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The New New Year

“Do not wait until the conditions are perfect to begin. Beginning makes the conditions perfect.” – Alan Cohen

The cold of January hardly feels like a new beginning. The symbolic child heralding the new year looks more vulnerable than strong. Yet this lull between the holidays and spring’s new buds is a great time to reflect on what has been and what might lie ahead.

My vacations often take me on hikes along mountain trails. I begin with energy and a plan. The early hours lead me through green, lush grasses and shrubs, where it is hard to see beyond the next bend in the trail.

As I start to climb, the undergrowth thins. I see an outline of the trail ahead. I grow into a quiet rhythm, a steady pace, a mindful presence. Soon I come to an opening where I can look back to view where I have been. I notice the switch-backs, the ups and downs, the troublesome ravine. I also get a glimpse of what lies ahead—the formidable twists and turns. Knowing how far I have come, I don’t need to be so afraid of what might follow.

The new year is like that hiking trail. I look back where I’ve been and get a glimpse of where I am going. Though the way ahead may not be crystal clear, I can set a direction, create a plan, start afresh.

New beginnings have energy. They are empowered by the spirit of *Yes*. Too often when we want to change we choose *No* – a diet full of nos, a budget full of nos, a litany of can’ts. I can’t leave my job. I can’t impact my relationship. I can’t afford to go back to school. I can’t save any more money. I can’t find the time. No carbs, no fun, no joy.

What if instead I looked at what I can do? Where I can turn toward a future different from today and see a glimmer of light in the horizon.

What might that look like? Often it is a simple change. Over the holidays I saw a niece who lost 35 pounds. A year earlier she decided to go to the gym regularly and stop drinking cola. She said *Yes* to herself.

Saying *Yes* may hold in it some farewells. My niece said farewell to daily colas. She said farewell to an hour of habitual TV. She said *Yes* to a stronger body, a sense of well being, a belief in herself.

What part of my life is not working? Is it my relationships? My finances? My health? What can I do about it?

Part of moving out of today’s stuckness is looking at what motivates me to stay where I am rather than move to what might be. It could be fear – I am afraid of not having enough, I’m afraid I’ll fail, I am afraid that I will see that I am already failing. I’d like to get back in shape, but how will I look at the

by Mary Lou Logsdon



gym? I’d like to save more for later but I fear I won’t have enough now. I am afraid of what I will lose rather than what I might gain. Fear is a powerful motivator – to do nothing, to stay where I am, to give up.

Another motivator, or anti-motivator, is complacency – it’s not that bad, it’s good enough, I don’t really deserve to be happier, healthier, more secure. It’s not that bad to carry my credit card debt – doesn’t everyone? All marriages grow dull. At least I have a job, even if it doesn’t pay enough and I am bored to tears.

A third motivator to staying stuck is hopelessness. Nothing I do matters. I have no agency. It’s rigged against me. They will never give me a promotion. As soon as I get ahead an emergency comes up. It’s in my family genes.

How do we break through these roadblocks? How do we energize ourselves to try another way? The first thing is to understand our patterns, our vulnerabilities, our weak spots. Like my hike, I can look back and see where I stumble, where the path shifts, where I get stuck.

Secondly, define a strategy to address the roadblocks. How will I circumvent my weaknesses. I am a morning person and am much more able to get things done in the morning. I don’t save my exercise until the evening. That doesn’t work for me. If I have a project to tackle, I do it early, before the day’s interferences come calling.

Another strategy that works for me is to enlist help – to team up with a friend, spouse or partner to support me in my change, to walk with me, to ask them to listen as I brainstorm ideas. I do not need to do this alone. Roadblocks are much easier to remove with a partner.

Finally, I become willing to change. Until I am willing, what I know and how I strategize won’t matter. How do I become willing? I listen to myself, to what I really want. I come to recognize what I know deep in my heart. I trust my true self, the one I know to be authentically me. Once I am willing the universe will support me in my change. As the inspirational author Alan Cohen says, “Beginning makes the conditions perfect.”

The New Year is like being on top of the mountain. I have perspective. I am not as distracted. I have time to reflect on what it is I want, what I truly want. When I settle back into my hike, after reaching the pinnacle, I am re-energized. Once I decide what I want to change, determine my strategy and become willing, I have a boost of energy to take me there. Like the New Year’s baby, there is new life in a fresh start.

Mary Lou Logsdon provides one-on-one spiritual direction in the Twin Cities, leads retreats and teaches in the Sacred Ground Spiritual Direction Formation Program. She has an MA in Theology and a Certificate in Spiritual Direction from St Catherine University. She can be reached at logsdon.marylou@gmail.com.



Vitamins, Minerals, Hormones: How to Find your Spiritual Adrenaline

by Tom Shanahan

How many of you paid attention to what you were eating in active addiction? Not many I bet. I certainly didn't. When you're in active addiction, the only thing that matters is chasing the next high. As soon as it wears off, it's right back at it. The vicious cycle keeps repeating itself and everything else becomes irrelevant. For me, I remember not eating for days at a time so I could buy cigarettes, alcohol and drugs. When I ate, I often gobbled down comfort foods, usually from fast food joints. My relationship with food was completely dysfunctional. In sobriety, just like I had to relearn behaviors in other aspects of my life, I had to develop healthy habits regarding my relationship with food.

Eating at the First Step

In the first year of sobriety, I missed my drugs of choice, alcohol and cocaine, and the lifestyle that came along with them. I hate to admit that but it's true. It's a scary thing to take the first step and surrender. Surrender caused me great anxiety and trepidation. In my first six months of sobriety, I ate my fear and put on a substantial amount of weight. I was admitted to rehab at 140 pounds; I left 28 days later at 177 pounds. I continued to put weight on during the first six months of sobriety. It was a smart trade off as I used food, mostly carbohydrates, to help take the edge off. It's fine in early recovery as you can always take weight off: You cannot undo an overdose. So using "comfort foods," ice cream, and other goodies, made sense as a bridge from active addiction to sobriety.

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An intrepid team heads to the Ice Shanty Projects, 2017 (Photo courtesy of Art Shanty Projects). This year's heartwarming event is on Lake Harriet in Linden Hills until February 11 - don't miss the free winter fun!

Sanity in the Age of Facebook, Google, Amazon, and Apple: Reclaiming our Lives

by Daniel White

The traditional objective of yoga is union — to connect the mind to body, and the self to soul. That's what the yogi masters say in the ancient scriptures — connect to your higher self, realize that we are all connected, and transcend the ego. In the modern age,



sometimes many of us feel like we are disconnected from our bodies, our emotions, and from all those around us. Sometimes we may feel like we are stifled by our own egos, suffocating in lonely desperation.

Some identify our technology as a source of our disconnection. It's true, because when we feel disconnected we may look to our devices in search of comfort. Sometimes we seek solace through connecting with other people through Facebook, and other times through shopping on Amazon. I find it interesting to look at what we can call compensations. I am talking about the kind of compensation when we use something to inauthentically satisfy a need when we are unable to fully and truly meet that need. For instance, at times I've felt lonely and disconnected. It hurts inside: I want to be held and connected and to feel love, and I sometimes find that I cannot help but consume too many sweets or anything that triggers a dopamine reaction in my brain.

In our time, it's worth noticing how the big companies who give us our devices and services that we use almost every-day offer compensations for that deeper connection. In the book *The Four: The Hidden DNA of Amazon, Apple, Facebook and Google*, Scott Galloway discusses how this is the case with the companies listed in the title. Galloway says that each of these companies fulfills a different compensation for different aspects of our being, namely,

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What Does Nourishment Mean to You?

by Olivia Pennelle

I have always associated the word nourishment with food — and eating. The word *nourish* actually means to provide food or other substances necessary for growth, health, and good condition; to promote growth needed for nourishment (including spiritual nourishment); and to maintain/support/strengthen. What is interesting about the definition is that it makes the distinction among the ways that we nourish ourselves, i.e. our whole selves — mind, body and spirit.



Understanding this concept — of nourishing one's whole self — is so important for people in recovery because the minute we put down drugs and alcohol, we pick up food. It is a rite of passage for many of us in recovery. But it often leads to months — if not years — of weight gain, shame, and self-hatred.

Why is it when we think of nourishment, we just think about feeding ourselves food?

This conception is so prevalent in a society focused heavily on the material: we are a generation of consumers. We are positively encouraged by marketers to overeat — with stores catering to our every whim, offering every possible snack, dessert, or anything else we desire. Would you like to super-size that?! we're asked with practically every food order.

While I am not intending to be a killjoy — in fact, I encourage you to savor and enjoy your favorite foods — I think we might benefit from being more mindful around eating generally. My experience has been that if I am not consciously eating, I will emotionally overeat and start a cycle of self-hatred and further bingeing. Just by taking a moment to be mindful of food's real purpose, and the true meaning of nourishing ourselves, we might actually tap into what our body really needs to be nourished.

So often when I am tempted to reach into

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Twelve Steps for Slouches

by Pat Samples

The first thing I want you to know is that I do resistance training. I use resistance bands, weights, and such.

OK, that's on a good day. Truth be told, I probably do more resisting than I do exercising. I'm more inclined to be a slouch on the couch, thinking "maybe later" when it comes to toning my muscles and all those other fine fitness goals. I can also claim with great justification that I have more urgent and more important things to do. I am convinced I'm pretty important, after all.

Darn, why is it so hard to just do the exercises that I know are good for me? As smart as I am, it seems like a no-brainer.

I think I'll check out some real power lifting — the Higher Power kind. Twelve

Steps to the rescue. Maybe getting on a step machine will help too.

Step One

Yes, I am powerless over my slouchiness. My clever brain can find any excuse to delay or avoid working out, making my exercise program, my weight, and my flabbiness unmanageable.

Step Two

OK, it's clear I need some Higher Power lifting. Neither my smart brain alone, or even my common sense, is enough to get me into action.

Step Three

I suppose that means I can't pull out my slouch excuses anymore. But turn my life over to a Higher Power? Seems a bit bizarre, but if that's what it takes — treadmill, here I come. Time to dust off the weights too.

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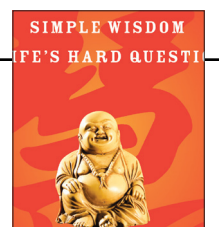
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Calendar

Upcoming

Psychic Development Beginning/Foundation Class: Begins February 28. Learn to consciously access your soul's guidance, clarity and wisdom. Discover your abilities and purpose working with your body/soul partnership in this lifetime. Wednesday evenings, February - November. Please see website or call for more information. Cindy Lehman, 612-669-1861 cindy@cindylehman.com www.cindylehman.com

Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACA) YellowBook workbook meetings, beginning on Sat., 2/24, 11 am to 1 pm. FREE. Park Avenue United Methodist Church, 3400 Park Ave South, Mpls, MN 55407. Event and other news on Twitter: @ACAMNIG

Ongoing

Mothers of Adult Children: A support group for people whose moms used violence. Our support group will offer a safe place to talk, listen and share your feelings, experiences and stories with other moms in a comfortable, confidential environment. We meet 1st Saturday of every month, 9-11:00am. Breakfast provided at Calvary Baptist Church-Maki Room 1st floor, 2608 Blaisdell Ave S Minneapolis, MN 55408. Parking available on street or back lot. Call 534-349-9105 for more information.

The Dan Anderson Renewal Center, Hazelden, Center City, MN. 12-Step-inspired weekend retreats focus on common issues faced in recovery: forgiveness, spirituality, healthy relationships, grief, and loss. Call 1-800-262-4882 for more info.

All Recovery Meetings: Minnesota Recovery Connection is hosting All Recovery meetings throughout the Twin Cities. These meetings honor all pathways to recovery, acknowledging that each person's path is unique. Come, socialize, share - friends and family members welcome. Call 612-584-4158 for more info or go to <https://minnesotarecovery.org>.

Art Shanty Projects Showcases Artist-Designed Village

Art Shanty Projects has assembled scores of artists from Minnesota and beyond on Lake Harriet in the Linden Hills Neighborhood in Minneapolis. The frozen surface will act as host and backdrop to a wide range of events, happenings, stories, songs, games and Saturdays & Sundays, January 20 - February 11. The event is open regardless of weather, 10am - 4pm and is free.

The frozen surface will act as host and backdrop to a wide range of events, happenings, stories, songs, games and more. Peace Coffee will be providing free coffee to warm everyone on January 20 and 27.

Youth and Family Weekend, January 27-28, features performances geared toward younger audiences and the Winter Kite Festival on January 27. All Access Weekend, February 3-4, includes additional volunteers and kick-sleds to assist with mobility on ice as well as 30-minute Sign Language In-



terpreted and Audio Described tours of Shanty Village at the top of every hour.

Closing weekend will include a special performance by Prairie Fire Lady Choir on February 10. Each Sunday of the festival will host a Tiny ArtCar and ArtBike parade on ice. For the complete program, see the Art Shanty Projects website.

Art Shanty Projects will be open every weekend regardless of weather: rain, sleet, snow, ice, no ice, blizzard or heat wave. The shanty village will be located either on the frozen lake or on shore near the bandshell, depending on ice conditions.

Women's 12-Step Program, Wednesdays at 7pm, Peace Presbyterian Church, 7624 Cedar Lake Rd, St Louis Park. For women of all ages who find any part of life chaotic or out of control. The chaos can be caused by addiction, eating disorders, relationship problems or self esteem issues. We use *A Woman's Way through the Twelve Steps* by Stephanie Covington. Peace Presbyterian Church has a community dinner at 6pm on Wednesdays and we provide free childcare for 12-Step participants. Reclamation-Ministries.org or call 612-879-9642.

"Exploring 12 Step Spirituality" Workshops meet the 2nd Sat of each month 9am-noon at Colonial Church of Edina, 6200 Colonial Way, Edina, MN 55436. Workshops include: Centering Prayer and meditation instruction; two 20-minutes

sessions of Centering Prayer; readings from the Big Book; teaching on 12-Step spirituality and impediments to it; testimonials; group discussions. Free-will offering of \$10 to cover rent, snacks, printing and coffee appreciated. All welcome - no registration necessary. www.12step-spirituality.org

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. Open to anyone 18 or older involved in a 12-Step program. \$20/person 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
800-257-7810; Plymouth alum welcome.

The Recovery Church, 253 State St. St. Paul, 55107, offers worship services on Sunday at 9:30am with fellowship, coffee and snacks following service. The mission is to provide a spiritual community for people in search of growth, healing, and recovery. For a list of recovery meetings, visit www.therecoverychurch.org, or like [therecoverychurchstpaul](https://www.facebook.com/recoverychurchstpaul) on facebook.

To place a listing, email phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com or call 612-805-1959.

Meet Hugo Klaers. He bangs the drums for the Suburbs, but neighborhood kids love him 'cause he builds their ice-rink each year. If you see him around town, he may be lost in his beloved crossword puzzles, but at home he'll be toying with his collection of weird socks and peculiar neckties. He also collects vintage shades. This Oliver People's design, which he got from the Spectacle Shoppe, is his current favorite.



See Different

Uptown, New Brighton, Burnsville Center and Grand Avenue



Minding Your Questions

by Thom Rutledge

Questions that are asked with genuine curiosity, with a sincere desire to gain information, are valuable tools. Questions asked rhetorically, often with the intention of insult, can be quite damaging. Too often we ask questions rhetorically to make a point. There is nothing wrong with that, is there? Well, of course not. That is, of course, not to a certain point. When rhetorical questions are thinly veiled put downs (i.e. Why did you do that?! , What makes you think this is any of your business? , How do you manage to always mess things up?), communication ceases to be a two-way exchange, becoming instead, a way to reinforce someone's negative opinion of himself.

Consider also that rhetorical questions are a common way that we put ourselves down. (i.e. Why am I such an idiot? What makes me think that I deserve anything good in my life?)

Make a point to recognize questions that you and others around you ask rhetorically --- questions directed to each other and to ourselves. Notice how often we ask a good question but then leave no space for the answer. This is a pretty good sign that a real question has not been asked. For instance, we often ask a question of someone else because we want to answer the question ourselves. I might say to you, "What do you think of this article?" And then with barely enough pause to take a breath, I continue, "... because I really like it, one of my best so far I think. One thing I really like about it is ... etc." When someone does this a lot, I think of them as one-way talking machines. Do you know any one-way talking machines?

When you ask a question, leave room for a response. Remember that a ques-

tion mark is punctuation. So, punctuate. (My wife once told me she was going to give me a box of punctuation marks for Christmas. Apparently I spoke in run on sentences, for long periods of time. She might have even put it the form of a question: "Thom, would you like me to get you a box of punctuation marks for Christmas?") Ask, pause, listen to the response. Listen with curiosity. Listening with genuine curiosity is a powerful expression of respect. Tell Mr. Assumption on your committee to have a seat; that you will not be needing his services today to tell you what everyone else is thinking. "No thanks, Mr. A," you say, "I am going to do this wacky thing called listening. Am I crazy? Perhaps, but what the hell?"

Here are some pointers about questions and answers:

1.) Don't assume there is only one right answer to the questions you ask. Our culture is very addicted to the idea of "right."

2.) Remember that questions about subjective matters, such as feelings and thoughts, are not likely to have "right answers."

3.) Contrary to popular opinion, it is perfectly acceptable to ask "why" questions. Be sure you are really asking a question though, and that you are really willing to hear an answer. Sometimes if we don't like an answer or find it inadequate, we just ask the question again.

4.) Avoid questions that are designed solely to get people to agree with you. Be brave and risk asking questions without predictable answers. Live on the "questionable edge."

Does this make sense? Do you think it is worth a try? What have you got to lose?

Thom Rutledge is a psychotherapist and author. For more information visit www.ThomRutledge.com

"Work hard for what you want because it won't come to you without a fight. You have to be strong and courageous and know that you can do anything you put your mind to. If somebody puts you down or criticizes you, just keep on believing in yourself and turn it into something positive."

-Leah LaBelle

the phoenix spirit

RECOVERY • RENEWAL • GROWTH

Every trial, every demon, every issue we find and face holds within it the seeds of healing, health, wisdom, growth and prosperity. We hope you find a seed in every issue

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The Phoenix Newspaper is a monthly publication for people actively working on their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being. We are committed to providing articles, advertising, and information about recovery, renewal, and personal growth to help people experience life in a balanced, meaningful way.

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.

Letters to the editor, stories and pictures are welcomed. phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com

Can't find the paper near your house or apartment? Write to us at phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com and we'll do our best to get The Phoenix Spirit to a drop-off site near you. For a list of drops visit us at www.thephoenixspirit.com

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Support Groups

MONDAYS

Conscious Contact – 11th Step Meeting and meditative Drum Circle. Mondays (except holidays) 12:30-1:30pm. Transfiguration Lutheran Church. 11000 France Ave S, Bloomington. Drums provided. No experience necessary. Arthur 952-884-2364.

Mindfulness and the 12 Steps at Clouds In Water Zen Center, St. Paul. Near University and Western – 445 Farrington Street, St. Paul, MN 55103. Mondays, 7-8:15pm. Meditation and one step/month. Ongoing.

1900 Mens Alanon, Mond 5:45-7:15pm, 12-Step meeting, step presentation and small groups, fellowship. 1900 Nicollet Ave., Plymouth Congregational Church. Tom W., 612-281-5230. Enter at parking lot.

Overeaters Annonymous: 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.emilyprogram.com or call 651.645.5323.

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.daminnesota.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: 7 p.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.

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

Recovering Couples Anonymous, 7pm. We are a 12 Step Group for couples wanting to find new ways to communicate. We provide strong couple support and model healthy coupleship. Unity Church, 733 Portland Ave, St Paul, 55104. Enter the building through the parking lot door and take the elevator to the basement. Please check us out! Contact Dave at 651-214-5747 or Connie at 651-307-7964 for more information.

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.daminnesota.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. For more info call 952-404-1488.

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

Al-Anon Evening Meditation Meeting, 7-8 pm., Pentagon Office Park, 4570 West 77th St., Suite 255, Edina, MN 55435.

Women's 12-Step Program: 7pm, Peace Presbyterian Church, 7624 Cedar Lake Road, St Louis Park. For women of all ages who find any part of life chaotic or out of control. Through reading *A Woman's Way through the Twelve Steps* by Stephanie S. Covington, members explore how the Steps help us overcome addictions and work to heal ourselves. Peace Presbyterian Church has a community dinner at 6pm on Wednesdays and provides free supervised childcare for 12-Step participants.Reclamation-Ministries.org, 612-879-9642

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.

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. 763-560-5199.

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 tAgnostic@gmail.com

THURSDAYS

Workaholics Anonymous: 12 step group for finding balance between work, activity and fun. Meets every Thur. 7-8:15 pm. Christ Presbyterian Church, 6901 Normandale Rd. Room 305 - North entrance, enter door on left and up stairwell on your left. Call before attending for any schedule or location updates Jeff 952-465-4928, Liz 612-229-8930, email: wafindingbalance@gmail.com

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, 7-8:30pm. For more info call Jacob at 612.819.9370 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.ldaminnesota.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

Food Addicts Anonymous: a 12-step program dedicated to food addiction. Fridays 8-9pm, Living Table United Church of Chjrlist, 3805 E 40th St., Mpls, 55406. LGBT friendly. For more info call Shea at 612-722-5064 or sheahnsn@gmail.com or www.foodaddictsanonymous.org

Recovering Couples Anonymous: Friday Night Mpls Nokomis RCA @ Minnehaha United Methodist Church, 3701 E 50th St, Mpls, MN 55417. Every Friday, 6:30 - 8pm. We are a 12-Step group and meet as couples in recovery from any addiction. The only requirement is the desire to remain committed to each other, and find better ways to communicate and develop intimacy. Call Kathy 612- 545-6200 or Allan 612-309-5632.

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

OCD Support Group: 2nd and 4th Saturdays of each month at Lord of Life Lutheran Church,-16200 Dodd Lane, Lakeville, MN. 11am -1pm For more information contact Susan Zehr @ sszehr@charter.net or 952-210-5644.

Nicotine Anonymous: Sat. 10am at Linden Hills Congregational Church, 4200 Upton Ave South, Mpls. Enter at the back door. 952-404-1488.

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, Mpls, 55413 (corner of 2nd Street NE & 17th Ave NE). Park in lot behind building, use rear entry door. Saturdays: 1-2pm. 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.

Clutterers 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.daminnesota.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.)

Overeaters 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-judgemental place to talk with other men re healthy sexual boundaries. The Men's Center, 3249 Hennepin Ave. S., Mpls.

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 info.

Men's & Women's Support Group: Meetings every Saturday (including holidays) at 9am. 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.daminnesota.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.

Slouch

from page 1

Now, should I work out at home or at the club? And how do I find the time? Better check in with my Higher Power, make a decision, and put first things first.

Step Four

Yikes, an honest inventory. I have a long history of slouching, and I must admit it's done me a fair share of harm. I live with a collection of aches and pains that likely resulted from not keeping in great shape. Also, when I don't exercise, I tend to get slouchy about other things -- my eating habits, my meditation, and my to-do list, for starters. My self-esteem certainly takes a hit. I'm not proud of constantly failing to keep my promises to exercise.

Other people have also felt the brunt of my slouchiness. I get grouchy and busy with self-pity when I don't exercise. I also tend to blame others. Somehow it becomes their fault I don't have time to exercise. Whew, this inventory could take a while.

Step Five

Admitting my slouching damage is hard enough, but do I really have to let someone else in on my slouching sins? Good thing there are other recovering slouches out there. Chances are they won't be as hard on me as I am on myself. And my Higher Power? Well, that's where I hope to get some support, so I guess it's best to be honest and bring the whole sorry picture out in the open. Kind of like needing to take out the trash before I can really start to clean house.

Step Six

No kidding around now. It's time to make some changes. If nothing changes, nothing changes.

Step Seven

On my own, I'm pretty much a slouch about cleaning up my act. Good thing I've got a Higher Power to take care of the heavy lifting. Better get signed up for some training.

Step Eight

My name goes on the top of the amends list. I'm the one who suffers the most damage from my exercise deprivation. But there are others who take a hit. Not only do my slouchiness and related behaviors affect the people immediately around me, the damage even spreads to people who have to pay higher insurance premiums to cover health care costs that result from my poor treatment of my body. Ouch!

Step Nine

No more hiding. My true colors are showing. Time to change my ways. I think I'll start my Ninth Step by writing a love letter to my body. It's about time it gets some respect -- and some apologies for all the years of neglect and failed promises.

First, I'll check in with my Higher Power to load up on self-love and willingness. I'm in training for new ways of living and ready to hit my stride -- on the walking trail, the step machine, the chest press, etc. I'm already liking having a clearer head.

Step Ten

I know, I know, I've made promises before and then returned to being a slouch on the couch. But now I have a Higher Power Trainer who shows me just what I need to stay in condition, and I have a community of recovering slouches as companions as I work out. The daily

inventory keeps me honest and on track. I also get to celebrate my victories and give thanks to my Trainer for them.

Step Eleven

I like and trust my HP Trainer. I really do. I relish the love I feel coming my way, and the guidance and motivation that come through. I want to stay in touch. The more often, the better. I'm becoming more and more confident that I can run the distance as long as I keep myself focused where my Trainer directs me.

Step Twelve

A spiritual awakening and a great workout? What a combination! I love the feeling of being physically and spiritually fit.

Won't you join me?

Pat Samples is a writer and a facilitator for creative aging, spiritual growth, and creative writing. www.patsamples.com

"A goal should scare you a little.... and excite you A LOT."
— Joe Vitale

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The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take a personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs.



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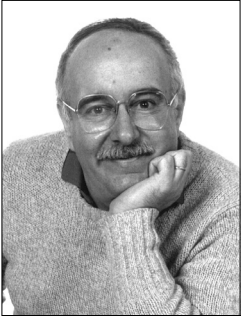
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by John Driggs,
LICSW

So Just How Important Is a Simple Act of Kindness?

*Love is something if you give it away,
Give it away, give it away.
Love is something if you give it away,
You end up having more.*

*It's just like a magic penny,
Hold it tight and you won't have any.
Lend it, spend it, and you'll have so
many
They'll roll all over the floor.*

— Melvina Reynolds, first verses of the
Magic Penny Song, 1949

Most of us think our small act of caring for a neighbor was no big deal, it was just the right thing to do at the time. Few of us even see our kind act as something kind. Without thinking we just do it and move on. What we did was not done to show off, get an award or expect something in return. So the day we shoveled our neighbor's walk or found her lost dog was just the right thing to do. In fact it was a lot more than the right thing to do. It likely meant the world to our neighbor and to ourselves.

Now it's true that not everything we do for others is a profound act of love. Some things we do because we have to or

because we want to score points with another or because we don't want to be seen as a bad person. We go to our children's sports games because that's what is expected of parents. We contribute to our church because it would look bad if the collection came around and we put nothing in the basket. Sometimes we feel like a colossal failure in life so that mowing our neighbor's lawn is the least we can do to be a decent human. All of these imperfect ways of caring do count but probably not as much as when we reach into our hearts towards another and do some kind act of simple love. We do it for its own sake because we put ourselves in the same boat as another person. We share our humanity with another in a way that is meaningful towards another. It is an act of altruistic love, be it ever so tiny. Such small acts of caring are real miracles!

Let me give you recent examples of altruistic love from my own life. Out of the blue two friends of mine were diagnosed with fatal illnesses. I was, to put it mildly, horrified and in shock. These are people who have been supremely generous and very close to me over many years. It just didn't seem fair that two such fine people would have to suffer. My distress lead me to a distorted thought: Couldn't God have picked some selfish wretch to be put out of his (and everyone else's)

misery?! This couldn't be right! I could think of many people to take their place. My daze took over my life and I wound up leaving my beloved car of 18 years unlocked with the key in the car overnight on a busy street. The next morning I ran to get my car and of course it was not there. I just didn't want to deal with my stolen car. I blamed myself and became disillusioned as my community no longer felt safe. This was the worst part of having something stolen. But God had other plans for me.

I decided to deal with the car as best I could by keeping in mind how my car ordeal was small potatoes compared to the health challenges of my friends. It was obvious that I needed to visit my friends and offer my support and most importantly not be alone with my own suffering. I told at least 20 acquaintances and friends about my travail. The quick outpouring of their love, good advice and moral support completely transformed me. I felt so moved by the abundance of their caring that I told myself, "Gee if I knew I would get this much love I would had my car stolen a lot sooner!" I just sat in a cradle of caring and loved every minute of it. My missing car drifted to the back of my mind. I became serene. Soon my disillusionment melted and I felt motivated to see my ailing friend. Later I thanked my many pals for their abundant caring. I got a call from the police letting me know that my car was incorrectly towed and that I could retrieve it at the impound lot!

I'm sure none of my friends felt that they had done is anything special. But in fact what they did, as simple as it was, was

indeed very special, even beyond words. Rather than be cynical I felt the safety net of caring in my life. Whoever took my car did me a big favor!

Why do we resist seeing our own small acts of kindness as a big deal?

The policeman who risks his life each day in public service. The teacher of our children who spots some special talent and stays after class to develop and inspire that skill in our kids. The older person down the block that repeats himself as he shares bits of wisdom he finds missing in our own lives. Many of these small

personal acts occur every day and go unnoticed. They happen but are not cherished. We are all so busy that we miss half of the miracles that happen each day in our lives. Our mindlessness and distractibility rob us of what is so rich and sustaining in our lives. We could slow down and be mindful of the abundance of love in our lives. Why don't we?

Too many of us are so scared of our own vulnerability and need for love that we don't want to feel its presence in our bodies when it happens. When our hearts beat too strongly, tears form in the corners of our eyes or our knees get too weak from the sincerity and passion of a loved one we freak out and fail to accept our shared humanness. So we just live in our heads and can't accept that what we do sometimes for others is a very big deal. We can't see the depth of what we offer others because to do so would mean we would have to cherish what others offer us. The giving and receiving go hand in hand. It's hard for any of us to be that important to somebody else despite how much we crave for that to happen.

Why are we so afraid of giving ourselves to love?

Many of us resist the emotionality of giving or receiving love. We don't like to

to page 5



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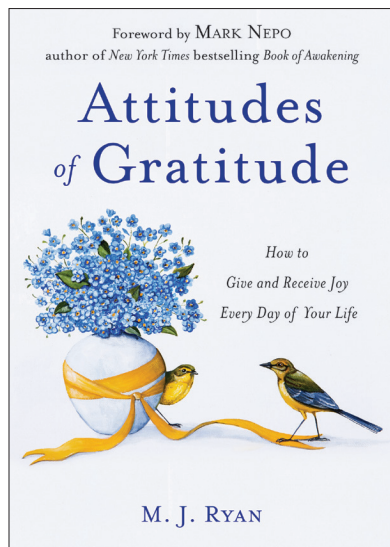
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Books



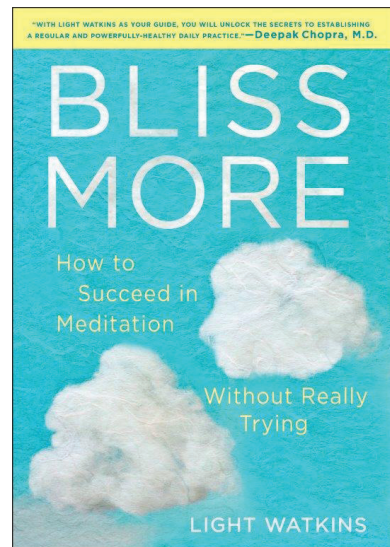
Attitudes of Gratitude: How to Give and Receive Joy Every Day of Your Life
By M. J. Ryan
Conari Press

Ryan states, “Research has confirmed the emotional and physical benefits of giving thanks.”

When we are thankful, fear and anger disappear. Additionally, she believes that more gifts come to us when we are grateful; it is a powerful change agent.

She provides 60 essays to help readers identify and incorporate gratitude in their lives. Practices of gratitude include daily exercise and being grateful “in spite of.” Included are anecdotal stories of how people have opened themselves to the fulfillment of gratitude and become more alive in the present moment.

Are you ready for more joy in your life? Try one of these suggestions, such as a gratitude journal, and see what happens!

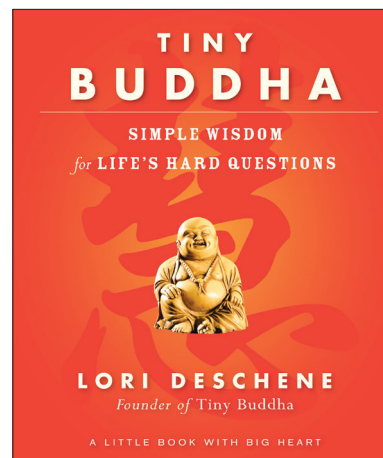


Bliss More: How to Succeed in Meditation Without Really Trying
By Light Watkins
Ballantine Books

This is Watkins’ “how-to guide” for a successful meditation practice. It includes his experiences and struggles with practicing and teaching meditation since 1998. Because of those experiences, he developed E.A.S.Y. (Embrace, Accept, Surrender, Yield), a technique everyone who wants to have a meditation practice will find valuable.

Watkins explains how he developed the principles and provides his own and students’ stories. All of which help the reader realize that meditation really can be E.A.S.Y.

If you have a book you’d like reviewed or have an old favorite you’d like to share with others, please contact barbara.kummerreviews@gmail.com



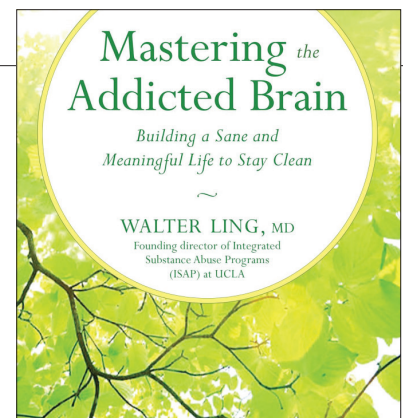
Tiny Buddha: Simple Wisdom of Life’s Hard Questions

By Lori Deschene
Conari Press

This book began as a quote—a-day tweet. Deschene tells the story of how she moved to New York City and the lessons she learned. She shares her insight and wisdom to help readers “live mindfully, in the present and connected to others.”

In her essay on pain, Deschene describes how one can learn from pain to make positive changes. Other essays include how to find the meaning of life and her thoughts on fate, happiness, and love.

Deschene is honest in her reflections and answers. For example, when writing about the question “What’s the meaning of life?” she admits that she has no idea and suggests, “Perhaps a better question is: “What are we doing about the things that are meaningful to us?”



Mastering the Addicted Brain: Building a Sane and Meaningful Life to Stay Clean

By Walter Ling, MD
New World Library

How the brain gets and stays addicted is described by Ling, a neuropsychiatrist with 30 years of clinical practice and a pioneer in research. He begins by describing how the brain works and how addiction is a brain disease. Ling also provides information on detoxification and explains what happens during the detox process.

Relapse and relapse prevention techniques, including holistic methods, are also described in the book for readers who want to establish new patterns to create a substance-free life. Ling suggests the strategy S.T.O.P. (Stop, Take a few deep breaths, Observe, and Proceed). This technique will help individuals who are feeling strong physical or emotional reactions. He also examines emotions, which if taken to extremes, can cause problems and lead to inappropriate actions. Readers will find valuable information, based on the best scientific evidence available in the study of addiction.

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Visit: MNGamblingHelp.org

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Spiritual Adrenaline

from p 1

Over time though, I realized these foods were not healthy and I could not continue to eat this way. I became very interested in nutrition and began to spend time studying it. I began to realize that my body (and yours) has an amazing capacity to heal if I treat it with respect and give it the nutrients it needs to function properly. The more I paid attention to what I was putting into my body in the context of food and beverages, the better I began to feel. It became very important to me to understand why.

The Substances in Food and How They Impact the Body

Let's quickly define what vitamins, minerals and hormones are, examine what they do in the body, and why they are so important for people in recovery. Vitamins are nutrients that your body needs to function and fight disease. Minerals are substances necessary for the maintenance of life and good health. Some are essential components of bodily substances, such as the calcium in bones and the iron in hemoglobin, whereas others help regulate the activities of metabolism. Hormones are chemical substances that affect the activity of another part of the body. Think of hormones as messengers controlling and coordinating activities.

Vitamins and minerals combine in the miracle of nature to permit your body

to create hormones, enzymes and other important substances to regulate organ function. Without eating these nutrients, simple yet critical functions either cannot occur or can only occur with substantial effort and stress on internal organs. Over time, with proper nutrients, you can empower your body to repair much of the damage caused by your days in active addiction. You also reduce stress on organs and enhance your body's ability to function at optimal levels in sobriety.

Many common ailments in the recovery community have a direct correlation with nutrition. Type 2 Diabetes and Hyperglycemia are among the most prevalent. But other ailments, such as depression and anxiety, are also directly impacted. Feeling lethargic and depressed can have a lot to do with what you are eating (or not eating). When I used to eat a lot of sugary

foods and drinks, I would get bursts of energy and then crash. I would then have lots more sugar, get more energy and then ultimately crash all over again. I started to realize that the way I ate and the ups and downs in mood had a lot in common with how I used alcohol and drugs. By reducing the amount of sugar in my diet, I noticed a positive change in both my mood and energy levels. The highs and lows were dramatically reduced in favor of more consistency.

Anxiety is also directly impacted by the foods you eat. For example, if you are already an anxious person, try to avoid caffeine and sugar as it speeds up metabolism and can exacerbate a genetic pre-disposition towards anxiety. If you combine eating the proper foods with regular exercise, you amplify the benefits that you would otherwise receive and further stimulate production of "feel good" hormones like endorphins, dopamine and GABA. Sounds like a lot to manage

right? Well it actually isn't if you learn how to integrate food and nutrition into your 12-step recovery. Just like step work is exercise for the brain, eating right and working out is step work for the body.

Achieving Spiritual Adrenaline

Spiritual Adrenaline is a lifestyle that I designed to be practiced along with the 12 steps of recovery. The goal of the program is to avoid white-knuckling abstinence in favor of true happiness in sobriety. Spiritual Adrenaline integrates two outside issues, exercise and nutrition, into your step-based lifestyle.

If you visit our website, www.spiritual-adrenaline.com or Facebook page, you'll find helpful information about what nutrients are important and why. We also offer practical advice on how to optimize your 12-step practice by integrating outside issues that directly impact how you think, look and feel. Every week we release a video or text blog on this subject. Later this year, my book *Spiritual Adrenaline: Strengthen and Nourish Your Recovery*, will be released by Central Recovery Press. If you purchase the book you'll have everything you need to know in one place. We recommend meal and exercise plans and lists of "recovery super foods."

Join the Spiritual Adrenaline community and learn to use what were traditionally known as "outside issues" to enhance your chances of success in recovery.



Resource Directory

A DIFFERENT KIND OF GRIEF

Individual coaching & on-going groups for those who have a family member/friend who has died from addiction. Contact: gloria@recoveringu.com /612-866-1056 for time, day, fee, and location.

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Maple Grove Therapy and Wellness is a collaborative of therapists working to serve primarily adolescents and young adults struggling with chemical and mental health issues. 612-460-0427, www.maplegrovetherapyandwellness.com

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Melrose Center- Melrose heals eating disorders for all genders and ages. Our experienced team offers specialty programming for those struggling with an eating disorder and substance use disorder – whether they are in recovery, treatment or still struggling with substance abuse. This specialty care is available in St. Louis Park, St. Paul and Maple Grove. Visit melroseheals.com or call 952-993-6200.

The Emily Program offers a wide range of eating disorder treatment services to individuals concerned about their relationship with food and/or body. Our caring and experienced staff develop personalized treatment plans to help individuals recognize and

change unhealthy behaviors and restore hope for the future. Six locations. www.emilyprogram.com or 651-645-5323.

RECOVERY WORSHIP

Recovery Worship is open service of evening prayer that includes recovery resources like the Twelve Steps and the Serenity Prayer. We meet at 6:45pm on Wednesday evenings at Zion Lutheran Church in Minneapolis. For more information, visit www.zionchurchmpls.org/recovery or call (612) 824-1017.

JEWISH RECOVERY NETWORK

A group of addicted people in recovery or in need of recovery, as well as their families and friends Open meetings second Sunday of the month - 763-544-4446

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS HELPLINE

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SOUL READINGS/CLASSES

Soul Readings/Psychic Development Classes: beginning, advanced, and workshops. **Cindy Lehman**; 612.669.1861; www.cindylehman.com; or email cindy@cindylehman.com. Beginning February 28 - Psychic Development Beginning/Foundation Class: Learn to consciously access your soul's guidance, clarity and wisdom. Discover your abilities and purpose working with your body/soul partnership in this lifetime. Wednesday evenings, February - November. See website or call for more information.

SPIRITUALITY

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WORKAHOLICS ANONYMOUS MEETING

Burning out? Workaholics Anonymous provides steps and tools to break free from non-stop work and activity. Newcomers are welcome at our Workaholics Anonymous meeting Wednesdays, noon, Fairview Riverside Hospital, Dining Rm. E. Learn more: 763-560-5199 or www.workaholics-anonymous.org.

Ticket to Ride

by Rick Talbot

I have a blue paper ticket that I carry in my money clip. Every time I pull it out to withdraw another dollar bill to spend, I see it. It's the very same kind of ticket that we have all seen a million times before. The kind of ticket that you get at any bakery—it's paper, it's blue and it's got a number on it. We all take these tickets and we wait in line. When your number is called, you get served. Familiar, huh?

I see this ticket every day. My ticket is like all such tickets but something about this ticket is quite different. It reminds me of something important, because this particular ticket is there to remind me that I am standing in a different sort of line. This line ends at the grave's edge at Roselawn Cemetery. It speaks to me. It says, "Carpe Diem, seize the day, your time is short and grows shorter all the while. Do you really have the time to not be the man you want to be?"

Such a notion for all of us usually remains a velleity, but this ticket, for me, moves me to action. No reminder of the end of the line, this one has become my ticket to ride.

definition:

noun: velleity; plural noun: velleities
1. a wish or inclination not strong enough to lead to action.

"the notion intrigued me, but remained a velleity" commonly expressed as, "I gave it a passing thought."

Simple Act of Kindness

from p 4

even use the word “love.” Cool detachment and rationality are culturally sanctioned values. We’re supposed to act like we don’t need anybody and that nothing seems to touch us. Being emotional is equated with being weak-minded, dependent or manipulative. For many of us emotionality makes us look foolish and we use the word “love” as an intellectual decision. Heaven help us when our pet gets run over by a car or our long-term girlfriend finds another lover!

Small acts of kindness are the practicing of authentic love, caring for someone for its own sake.

Many of us are afraid of the loss of control that giving ourselves to love entails. We may have been hurt in our childhood by imperfect parental love or fate and we want never again to go through that experience. We develop an avoidant pattern in our connections with others. Our avoidant pattern keeps us from ever feeling deeper love and the delight of making a difference to others. When we avoid emotional love we remain stuck in our emotional past and don’t even see when people are actually caring for us or that we are caring for them. Simple acts of kindness seem meaningless to us and we ignore them.

How can we give ourselves to love?

There must be others ways of feeling loved besides having our cars stolen or having a serious illness. All it takes to change this pattern of avoiding love is to tune in to others and make some small offering from our heart. How it will be received is beyond our control. We will be rewarded just by the doing of the act. It doesn’t have to be a big act of caring, just a small act. Once Mother Teresa was asked how she learned to be so abundantly generous. She said, “We don’t do great things. We do small things with great love.”

It’s vital to pause when we either give or receive love and cherish the sensation of caring as it washes over our body. Often it feels like a warm, calming and joyful experience. It fills us up with a sensation of security and fullness, more so than any joyride in life. Initially it may scare us to expose our emotionality to others as it looks very uncool.

We may worry that we will be rejected

or that we will lose our identities if we go out on a limb with love. But just the opposite usually happens. People respond to our kindness with their kindness and we will be confident enough to be separate from how others respond. Love is the best risk you can ever take. In the long run you never lose with it. However, it does take courage to be kind. You may need support from a professional helper or support group to make the leap.

What can you expect from small acts of kindness?

You can expect miracles! Not every time. But a lot more often than you ever imagined. Just as I was writing this article I got a call from a new college grad who lives in South Dakota on a Native American reservation. Out of the blue he called me to thank me for my many small donations to his school over the years. The words that went with the donations as well as the offerings made a huge difference in his life.

I was flabbergasted with his call and thanked him profusely for taking the time to acknowledge my part in his success. I cherished his call, especially the timing of it. He told me he plans to go into medical school and study immunology as he wants to help his people to overcome their intergenerational trauma. I applauded him big time. Indeed, the magic penny had multiplied, just as the song says!

“Occasionally in life there are those moments of unutterable fulfillment which cannot be explained by those symbols called words. Their meaning can only be articulated by the inaudible language of the heart.”

— *Martin Luther King, Jr.*

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.

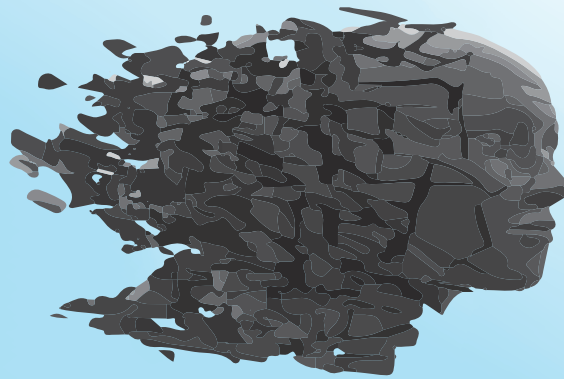
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1:2

One out of two people living with a brain injury suffer from some form of substance abuse issue, accordingly to the Office on Disability.

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Reclaiming our Lives from p 1

the head, heart, gut, and sexuality.

Google has become the omniscient source of knowledge, the brain of our species. Yogic practice teaches that we are the infinite wisdom of the cosmos that is available at any moment through our “higher selves.” Yoga can help you feel your body, connecting your thinking mind to your heart and gut — our second and third brains—and rest of the body. In this way, yoga can help you find knowledge about what to do, where to go, and who to connect with as the mind becomes more sensitive to the signs flowing through the body. Google becomes the compensation

for the disconnection from this awareness, the technological rational source of knowledge to which we turn for almost all wishes of information.

Facebook has become the heart. We have a deep need for a heartfelt connection with each other. Truly familiar and interdependent communities have defined human life for 99.9 percent of human history. In the past couple hundred years, this trend has shifted, and now we live in our own rooms in big houses, seldom truly depending upon others for the basis of our lives. Our money can be used anywhere to buy what we need, but we don’t



truly depend upon the cashier or others involved in getting the products.

Facebook promises us this lost intimacy. We go on Facebook hoping for a new like, comment, or message. The red flag on the toolbar gives us a taste of that lost connection. Yoga can also help us reclaim true connectedness. By becoming more connected to our own selves, we can’t help but relate to others with more presence, authenticity, and feeling. Yoga helps us get out of our own way so we can connect more easily and deeply with others, thus making frequent checks to Facebook unnecessary.

Amazon has become the gut. As I said earlier, in unhappy alienation, there is an ever-present will to consume, and Amazon offers endless consumption. Ordering a new product can give us a taste of that satisfaction, perhaps through the hope of something that will bring fulfillment when it arrives.

I once went through a phase of internet ordering — supplements and health products thinking that each new pill bottle would elevate my life. That wasn’t my experience. I’ve found that connecting with the deeper wisdom of self has been a far better way of identifying what I need to elevate my health. We can also use Amazon to fulfill the lost connectedness with others. Clothing or other products can present a certain self-image meant to appeal to others. Feeling disconnected, we may also feel unloved or unworthy, and so new products may inspire hope that we will be better, more capable of being loved. This is closely related to Apple’s compensation center on sexuality.

product imagery will suffer hard endings as the problems of alienation rise to the surface. Again, yoga helps with the connection to self and relation with others.

Ok, so yoga can help liberate one from the illusions of separate self, enabling one to connect to others in meaningful and heartfelt ways, truly satisfying our deeper needs. But let’s go further, shall we? How about a look at how this is a bigger-than-self social justice issue.



The bigger justice issue enters when we recognize how these big companies are using our state of disconnection to profit off us. Contrary to what many think, these are not benevolently minded companies seeking to maximize the public good. If they were, why would they hide their profits off shore so they can pay lower rates of income tax than you and I? Why would they depend upon slave labor and the destruction of the natural world to produce more and more products? Why would they look at us as consumers rather than humans, studying how our brains tick so they can create the most manipulative algorithms and advertisements to compel us to buy more and spend more time on their networks? It’s about profits, and it’s more profitable if we are stuck in disconnection.

The symptoms that yoga is often touted as resolving are sourced in problems bigger than the self. Sure, someone will talk about how we must change our own selves to change the institutions and system, but this is a limited approach. These companies are so powerful and pervasive that it is foolish to think that only efforts to change the self will be enough.

So, is the answer then to rally against these companies?

I’m not sure, to tell you the truth. At this point, I think it is worthwhile to recognize how these companies are manipulative and compensatory in their services. It certainly has helped me to recognize the true motives of these companies and the roles that they are playing in society. Awareness inevitably leads to transformation, so enough of us recognizing these dynamics may shift the culture so that these issues are simply left behind.

Reality is so bewilderingly up in the air at this point that I don’t feel honest in prescribing a particular path of action beyond raising awareness and demanding that these companies operate with honesty and integrity of values. I sense that this system as we know it is so impossible that major changes are on the way. Whatever is the proper path forth, we can be sure that more awareness will never be a bad thing.

Sexuality is one of the deepest drives of being human. Being disconnected from others and seldom engaging in fulfilling sexual relationships is a form of subtle and pervasive trauma. Apple has become the corporate leader of sexy products that promise to make you more appealing. As Galloway discusses, the sleek, shiny, expensive-but-affordable, top of the line gadget that can be worn or held on person sends the message that you are the crème de le crème of the sexual supermarket. However, what really makes us appealing is when we are connected to our spirit, our true self. Then we are comfortable and empowered, and send out vibes that others can’t help but find appealing. Also, we will easier find others who also practice presence, and then the relationship will be growth based. From the compensations of Apple, people may be drawn to each other, but relationships built on the illusions of

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Nourishment

from p 1



the fridge, I am not attuned to what my body is truly hungry for. If I take a moment to ask myself, what are you really hungry for right now? I frequently find it isn't food — I'm tired, overworked, stressed. In those moments, I benefit from nourishing my mind, heart, and spirit, not my stomach. Neglecting my whole self and all of my needs makes my hunger so loud that I can obsess over food, leading to frequent overeating, feeling emotionally drained, and feeling exhausted. That is no way to spend my days.

I was so stressed out recently — about my trip back home for the holidays, seeing everyone for the first time in a year when I feel like a completely different woman — that my shoulders had become so tense they caused a terrible headache. Around the same time that day, my landlord decided it was a good time to use a pneumatic drill to dig up the pavement. I nearly had a meltdown. This is a time I would typically go to the fridge. Instead, I booked a massage. Afterwards, I sat in the steam room and I felt that fulfilment I'd been seeking — my mind needed time out to restore, to rest. And because I did that, my carb cravings that I'd had all week completely dissipated.

It's my experience that if we look after our body holistically — listening to our entire body's needs — then we're more likely to be present, engage in healthy and helpful behaviors. We'll feel nourished.

I'd encourage you to start the new year with a little reflection practice. Have a look at the question and reflect for a few moments, then write your answers down. It may be a more powerful exercise if you wrote the answers and stuck them to your desk wall, or on the fridge — anywhere that makes you pause, and gain a few moments of mindfulness before reaching into the fridge.

Consider all the ways that you can nourish your whole self — for example, massage, journaling, walking in nature, or reading a book. Make a list on your phone or a notepad that you can keep handy. Then, at some point when you feel an overwhelming craving, I encourage you to speak to your hunger and ask it, *what are you really hungry for?*

This question/answer exercise is designed to give you the time to pause and reflect; to get in touch with what your whole self is asking. When we listen to our bodies, when we feel more in tune with what is happening within us, we're much more likely to choose nourishment (in all senses of the word), over harmful and addictive behaviors. Try taking a few moments out — your body will thank you for it.

Olivia Pennelle is a writer who believes in a fluid and holistic approach to recovery. Her site, Liv's Recovery Kitchen, is a resource for the journey toward health and wellness in recovery.

"I truly believe that everything that we do and everyone that we meet is put in our path for a purpose. There are no accidents; we're all teachers - if we're willing to pay attention to the lessons we learn, trust our positive instincts and not be afraid to take risks or wait for some miracle to come knocking at our door."

- Marla Gibbs

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