program grounded in the spiritual principles of Alcoholics Anonymous and located in Wayzata, MN.

cultural savvy from page 4

on electronic media and balance that time with more real-life, face-to-face interactions with friends and community. Some parents may choose to watch less televised sports on TV and instead play more sports on their own, take more nature walks, involve family in church volunteer projects or creative activities like music lessons, art projects and baking cookies for the neighborhood elderly. Such community involvement may allow for occasional splurges like a family Super Bowl party, where old friends reunite. Being countercultural makes us more aware overall and teaches us to be balanced and less addictive with our life choices. In fact, when we use cultural savvy to live a counter cultural life our overall life satisfaction vastly increases. Typically, kids will prefer to do some fun real-world activity with parents and peers than stare at a computer screen or TV monitor.

Why are some of us blind when it comes to culture?

Most of us don't want to see what we unconsciously don't want to see. Conforming to culture feels comfortable because it gives us an artificial way to fit in, even when the fitting in means we are doing something mindless and unhealthy. We get nervous when it comes to bucking the crowd, particularly when our kids demand that we do what everybody else is doing. Understandably so, kids don't like to be the odd person out when it comes to their peers. But parents often allow their kids to control their own parenting choices. It can take a lot of courage for parents to stand up for what they believe in when it comes to guiding their children and teaching them to occasionally buck the crowd if it's done for good reason. In fact it can take real backbone for parents to withstand the wrath of their kids after they announce

Our children often love us the most when we are telling them what they don't want to hear.

that no cell phones will be allowed at the dinner table. Sometimes parents themselves are reluctant to give up the gadgets. This dilemma is especially true for parents who get sucked up into raising the kids as part of a popularity contest. Some of us choose the familiarity of known misery to the unfamiliarity of making healthy choices and we remain blind to culture. Unfortunately our blindness does not protect us - or our children - and in the long-run does nothing for our popularity.

It's wisest if parents stop looking for approval from their children. There is a way to allow for input from their kids, and to do what they think is right for their children no matter what their neighbors are doing. Our children often love us the most when we are telling them what they don't want to hear.

Guidelines for making smart choices about culture

It's best to make decisions about culture after a long discussion as a parenting team. Obviously, everyone ought to have

input on family decisions about culture and compromises need to be made. Ultimately parents have the responsibility to make the final decision regarding how the family interacts with culture. Generally, such decisions are more easily made when children are young, but they can always be made later in the family history.

It's best if the family as a whole can have a long discussion about such choices and why such parenting choices are being made. Typically the best parenting decisions are made when not everyone is happy about them and children are allowed to express their reactions.

It's often very helpful if alternative family practices are enjoyed in community with other families that are also savvy about culture. In the long run good intentions and tough choices by parents often result in abundant and deeper family love. Loving, courageous and sometimes old-fashioned parents always do a far better job raising kids than all of the technology and intellectual sophistication of culture. The real culture kids need are warm, savvy parents.

John H. Driggs, L.I.C.S.W., is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in private practice in St. Paul and co-author of Intimacy Between Men (Penguin Books, 1990). He can be reached at 651-699-4573.



EYES on MINNESOTA

Molly Maher is a guitar stringer, song slinger and acoustic guru at Willie's in St. Paul. From Work Day to Gig Night, she always looks great in her Spectacle Shoppe glasses. Keep an eye on her at mollymaher.com



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Art Therapy can benefit anxiety and stress at work

by Helen Dawson

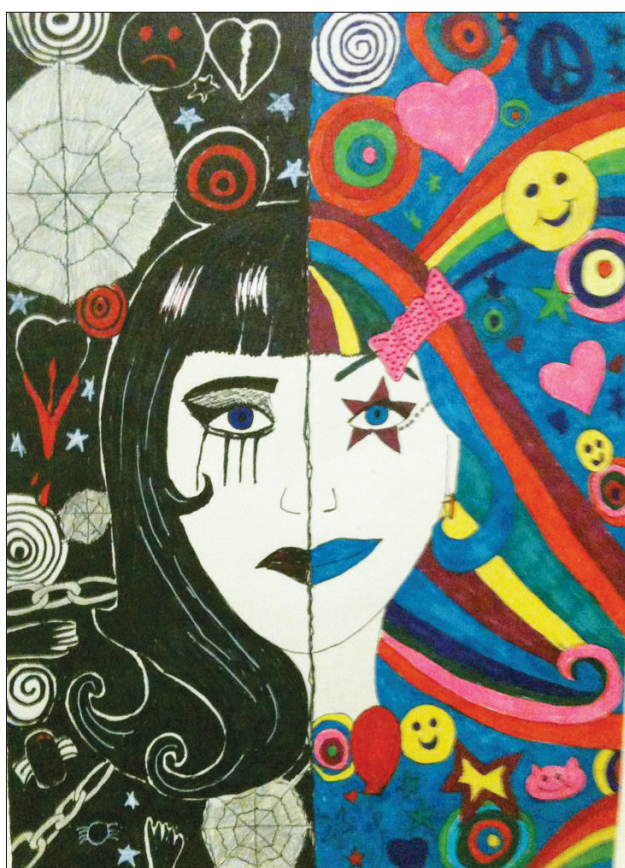
Our nation seems like it's always in the grips of a stress epidemic. Stress and anxiety are disorders that affect more people than ever before, with research suggesting that work related stress costs the American economy \$300 billion each year as a result of related health care costs and missed days at work. According to 76% of those individuals suffering from stress, money and work are the leading causes of the condition. Workplace stress can have a myriad of adverse effects. It can lead to physical and psychological systems (with one in ten strokes being attributed to stress) and, at its worse, workplace stress can even result in alcohol or substance abuse in a bid to drown out the tension of the experience.

However art therapy can be massively beneficial in helping to deal with workplace stress and process the emotions involved. Intensively focusing on any activity (be that creating art, concentrating on a hobby, or even reading a book)

can help to temporarily relieve stress by distracting and refocusing the mind at least for a while. However, dealing with stress more permanently requires more creative solutions. Here's how art therapy can help you to effectively deal with the work stress in your life:

You Don't Have To Verbalize How You Are Feeling

Some aspects of leading a stressful life can be difficult to talk about and process. However art therapy doesn't always require its practitioners to verbalize the stress that they are experiencing, instead enabling them to express what they feel and release their anger and unhappiness without any need to express their emotions through words.



You don't even have to be an artist to enjoy these benefits of art therapy; in fact, the artistic results of your endeavors are secondary to the emotional benefits that you can reap. Your insights into the

cause of your stress and anxiety will increase, and you will have increased self-awareness about what is leading to your stress and, ultimately, how you can avoid these anxiety triggers.

You Can Practice Anti-Stress Art Therapy Anywhere

Art therapy encourages creativity and self-expression; sensations that are generally suppressed and not experienced in the conventional workplace. It can, however, be used to counter those negative emotions that are experienced within the workplace: Art therapy is a portable form of therapy, and one that can be practiced alone without the support of a therapist when necessary (though it's always recommended to enlist the help of a professional art therapist whenever possible).

This means that when you are working within a corporate environment you can de-stress during your lunch break by painting or coloring; rather than spend your downtime stressing out about any negative comments made by your clients or co-workers, you can release any of those negative emotions through your artwork and express what you are feeling, in turn potentially helping you to overcome stress, anxiety, and depression.

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Learning The Techniques Involved

To be truly effective, art therapy is best practiced with the guidance and support of an art therapist practitioner, there are a host of art therapy techniques that you can try that will help you to de-stress in a relatively short time frame.

One technique to try is to write a postcard (that you never intend to send) to someone within your workplace who has caused you significant stress: the process of writing the text will be therapeutic in itself, but designing and creating the visual aspects of the postcard will also cause you to relax and deflate any anger you are experiencing. Once you have thrown the postcard in the trash bin, you will find that your stress levels decrease and the individual or individuals causing you stress lose their power.

Alternatively, if you are self-conscious about your art work (and feel you have no talent or aren't creative) why not try drawing in the dark? You could still reap the stress-relieving benefits of art therapy, but in freedom from your inner art critic. Once you turn the lights back on you'll be amazed at what you have created, but this creation will be secondary to the stress relief of creating art in the first place.

The beauty of both these techniques is that they can be practiced for as long or little as you wish, depending on the amount of time you have. Just ten minutes of self-directed art therapy can make improvements to the quality of your day and to the levels of stress or anxiety you experience.

if you're feeling blue - try painting yourself a different color.

Hannah Cheatem, age 8

Books by Barbara Kummer

Swimming Upstream: Parenting Girls for Resilience in a Toxic Culture

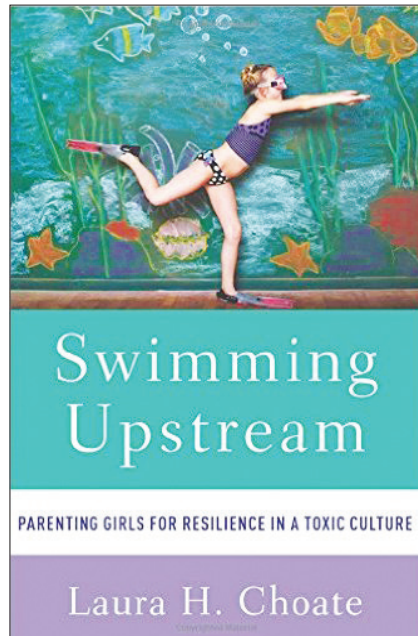
By Laura H. Choate

Oxford University Press

Readers will appreciate this guidebook of encouragement and useful information. Choate's decades of experience as a counselor educator and licensed professional counselor is evident in this resource of research on popular culture and the pressures facing our young girls and their parents.

The first part of the book provides an explanation and description of the world we live in; it identifies the cultural standards and messages girls are surrounded by, such as your worth is based on your appearance, on getting attention and approval from others, or on your accomplishments.

The second part of the book helps parents understand how to deal with this world and its influences on their child. It includes activities parents can try and discussions they can have with their daughters. Choate addresses the myths and trends young girls and their parents



are exposed to and suggests strategies to successfully navigate through and combat those myths.

Although it is advertised for anyone who knows, works with or loves a growing girl, parents of boys can gain insights from this book also.

Living Long, Living Passionately, 75 (and Counting) Ways to Bring Peace and Purpose to Your Life

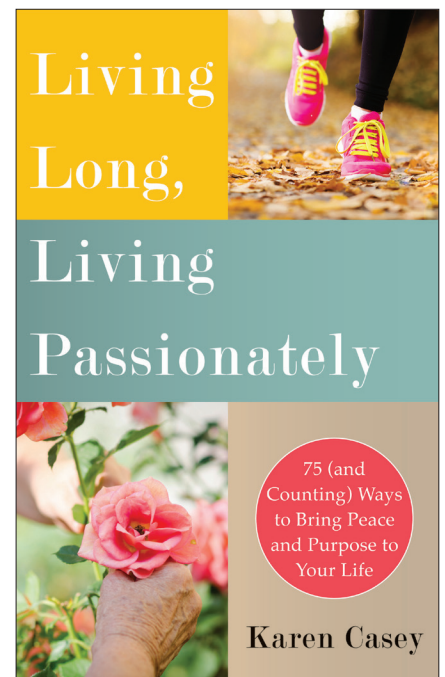
By Karen Casey

Conari Press

Casey reveals she's "been on the planet writing books and facilitating workshops for nearly half of my seventy-five years." She is recognized as a long-time recovery expert and shares her personal story and experience of recovery in a 12 Step program.

She provides meditative essays and insights with follow-up questions for journaling. For example, "What have you passed on to a loved one that he or she may cherish?" In the section on Remembrances, Casey asks, "Whom do you remember clearly? And why? And whom do you hope will keep your spirit alive. And why?"

So, stop, pause, and breathe. And then answer the question, "If you could have a do-over, describe it. How does the do-over make you feel? Might you have amends to make?"



Casey states, "Journaling for a while about these questions will clarify what you believe, thus revealing to you some opportunities for new directions." What an opportunity.

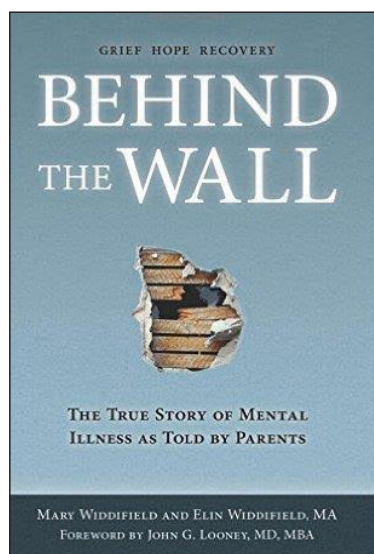
Behind the Wall: The True Story of Mental Illness as Told by Parents

By Mary Widdifield and Elin Widdifield

Langdon Street Press

This collection includes candid stories from parents who have loved and lived with a family member who has a mental illness. They report their experiences with heart-breaking honesty and provide important information and resources for other families in similar circumstances.

The book is divided into three parts so readers can experience the process of seeking treatment, recovery, and coping with life. Included is a Parent Questionnaire to help understand and guide the journey.



Some of their advice includes suggestions to help alleviate the pain of integrating mental illness into our daily lives: be honest with yourself and your child, trust your gut, don't be ashamed about a mental illness diagnosis, be informed, allow time and space for grieving, find a method for coping that best fits you and your family, don't blame yourself or anyone else, and stay connected.

The Widdifields state, "Parents want only what is best for their child." This compassionate book offers stories and resources that may help with the process.

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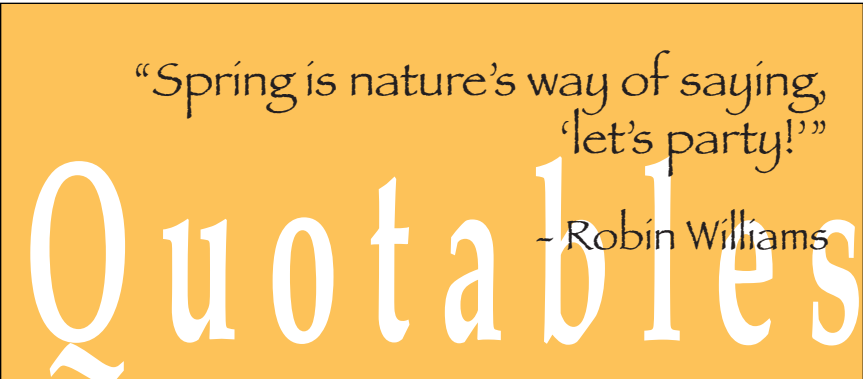
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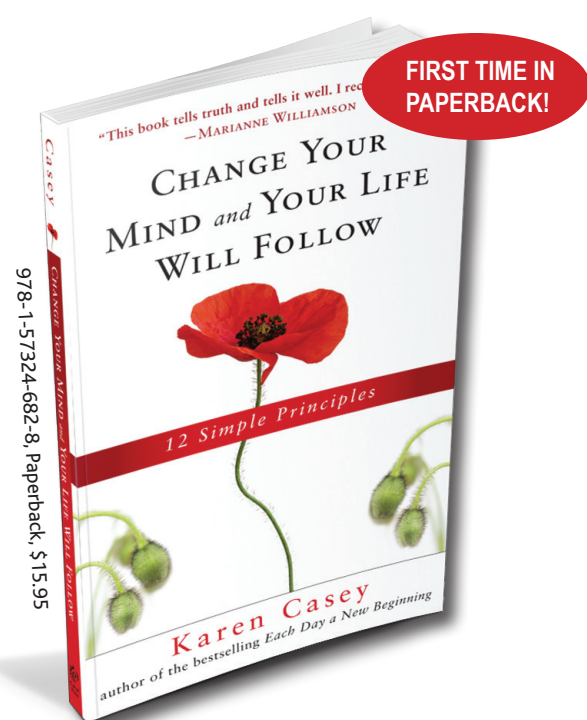
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from Mozart to Motown from page 1

briefest of moments” is a basic yearning. Prisoners of war formed bands and choirs. Playing in an orchestra at Auschwitz kept some prisoners alive. Slaves sang in the cotton fields to bear their pain. Syrian refugees, packed into overcrowded boats, sing to keep up their courage.

This year, the Zomba Prison Project Bank in a maximum security prison in Malawi, Africa, was nominated for a Grammy Award. Their album, “I Have No Everything Here,” was written and performed by male and female prisoners, most serving life sentences. The album did not win but Ian Brenna, the producer, told Al Jazeera News, “My belief is [that] almost everyone is musical and I think people that are under-heard have even more to express potentially.” One woman’s voice on the album sings “I am alone at the wide river and I have failed to cross it.”

Today, we recognize another type of prison. Many of the 8.5 million Americans living in long-term care facilities are imprisoned within their own bodies, their minds stranded “alone at the wide river” of Parkinson’s disease, stroke, Alzheimer’s or dementia. Deprived of their independence and freedom, residents also lack crucial personal attention due to chronic understaffing. Many withdraw into themselves or become agitated; the solution has been medication which serves only to strand them further inside their mental darkness.

Music is guiding many back into the light. In 2007, Oliver Sacks, a physician and professor of neurology at the NYU School of medicine, published *Musophilia – Tales of Music and the Brain*. A New York Times bestseller, the promo blurb says Sacks “describes how music can animate people with Parkinson’s disease

who cannot otherwise move, give words to stroke patients who cannot otherwise speak, and calm and organize people whose memories are ravaged by Alzheimer’s or amnesia.”

Alive Inside

If that seems like a tall order for music, a 2014 Sundance award-winning documentary entitled *Alive Inside* proves it works. Filmmaker Michael Rossato-Bennett followed Dan Cohen, founding Executive Director of Music & Memory, Inc., who had pooled his background in technology and social work to create a program that would give iPods with personalized music playlists to nursing home residents. He was betting that memory loss was not permanent, that memories could be triggered with the right stimulation and lead to some reclamation of life quality and dignity.

Music was the key. Not just any music, says Cohen, but “Music that connects people with who they have been, who they are, and their lives; because what happens when you get old is that all the things you knew, your identity, they’re all just being peeled away.”

Significantly, the program also brought about a reduced need for psychotropic medication. Residents who listened to their music at least three times a week showed a decrease in anxiety, agitation and acting out that previously led to being sedated. Music is more than enjoyment and as Oliver Sacks states, “not just a physiological stimulus. If it works at all it will calm the whole person.”

The return to identity is apparent in the film’s segment about Henry whose daughter tells us he had been in a nursing home approximately 10 years. As images of a young, handsome, vibrant man float across the screen, she says, “Of course, it affected me greatly because he was always fun-loving, singing....he used to walk down the street with me and my brother and he’d do ‘Singin’ in the Rain.’”

Oliver Sacks narrates, “We first see Henry inert, maybe depressed, unresponsive and almost unalive.”

A staff member approaches with an iPod: “Henry, I found your music. Let’s try your music now.” She puts headphones over his ears and we witness what Mr. Sacks confirms: “[Henry] lights up; his face assumes expression, his eyes open wide; he starts to sing, to rock and to move his arms, and he’s being animated by the music.”

The staff member says he used to “always sit on the unit [unmoving]....He didn’t really talk that much to people; and when I introduce the music to him, this is his reaction every time.”

The iPod is removed and Dr. Sacks,

reiterating that Henry had been mute and virtually unable to answer simple yes or no questions, asks Henry: “Do you like music?”

Henry responds clearly, “I’m crazy about music! You play beautiful music, beautiful sound.”

“What was your favorite music when you were young?”

“I guess....well, Cab Calloway was my number one band that I liked.” He imitates Cab Calloway singing.

Asked what music does to him, Henry says, “It gives me a feeling of love, romance. Like right now, the world needs to come into music, singing. You got beautiful music here, beautiful, lovely. And I feel a band of love, dreams. The Lord came to me and made me holy; I’m a holy man. So he give me these sounds, lemme see... (singing) Rosalie won’t you love me, Rosalie won’t you please be mine.”

Sacks tells us: “The philosopher Kant once called music the quickening art and Henry has been quickened. He has been brought to life.”

Here’s how

It would be easy to dismiss a film about the elderly as not relevant except here’s the thing: If we’re lucky, we’ll all grow old; we’ll probably need similar assistance. At the very least, we may have to tackle age-related issues with a family member. The time to organize music is when the person is still lucid.

Guidance is available on the websites for both the film (www.aliveinside.us) and Music and Memory project (www.musicandmemory.org). You can order the film, read volumes of information, support, volunteer and donate iPods.

At Cobble Hill Health Center in Brooklyn, President and CEO Tony Lewis said, “The iPod project...didn’t just present a wonderful opportunity for the resident.... it also was a medium for staff to be able to really develop a strong bond with that resident....That to me is the essence of person-centered care.”

“These people are waking up” says Rossato-Bennett. “The process of waking up another person also wakes you up.” When music calms the chaotic brain and reduces impulsive outburst, relationships improve with everyone around.

Henry said, “I’m a holy man.” Every person standing “alone at the wide river” of their dark internal prison is holy and deserves to be ferried across into the bright sunlight of joy and their own identity.

Aldous Huxley said: “After silence, that which comes nearest to expressing the inexpressible is music.” Go seek out your loved ones and find out what they need to express.

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Art Therapy from page 1

selves feel. Once this is completed, work with the art materials to visually represent the 2 selves. On the inside of the mask (the part that would be placed on your face) decorate that mask in a way to express the inner self. Do the same on the opposite side of the mask and decorate it in a way to represent the outer self or the self you show others.

Why It Helps: This is another form of art that focuses on introspection. It is important to be able to identify what parts of ourselves we show to others and what we keep private. This can lead to further exploration. You can start to think about what it is that keeps you from showing that inner self to people. What people do you feel you share that inner self with and what people do you not. Does your outer self change in different situations and why? How does it feel to express that outer self vs the inner self? Does one cause more anxiety, does one feel more authentic? Tap into that.

4. The Project: Write a Love Letter to Yourself

How To Do It: This can be done simply with a piece of paper and envelope. If you want to get crafty, you can head to the craft store and pick up nice cardstock and envelopes, add stickers or any other decorations to make it more fun! The important part lies in the words, though. Write a love letter to yourself mentioning all the things you love about yourself. Think about all the things your body & mind does for you. This is not a time to be critical of yourself; it is a time to appreciate all the wonderful things you offer to the world. You can write words of encouragement to yourself for the times when you truly need it.

Why It Helps: We spend so much of our day thinking about what we did wrong

or why we're not good enough, without thinking about how much we have to offer the world. Give yourself credit for being incredible. By writing and reading this letter, you will be taken to a place of compassion and love for yourself. You need to be as loving towards yourself as you are for other people. It's easy to do nice things for others, but it's often hard to do nice things for ourselves. You are not alone in that struggle. So take the time out to love yourself with this exercise. Keep it with you so that when you are having a low day, you can remember why you kick ass!

5. The Project: Paint a Self-Portrait

How To Do It: You will need a canvas, paint brushes, paint, a palette or paper plates, water, paper towels, pencil and mirror. Find a comfortable place to sit. Make sure you have a mirror in front of you so that you can see your face. Begin by outlining your head on the canvas with a pencil. This DOES NOT mean to be exact. This is about spending time with yourself, learning the curves of your face, the color of your eyes, the beauty of you and the experience of playing with art materials. Spend some time painting your portrait. Once you have completed your project, again, DO NOT JUDGE. Fighting your inner critic is one of the hardest parts about this specific task! Spend time writing down what the experience was like for you and what you see when you look at the portrait.

Why It Helps: This exercise helps to get you comfortable looking at your reflection. Practicing the act of not judging, but playing with the materials, can help to alleviate some of the critical thoughts we have about ourselves when we look at our reflection. It can be a different experience

for people who spend time only critiquing themselves in the mirror and attaching emotion to those critiques. This exercise is more about looking at the face as a set of shapes, lines, and colors and hopefully appreciating the beauty of it instead of immediately finding the 'flaws'. Having a different experience in front of the mirror gives you the opportunity to have a different perspective, which after more practice, can hopefully decrease the initial instinct to judge.

6. The Project: Affirmation Cards

How To Do It: You will need blank, unlined index cards, scissors, magazines, writing implements, glue and magazines. Write down affirmations that you like. Here are some examples: 'I am enough,' 'I can do whatever I focus my mind on,' 'I

am healthy,' 'I am creative,' 'I believe in myself.' Take a note card and write down one affirmation. Create an image on each affirmation card that represents that statement for you. You can carry around these cards with you or choose to look at them when you need.

Why It Helps: These daily affirmations can help you to develop a more positive self-esteem. Having positive thoughts about yourself can potentially re-wire the connections in your brain causing you to feel better about yourself. It is important to rework our thoughts. Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) works to adjust thoughts and the behaviors associated with those thoughts. If we change negative thoughts into positive ones, our behaviors will likely follow!

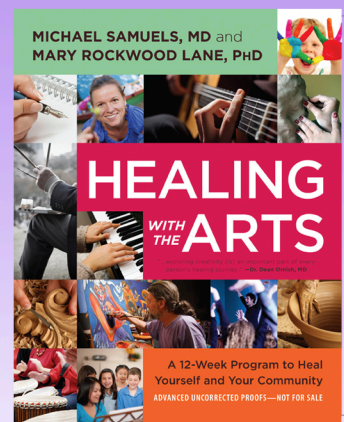
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