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Disclaimer: The model depicted in this ad is not associated with Meridian Behavioral Health and is for illustrative purposes only.

Harboring Hope

by Mary Lou Logsdon

"Hope inspires the good to reveal itself." Emily Dickinson

If I were to create an image of hope I would picture it as the water wings children wear to keep afloat. I see young children swim across a pool with the aid of these inflatable arm bands. It is not the device that holds the beginning swimmer, it is the air inside. When the air is gone, the water wings are useless. Hope is like the air in the water wings. I can't quite see it but I sure know when it's not there.

Some days it feels like my water wings have a slow leak. I may start the day with a full tank of hope only to open the paper to a new tragedy or hear from a friend just diagnosed with a life threatening illness or feel burdened by a list of tasks long avoided. How do I plug the leak in my water wings before I drown in despair?

We have our own air pumps to refill our water wings. For me, the strengthening sun rays that melt winter's snow pack breathe hope. Friends I can call to share my hurts, fears and sorrows refuel hope. Tackling a job I have long avoided builds hope.

According to Czech writer and philosopher, Vaclav Havel, "Hope is a state of mind, not of the world." Even when the world looks lost and foreboding, I carry my own hope. I cannot rely on the world's supply.

For many of us, the idea of hope sprang from our religious roots. It formed a triad with faith and love, flowing from a benevolent Power and a sense that we were neither alone nor in charge. While that sense of hope persists, like other virtues, hope is not only good for our soul but it is also good for our well being. Hope has been identified as a psychological trait that enhances our life satisfaction and can be measured and scaled.

Psychologist R.C. Snyder says hope is a function of struggle. He defines hope as a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful agency (goal-directed energy) and pathways (planning to meet goals). In other words, we carry hope when we recognize how we made it through past struggles and trust we can find a way to do it again.

Radio personality Krista Tippet, in her book *Becoming Wise*, says, "Hope, like every virtue, is a choice that becomes a practice that becomes spiritual muscle memory. It's a renewable resource for moving through life as it is, not as we wish it to be."

Hope is not wishful thinking. I hear my Mother's voice, "If wishes were horses, beggars would ride." Wishful thinking lets us off the hook. Hope rolls up her sleeves. Wishing looks back. Hope looks forward. Wishing stands still. Hope takes the next step. Wishing pulls back. Hope leans in.

The gardener doesn't wish for a warm winter and let things care for themselves. Rather, she plans for cold and prepares for winter's harshness by covering delicate plants, wrapping young trees, mulching frozen ground to protect roots from the thaw-freeze cycle. Like the gardener, the person with hope knows there are difficult times ahead and builds

“we carry hope when we recognize how we made it through past struggles and trust we can find a way to do it again.”

her own resiliency. She knows she can withstand difficulties. She's done it

before. She will do it again.

Our great challenge to hope is cynicism. Cynicism is rampant in our electronic world. Somehow hope is accused of naïveté, while cynicism claims realism. Cynicism is a disposition of disbelief in the sincerity or goodness of human motives and actions. It is an attitude of distrust that reaches into our politics and institutions.

Hope, on the other hand is a disposition that is based on an expectation of positive outcomes related to events and circumstances in our life or the world at large.

Each day I choose the disposition I carry. Some days it is tempting to be the cynic. The morning news brings stories of polarized responses to serious problems, denial of natural consequences and biting satire that erodes rules of decency. It is tempting to join "the world's a mess, what's the use" story, but hope is an inner strength and I cannot give it up to outer forces.

When I am tempted to veil myself in cynicism, I have two antidotes. The first is to get outside into nature. Here I get out of my head and into my body. The second antidote is gratitude where I get out of my head and into my heart. It is much more difficult to feed into cynicism when I see the beauty and rhythm of the natural world or remember how much I have to be grateful for.

Hope, like spring, persists through difficult times—not because it is easy—but because it must. The earth must burst forth with spring and even the harshest of circumstances will not crush it. So it is with hope. It cannot be snuffed out, even when all appears lost. With hope we stand in our own uncertainty and hold on.

Hope shoulders us through adversity. It doesn't give up. It knows, in the end, that all will be well. It transports us, like a bridge, to whatever comes next. Hope is contagious, powerful and binds us together. Michelle Obama says, "You may not always have a comfortable life and you will not always be able to solve all of the world's problems at once but don't ever underestimate the importance you can have because history has shown us that courage can be contagious and hope can take on a life of its own."

Here are places I see hope. Teachers and students who return to school after two weeks of funerals for colleagues and friends. The mid-life woman who joins Toastmasters because she is ready to move beyond her immobilizing fear of public speaking. The husband who walks into his first Alanon meeting to look at his own part and not just his wife's. The 17-year-old who goes to her first caucus. The 20-something who runs for city council. The retiree who converses with a circle of immigrants new to English.

Everyday I see rays of hope. Everyday the good reveals itself. Everyday I have another opportunity to lean into hope.

Mary Lou Logsdon is a Spiritual Director and Retreat Leader in the Twin Cities. She can be reached at logsdon.marylou@gmail.com



The Avivo ArtWorks Collective Artists Thriving in Community

By Andrew Braunberger, Peter F. Hinze, Sjolín, Shining Starr, and Jes Reyes

Housed in a basement art studio in Avivo's Minneapolis Community Support Program, we organize together as the Avivo ArtWorks Collective. If you ask us who we are, we would say we are artists – first and foremost. What brings us together is the goal to create community so that we can support one another. Our mission statement reads, “As a collective of artists, we embrace diversity, build community and present publicly. In doing so, we are challenging mental health stigma, and demonstrating that people living with mental illness can achieve success in art and life. We also aim towards building personal leadership, encouraging individuality, and supporting one another in our lives and in recovery.”

So why organize as an art collective? An art collective is a body of artists who come together to organize under a shared initiative. Collectives often serve as self-created, self-identified resources to the artists involved. Coming together ultimately creates an important and relevant career and mission-focused social group. Our collective is the heart of the Avivo ArtWorks (formerly Spectrum ArtWorks), which it was founded upon in 2004. “Avivo ArtWorks taught me how art and creativity can define who you are,” a collective member recently voiced about their time in the group. “I’ve learned about people, kindness, self-control, empathy, and commitment.” Art collectives form for a variety of reasons, and we find that this quote alone expresses what we hope being in the collective can do for someone. *to pg 6*

Mental Illness Gets a Hearing

by Pat Samples

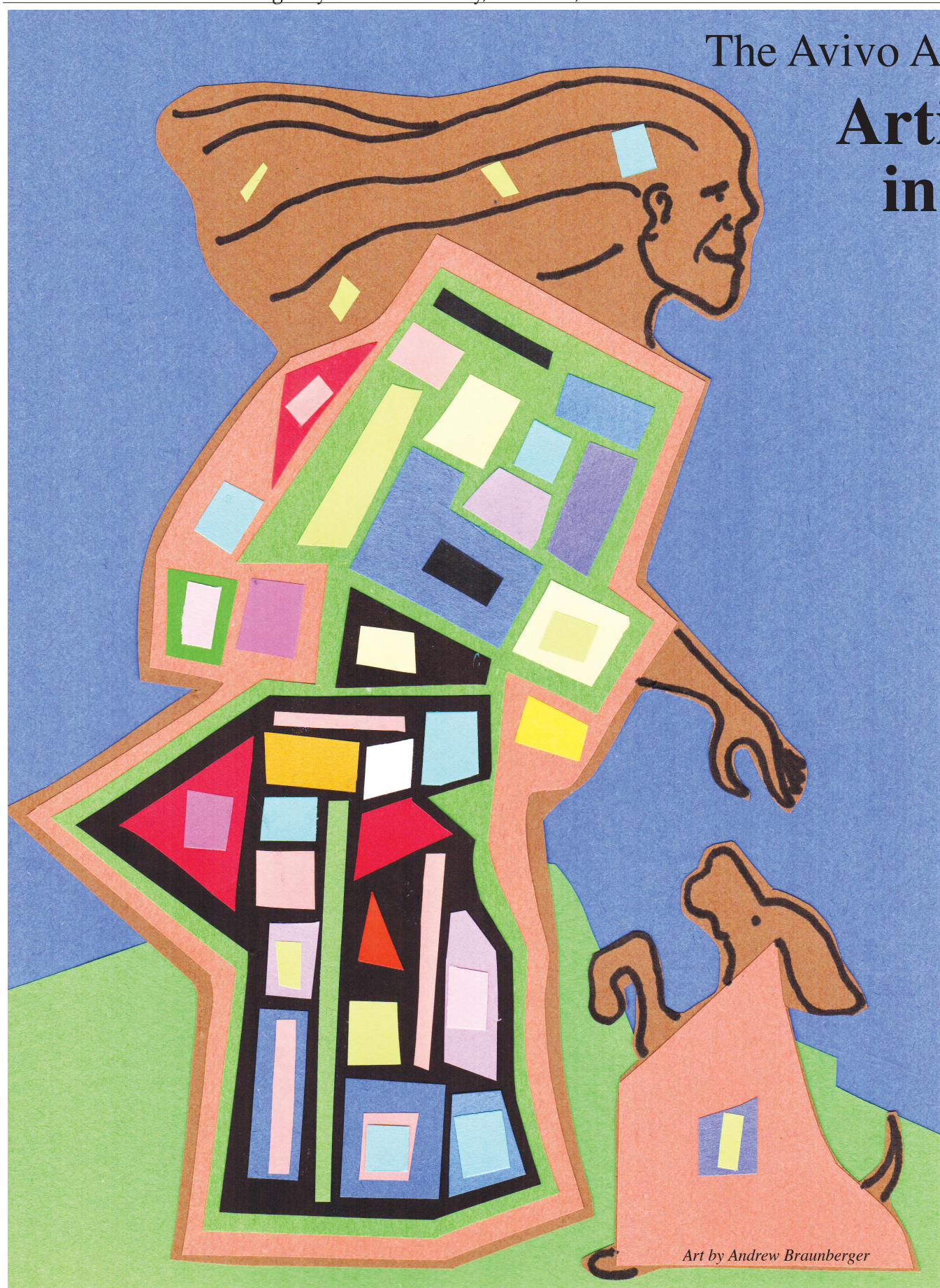
“I’m a veteran of mental illness combat,” declares a gray-haired man with years of untrimmed beard from the History Theatre stage in downtown St. Paul. David Beebe is reading from his personal writings to a crowd of friends and supporters of Vail Place, a clubhouse in Uptown for people with severe mental illness where David is a member.



Fatuma Ali reads about the difficulties of having chicken pox as a child.

“I deserve to be proud,” he reads. “I fought the good fight. I nearly died. I survived.” He notes there is gay pride and black power and

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Art by Andrew Braunberger

Growing Up With Emotionally Detached Parents

by John H. Driggs

I live with my girlfriend in what you might call a mutual arrangement. It’s about all we can handle. Neither one of us wants to be married. We’re both successful career people. It works for us. That is until recently. Last week my girlfriend said she would like to have a baby. I half facetiously asked her, “Well I suppose you want one with me?” Many of her women friends were having their first child and she felt like odd person out. Now raising a child is at the bottom of my list. Neither one of us is into cuddling, even with each other, let alone with a baby. I’m terrified of anybody being dependent on me. I was raised in a household with no hugging, emotional displays or loss of control. We were given many good life lessons and expected to do well in school, all of which I followed. I am a success today because of those lessons. Except that sometimes I get depressed.

Being emotionally detached means not having strong feelings about people we are in relationships with. It is not always a bad thing. If we have to fire someone who is working under us it’s likely a very good thing. If we are forced to listen to our co-workers tales of woe nothing could be better than having things go in one ear and out the other. Even being close to a mate sometimes goes better if we are not hanging on to every word that is spoken to us. Being removed from another’s pain can allow us not to be overwhelmed and hold on to ourselves. Sometimes emotional detachment is a welcome protective mechanism.

However sometimes we get very hurt when others are emotionally distant from us. If we get together with a group of old friends and no one asks about us, our hearts can be broken as we wonder if anyone cares. We may feel like the group misfit if everyone else gets attention but us. Having our children and spouse not even recognize us when we come home may cause

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Calendar

Upcoming

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. Wedn eves, now - Nov. See website or call for more info. Cindy Lehman, 612-669-1861 cindy@cindylehman.com www.cindylehman.com

Coffee, Croissants and Creativity: Experiential workshops providing hands-on theater and art-making activities at Interact Center for the Visual and Performing Arts. April 4, May 9, June 6, and August 8, all 1-3:30pm. Space is limited, call Deb Holtz at 651-209-3575 ext 117 or debh@interactcenter.com. 1860 Minnehaha Ave. W, St Paul, 55104.

Tergar Meditation Community Grand Opening: Saturday, April 7, 3-6pm. 1621 E. Hennepin Ave., Suite 210, Mpls, 55414. In the SE Como neighborhood. Join the celebration and learn about the meditation programs! 612-460-8837.

Minnesota Recovery Speaker Series:

Reenergize your recovery! Join friends for inspiring conversations at the Minnesota Recovery Speaker Series on April 3, May 1, and June 26 at the Huss Auditorium, 680 Stewart Ave., St. Paul, MN 55102. Free of charge, 7 p.m. Register and learn more at HazeldenBettyFord.org/MNSpeakerSeries or call Brigi at 651-292-2407.

Tuesday, April 3 - *The Disease of Addiction: A Complex Brain Disease Better Understood and Biological Considerations for Early Recovery*

In modern times the disease of addiction remains widely misunderstood by both society and even our helping professionals. The goal of this presentation is to help you better understand the causes and changes in brain structure in an individual struggling with chemical use issues, how those changes keep the afflicted person in the cycle of addiction, and how those changes and the subsequent healing process will challenge the person's ability to treat their disease as well as implement changes in their life.

Tuesday, May 1 - *This Too Can Last*

Steps Ten, Eleven and Twelve are often referred to as the maintenance steps. They enable us to maintain our spiritual condition, which in turn, will grant us a reprieve for today from drinking and using. While carrying the message to others, being of service and practicing the principles of the Twelve Steps of our program of recovery is our lifeline to abstinence and recovery. We cannot keep it unless we give it away. Incorporating these three steps into our daily practices can and will assure us that our recovery remains alive and vibrant.

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., Mpls, 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>.

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



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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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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.



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Sharing the Love is Happiness

by Daniel White

When I was in high school, I swore I would get rich working on Wall Street. I knew if I had a lot of money I could get whatever I wanted to be happy. My parents would tell me that this wasn't the case, but I knew better. In college I majored in economics because knowing how money works helps you make more money. Duh. Well, thankfully, some things shifted, and I began a deeper exploration of what it means to be human and of where happiness comes from.

From my studies of Buddhism, I turned on to the view that we are interconnected. There is no me with you. In fact, what we call "me" is always enmeshed in this seamless web of life, this conglomeration of constantly changing conditions. The Buddha said separateness is an illusion and the cause of suffering.

I've learned that my earlier yearnings to make a lot of money came from my stuck state in separate selfhood. Being a separated individual, I wanted a lot of money so I could get whatever I wanted and needed. Forget other people, if I had a lot of money, I wouldn't need to depend upon anyone else. And I would feel good about myself because of my nice things.

After college, I had thoroughly transitioned from the Wall Street path to the path of the artist wanderer. I was determined to live simply, perhaps in a cooperative house, and pursue my passions of ideas, poetry, music, yoga, and relationships.

In a cooperative household called "Dreamship," I lived with as many as 15 other roommates at once. I deepened in new relationships, practiced my craft, and worked on health and healing. From the lens of our society's value system, my path was perhaps unwise. I was working part-time at a coffeeshop, writing poetry, learning music, and living with 15 other wandering souls.

What about saving money for a house? Children? Retirement? A few years later however, I see with crystal clarity how those investments paid off.

I find myself today in Sedona, Arizona staying with two dear friends I met at Dreamship. They are offering me a room in their home if I ever want to move here. I feel so blessed everyday with these friends — my extended family. I see now how happiness comes through the flow of love that we pass to each other.

Each moment there is an opportunity. Will I share goodness with the world? Will I act in a way, however small, to uplift those around me? There is no happiness without this flow of energy back and forth with others.

The Buddha talked about the state of emptiness as conducive to peace and happiness. When I am empty of my own self-concerns, I breathe easily and tune in to what's happening around and within me. Thus, in this state of emptiness, I am in relation to the actual phenomena of the world, and peace and wellbeing naturally arise. It's about letting the energy flow freely.

The Buddhist practice of loving kindness can help open one to the flow of gifts that connect us. By simply thinking and feeling an intention for others to be well, we may release defenses and fears that separate us. When we begin to see others as deserving of love, and of our purpose to share our own love, then we can expand out of the separate ego into a relational state of being rooted in the flow of gifts back and forth with others.

Daniel White is a writer, poet, and yogi who wanders the world sharing his gifts and co-creating deeply fulfilling connections and moments.

"When spring came, even the false spring, there were no problems except where to be happiest. The only thing that could spoil a day was people and if you could keep from making engagements, each day had no limits. People were always the limiters of happiness except for the very few that were as good as spring itself."

— Ernest Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast*

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 fposmn@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: blooming-tonma@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

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

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 Chjrist, 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 @ Minnehaha United Methodist Church, 3701 E 50th St, Mpls, 55417, 6:30 - 8pm. 12-Step couples group meets 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 rrwink@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.com

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: 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 (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 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.southside-mensgroup.org.

SUNDAYS

Double Winners Anonymous. 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 pkg lot, 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.

Deep-Healing Prayer Group: Discover how God provides healing of memories, emotions, and the body at St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Sundays, 7-9:30pm, www.Door2Hope.org. 612.874.1033.

Calix Society: A group of Catholic Recovering Alcoholics and their family/significant others who desire to strengthen their spiritual growth, meets the 3rd Sund of the month at Cathedral of St. Paul. Mass at 8am., breakfast/speaker meeting at 9am. 651.773.3117.

Debtors Anonymous: a group of men and women using the 12-Steps to solve problems with debt and other money issues.; www.daminnesota.org 5:30-6:30pm, Oak Knoll Lutheran Church, 600 County Rd. 73, Minnetonka, MN 55305 (enter rear of bldnga, the Plymouth 2 Alanon. For more info call 612-388-2944.

Stress: How Mental Distress is your Signal to Make a Change in your Life

by John Demartini

Physical or mental distress can be challenging at times. We certainly don't go out of our way to acquire it, and we generally try hard to prevent it, but like Murphy's Law if something can become challenging and distressful it will, and probably at the most undesired time. Just the idea of distress is frequently distressful.

Our minds act in concert with our bodies in how they handle or respond to our specific environments. When our bodies are perceived to be under attack from, say, a virus, the hypothalamus – the area in your brain that acts as your body's thermostat – shifts the set point of your normal body temperature upward, producing a fever. So, in fact, a fever is your body's way of letting you know two things: one, that a microorganism and toxin is present; and two, that your natural immune response is on the case.

Likewise, your brain has a response against any perceived attack. In fact, a similar part of your brain that fights against a so-called physical invasion or infection by raising a fever – the hypothalamus – is the same one that lets your body know you're under a perceived mental attack or distress.

When you feel physical, mental or emotional distress, the hypothalamus responds by releasing a flood of adrenaline and cortisol – known as "distress hormones" – that provoke a rally from your body to assist, known as the "fight-or-flight response." Your strength and stamina increase as your reaction time is shortened, and your senses become sharper as your heart rate increases and your breath quickens. Overall, your body's reaction to mental distress can temporarily enhance your focus and coping capabilities.

In this way, mental distress can be viewed as a feedback mechanism – a process that uses the conditions of one component to regulate the function of the other. While the sense of distress is a signal to our body to make a change from the situation causing the distress, neither our body nor our mind can maintain proper functionality for extended periods of it. When we feel distress, we are wise to act immediately to remove ourselves from it, or it from ourselves, either by changing our actions or our perceptions.

Why do we experience mental distress?

We often experience mental distress because *our personal highest priorities and values are ill-defined*, and we unknowingly focus our attention on low priority, immediate or instant gratifiers instead of more meaningful and productive long-term objectives. Without a clear picture of our highest values, we often end up tending to another person's values not our own, and/or lower priority issues.

Another cause of mental distress is *not cataloguing and expressing gratitude* for the so-called challenging events, actions and people who have helped us in life. When we are grateful for what we have, we receive more to be grateful for. All is ultimately on the way, not in the way.

Frequently, our distress is self-perpetuated. When we allow our mindset to be filled with doubts and "what-ifs," we can work ourselves into a state of inaction – the "flight" aspect of "fight-or-flight" and the feedback loop, left unchecked, just increases. Vicious cycles can be the result.

What can we do to prevent distress?

On a daily basis, we need to stop and evaluate our highest priorities and honestly assess if we are tending to these goals or not. We are wise to ask ourselves what is truly working and not working, and then refine our actions and skills so as to maximize our meaning and productivity. When we are doing high priority, meaningful actions we transform illness creating distress into wellness.

It is wise to make a daily practice of entering into a state of mindfulness where we feel present and centered, can think wisely and clearly and become engaged in an efficient time and life management system.

By constantly reminding ourselves of our highest priorities or values and our mission and vision through self-affirmation and checklists, our achievements can be even more sustainable. Without distracting, or lower priority inputs from others, we can heighten the impact of our body's feedback mechanisms and override and master the "fight" aspect as our body's distress response.

Much like the palpable relief our bodies feel when our high fever breaks after successfully breaking through an infection, so too will our minds be cleansed with a similar sense of relief when we overcome or transform the mental distress we once imagined attacked us.

By listening to the subtle responses of our perceived distress we can attend to the personal signals they offer us to make wise and meaningful change. Then we can make the change that enhances and transforms our lives.

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Emotionally Detached Parents from page 1

us to feel taken for granted or unwanted. Being seen as a role and not as a person by friends may cause us to feel invisible and unimportant even when we serve some useful purpose and are around others. Many of us feel the loneliness of a disengaged culture. We are lonely in a crowd.

Now imagine the hurt of being around emotionally detached people who call themselves our parents and we are too young to put words to our experience. We may have leaped into their arms only to be cast aside or scolded. In our earliest years many of us were severely wounded by our parent's aloofness. We coped with these wounds by building an invisible wall around ourselves to never allow anyone to harm us again. Unfortunately these walls, while protecting us, have now eventually become our prison as we have difficulties today completely opening ourselves to love or offering love to others. Also we have trouble knowing and loving ourselves. We may be strangers to who we are today and not know how to affirm who we are. This harm often goes unnoticed in a busy, technological society.

Signals of emotional detachment

Aloof people are at best vaguely aware of their detachment. However, the following signals are likely indications of emotional distancing in past and present relationships:

- Continual avoidance of eye contact, especially in emotionally charged moments
- Overly intellectual use of language
- Lack of facial expressions and flatness when addressing personal stress
- Paucity of talk about personal friendships and their complexities
- Spaciness and inability to stay present

- Failure to get excited about anything
- Emphasis on looking good, being morally correct or trying to impress
- Hidden fear of emotional abandonment
- Indifference to spiritual pursuits and self-reflection
- Inability to explain personal feelings or recall significant emotional life events
- Overly dramatic style that is lacking in substance
- Disinterest in expressive arts: poetry, abstract art and soulful music
- Few discussions of friends, relatives or personal turmoil
- Willingness to look the other way when others are in pain
- Abhorrence of clingy or emotional people
- Diminished ability to reflect on oneself
- Inability to trust others and receive consideration from others
- History of chronic unexplained depression and anxiety

How does emotional distance harm us?

Certainly occasional distance between people may not hurt either one. When we don't talk to old friends for some time we may readily take up where we left off the last time we were together. However, chronic aloofness between people is another story since we are all designed by evolution to be social creatures. In fact we define and regulate who we are by our emotional connections with others. If beloved others are constantly distant from us we can view ourselves as unlovable and undesirable no matter how much we tell ourselves otherwise. The pain of this is often unbearable. To experience this suffering all you have to do

is momentarily turn your face away from an infant you are watching and have a relationship with. This is the core pain of the silent treatment. Undoubtedly you will turn your face back to the toddler once you hear his or her protest. This same pain occurs in us adults in our relationships. To cushion ourselves in emotionally detached relationships we develop a hardened self to others, we become less warm with others and we receive less warmth from others even when it is welcomed. Such deprivation may cause us to get depressed and experience chronic unexplained anxiety. We have unintentionally cut ourselves off from the main way we humans regulate anxiety: tender human relationships. Such wounds may last for years even when people are kind to us today.

Certainly a more serious type of harm may occur to us when emotional detachment happened in our childhood, perhaps even in years where we have no memory of it. Because childhood is our learning laboratory for life during key years of brain development, the hard wiring of our brains may have been traumatized by this emotional distancing, even when there was no harm intended by our parental supervision. This means that we have strong involuntary and repetitive physiological reactions to people we get close to. Children whose caregivers were generally aloof people, had post-partum depression, were mentally ill or abused alcohol may fit into this category. This trauma, if left unnoticed or untreated, can severely limit a person for life. Even understanding this fact alone may comfort us. Generally, the damage, like all forms of trauma, can be treated and changed with proper, extensive specialized help.

Cultural factors that contribute to emotional distancing

One of the greatest crimes of modern living is the increasing detachment that most of us live with. Parents are more attuned to their cell phones and i-pads than their beloved toddlers who are dancing around them for attention or else floating off to electronica in their own right. Seeing a group of teenagers sitting in a circle texting each other with no eye contact has



replaced the engaged banter of teens making faces at each other. Trying to get a real person on a phone for assistance seems like a quaint and unattainable wish. Driverless cars have replaced cab drivers and all their banter. Social media, while having some redeeming value, oversells itself as the great people connector, despite depriving people of eye contact and physical affection, the crucial ways

we humans convey warmth and meaning. All of this dehumanization is occurring at the same time that young people have massive epidemic levels of social anxiety and completed suicides. Culture, like a massive tsunami, sells us a bill of goods that make us less connected to each other and to ourselves. Few of us have the backbone to pick and choose what we embrace about our culture. Most of us don't even ask the questions of when to opt in and when to opt out. Cultural savvy is a lost art.

Getting close when you've always been distant

Rather than just give you advice, let me talk about my story from zombie to human being. In my younger years I used to be a math nerd and was very good at it. I spent most of my time in the artificial world of academia. I thought I had it all figured out until I started having problems with girlfriends. I never saw how distant I was from them and then was repeatedly puzzled and frustrated when many of them dumped me despite my view of myself as a "good catch." My head was fine but my heart was broken a lot more than I realized. So I signed up to do some volunteer work. I visited severely brain-damaged children in a local institution, many of whom lay on mats all day. Since I felt like such a privileged person I decided to connect with kids who weren't so privileged.

Unconsciously I knew that I had something very important in common with these kids. It was anguishing to see these darlings at first. I cried the first time and almost every time afterwards seeing the kids. Over time it actually became fun visiting them. We pet rabbits and watched them hop around, and I sang songs to the kids. It was marvelous to see their eyes dance when I looked at them and their delighted faces when I walked in to see them. They made me smile. I loved these kids and never missed seeing them for a year. I realized that my heart was beginning to open and heal and that I needed to dedicate my life to people and not my career.

I finished my Ph.D. program in math, found a very warm psychotherapist and walked away from math, eventually finding the love of my life and continuing to do volunteer work. I feel like the luckiest person on the face of the earth to have these children heal my brain damage. I live with that joy and these children (and many others) inside of me every day of my life!

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

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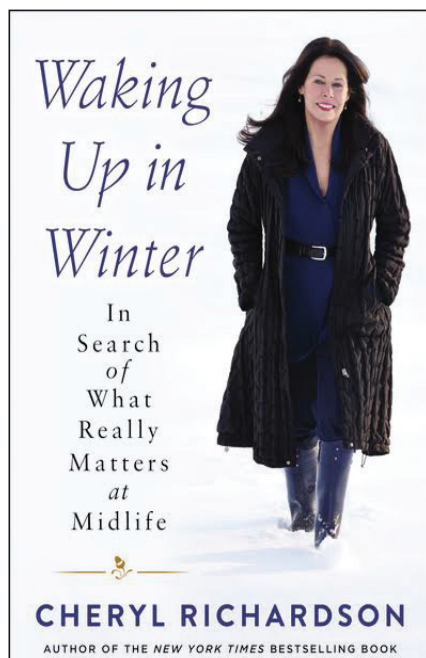
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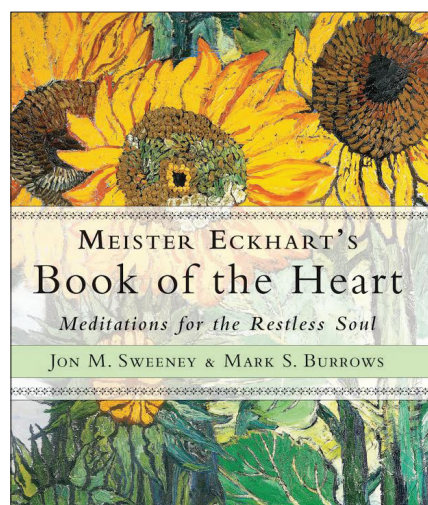


Waking Up in Winter: In Search of What Really Matters at Midlife
By Cheryl Richardson
HarperOne

As a best-selling author and professional life coach, Richardson is known for having answers. Then she experienced events that made her reevaluate and reexamine her life and what really mattered. She shares her journal entries and candid thoughts about age, marriage, work, friendships and priorities in life.

Richardson says, "I want to give people the tools they need to take better care of themselves—the language to say no, permission to gracefully disappoint others, strategies for setting firm boundaries that honor one's time and energy. This is not selfish, it's spiritual. I'm encouraging people to honor the soul, not the ego."

Readers will find her search included answering thought provoking questions such as "What's great about your life right now?" and "Who are you grateful for and why?"

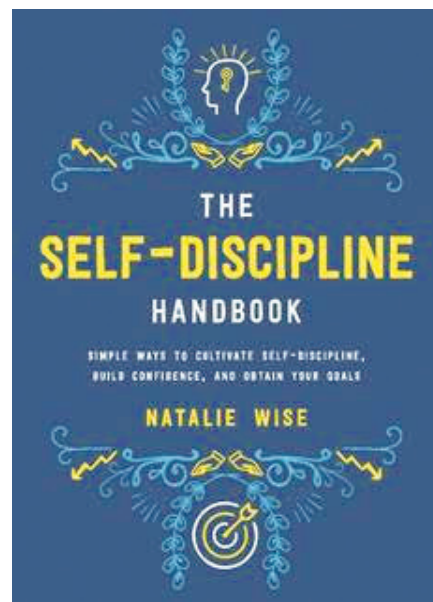


Meister Eckhart's Book of the Heart: Meditations for the Restful Soul
By Jon M. Sweeney and Mark S. Burrows
Hampton Roads Publishing

Meister Eckhart was a 14th century German mystic and philosopher who thought the search for God was a search for the self. He has been credited with influencing spiritual teachers from Erich Fromm to Rudolf Steiner.

Sweeney and Burrows took a collection of Eckhart's sermons and manuscripts and put them into poems for contemporary readers. Eckhart's description and understanding of the Divine is expressed in short, quick images that allow the reader to see and deeply experience their understanding of God.

However you interpret his writing, Eckhart's sermons and scripts inspire the desire to do some good.



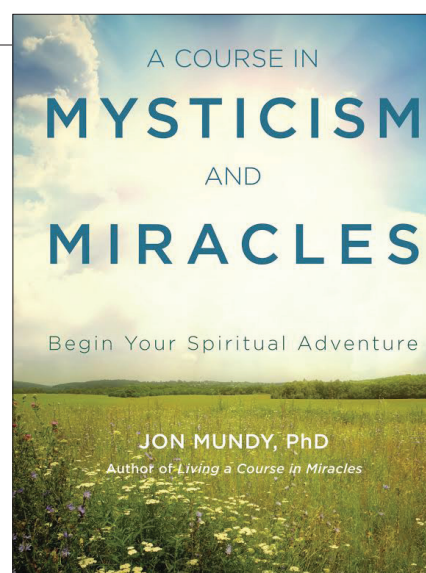
The Self-Discipline Handbook: Simple Ways to Cultivate Self-Discipline, Build Confidence, and Obtain Your Goals
By Natalie Wise
Skyhorse Publishing, Inc.

Wise explains the art and science of self-discipline. She describes boundaries and the influence of internal and external stumbling blocks. She even explains why she thinks persistence is a virtue and self-improvement is exhausting. However, to maximize progress and minimize confusion, Wise affirms, "Small positive choices set us up for success."

The handbook includes spaces to journal and draw and prompts with room to list items such as "My Values," "My Strengths," and "Curiosity Sparks." Readers will find thought provoking activities that may help them evaluate their goals and build the confidence to reach them.

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

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A Course in Mysticism and Miracles: Begin Your Spiritual Adventure
By Jon Mundy, PhD
Weiser Books

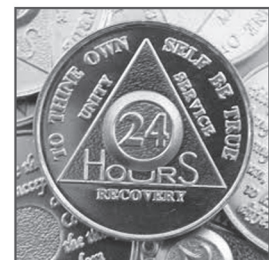
Drawing on the teachings of *A Course in Miracles*, Mundy explores mysticism and how it fits in today's world. He is also the author of *Living a Course in Miracles*.

In this book, he describes what mysticism is, and what it isn't. He explains how mysticism has affected various religions, but more importantly, how it influences spirituality. He expands on the topic of mysticism and how it is so simple it can be found in "ordinary" experiences.

Readers will learn about self-fulfillment and that peace is available to all.

"Is the spring coming?" he said. "What is it like?"...
"It is the sun shining on the rain and the rain falling on the sunshine..."
— Frances Hodgson Burnett, *The Secret Garden*

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Living with no Ending

by Susan L.

The ending began in the fall of 2016. I went to an appointment and this ignited a series of steps.

After a second x-ray and an ultra sound, an indication of a mass in my breast was determined. *Mass* — what a mediocre word for the ugly word *tumor*. The radiologist in the small clinic wanted to do a biopsy. I wanted to think about it overnight.

The reason I wanted to think about it? I knew I would be moving back to the metro area within two weeks. At first I thought I'd have the biopsy and then get a second opinion from a cancer specialist in Minneapolis.

Then I reconsidered. The tumor was said to be smaller than my pinky fingernail. Would there be enough left to be cutting off a second slice of the very small tumor? I wanted to have enough to get a good-sized sample for the specialists. I waited.

Even though the medical x-ray was forwarded along with the records, the process needed to begin from the beginning — the first step again. They wanted to see if the tumor had grown in one month. And if so — how much? I waited.

Two weeks would pass before the results of the biopsy indicated a low grade of cancer, and surgery was scheduled. Another two weeks would have to pass before surgery. They would then know if it had spread, and if so, how much. I waited.

This was a difficult time. I believe endings and beginnings happen at the same time if I look for them. I turned to God and asked two things: 1) to please comfort me,

and 2) to please guide the surgeons' hands

As I thought about the three possibilities I was facing, I decided to linger on each of them. Would it be that the cancer was contained and the surgeon would remove it? This of course, was what I hoped.

Or would it have spread and my breast would need to be removed? This one was not difficult either as I thought of myself as being more than just my breasts.

Or the third possibility — would cancer have spread throughout my body, and the surgeon would just sew me back up?

This third one caused me to think deeper. With this dilemma I took a step back to look from a broader perspective. Life or death. Life would just continue on and death would mean it was time for me to return to God. I decided both concepts were good, and I found peace with the issue.

The day of the surgery arrived. As I sat in the pre-op room in the recliner chair, I couldn't stay awake. I had had a good night's sleep the night before, but I would doze off and wake myself over and over again. Finally I fell asleep. The next thing I knew the nurse walked into my room saying it was my turn. I realized God had been comforting me. That's why I kept falling asleep. Just what I had asked him to do.

At the end of the surgery, the next step was to return to the same room and wait for my surgeon to recap what had occurred. Again, I felt comforted. I waited.

The doctor came and sat next to me, and the first words out of her mouth were that the surgery had gone exceptionally well. She said the "marker seed" and tumor came out together on her first try, and three lymph nodes had been removed



Artwork inspired by artist Jim Dine and created by Joy Blewett, an elementary art teacher and freelance artist from Rochester, MN.

from under my arm for safety. I thought again to myself — there's God again, he was guiding her hand. That concluded the two things I'd asked God to do for me.

It was then that my eyes began to get misty. It was because God loves me that much to actually do exactly as I asked. It humbled me. That's what I do, I just talk to God — no formal prayer.

The result of the surgery was that I am categorized the lowest level of reoccurring cancer, *after* I finish six weeks of daily radiation. Waiting through radiation.

My soul rests peacefully in this new place now. I don't think about cancer returning. That's because I feel God's love for me is beyond measurement. I'll be home whether I'm here on earth or whenever the time has come that I return to

God. The threat of cancer might be never ending, but God's love is a much greater never ending. Cancer and death have no power over me. I know God will take care of me wherever I am.

I am in a new place. The sun shines brighter, I have a bounce in my step, things are funnier, and I see things from a little different perspective.

People often ask me why I'm so happy all the time. They don't even know I've had breast cancer surgery. I hasten to mention some days I feel suspended above the earth in some way. It's as if I have wings of some sort. The infinite love from God is why you might find me this way. I know where I'm going, because I know where I've been.

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.

BETTERS ANONYMOUS

Bettors Anonymous now meeting in MN. Men and women using AA's spiritual solution to recover from gambling addictions. www.bettorsanonymous.org. 612.298.8593.

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COUNSELING

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

Amethyst Counseling Services - 651.633.4532

EATING DISORDERS

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.

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS HELPLINE

Drug Problem? We Can Help! Call Now 24-hour (877)767-6767. Also, check out www.NAMINNESOTA.ORG For a complete listing of meetings, upcoming events, campouts, and service opportunities.

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

Sacred Ground Center for Spirituality 651.696.2798; www.sacredgroundspirit.org. Explore your spiritual journey with the help of a spiritual director familiar with the 12-Steps.


WORKAHOLICS ANONYMOUS MEETING

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WOMEN'S MENTAL HEALTH

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Offering Love to People who are Dying

In the past few days, since news was shared that a beloved friend is dying, several people have come to me to ask what they can do. This friend is such an exquisite human; it is no surprise that so many people want to help and that there has been such a beautiful outpouring of love and kindness.

After almost 18 years in the rabbinate, I've learned a few things about dying and loving and grieving and getting back up again. Here are some thoughts and suggestions that may be of help. I'm not an expert. This is simply what I've learned in the school of hard knocks and loving people.

1. Every person's journey is unique just like every human soul is unique. Yes—it is true that your uncle may have had the same tumor—and he responded totally differently. We understand the desire to empathize and make sense of the mysterious; still—everyone's journey is unique. Remember this.

2. There are far too many euphemisms we use for death. I get it. Death is terrifying and sad and final and awful. And still—using words other than death or dying—especially for the person who is actually dying—isn't helpful. The dying person knows they are dying. As hard and painful as it is, using the language of death to talk about death actually enables us to be intimate and tender and loving in moments when we need it most.

3. When you visit someone who is dying and their loved ones: Be tender. Let them take the lead. Humor is often OK. Don't be afraid to show real, human emotion. Tears are OK. Hysterical wailing and sobs are not.

4. Do tell the person who is dying what they mean to you. BE SPECIFIC! Generalities are for Hallmark cards, not humans. What do you love about this person? What have they meant to you? What do you treasure? What's a funny story or a tender memory or wild story to share? Please: Be real and be specific. This is a gift for the person who is dying and those around them.

5. Please: Avoid platitudes like "Be strong," or "If anyone can beat this, you can!" Sure—it often comes from a place of love. But it isn't useful and actually shuts the door to intimacy.

6. Silence is OK. Truly. Sitting together in peaceful quiet can be quite a gift.

7. Don't overstay your welcome. Think of dying as the inverse of being born: For most people, dying takes a lot of work. There a bunch of stuff we can't see happening in the body and the soul and it is exhausting. Come for a few minutes, and then depart.

8. Before you go for a visit, do a little bit of spiritual prep: Think about if this were you, what would you want? It may be exactly what the dying person wants. And it may be the exact opposite. It is good to be aware of our own needs and desires so that we can be fully present to what the dying person and their loved ones need—even when our choices might be different.

9. Do NOT—under any circumstance—tell the dying person or their loved ones that there is a reason for their suffering and/or that they are going to a better place. You may believe that and that is 100% your right. But it is not acceptable to impose our theological beliefs onto others. And I've never, ever seen it work out well.

10. If you want to offer help, be specific. Dying is hard work. Don't make the person who is dying or their loved ones do the work. "Can I get you water?" "Do you need a blanket?" "Can we make you a meal?"

11. Dying people are people. Until they absolutely cannot do anything for themselves, respect their power and their autonomy and do what you can to support their independence. Do NOT make decisions for people who are dying unless you are the person/people who have been expressly granted permission to do so.

12. Despite how fabulous you are, you can't take this suffering away. But your presence and your love can make this suffering sufferable. We are all going to die. That is a simple fact of human nature. So given that fact, offer up as much love and kindness and tenderness as you have inside your soul—and then offer more. No one ever regrets being told they are loved.

13. People grieve differently. This includes spouses of the dying and their children. Some folks are weepy in public and some people are quiet. The more spacious we are in understanding that we all grieve in our own way, the more love we bring into the world.

14. People die. Love doesn't.

This is all written with love. I hope it is received with love.

— Rabbi Katz, *Shir Tikvah*, Mpls

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Artists Thriving in Community

In our shared art studio at Avivo ArtWorks, we usually work at our individual stations, spending time on our own projects. The perk is that we are around others who are doing a similar activity. Many of us have been in the collective for years, because it's just good self care. Because we are located in a Community Support Program, which is basically a community center, we also have access to a host of other resources such as activities, health coaching, and support groups. It's a holistic approach to overall wellness that we value.

We are all part of the collective for our own reasons. Essentially, though, we want to be part of a group and be connected to other artists. Here we share with you some of our own reasons:

Andrew Braunberger

I am an artist managing schizoaffective disorder. My mother encouraged my art making as far back as my memory goes. My illness began as I was graduating with a BA in Arts and Sciences from the University of North Dakota.

The Avivo ArtWorks Collective has a lot of non-verbal weavings of inspiration. Synchronicity enthusiasts, professional connections, and lasting friendships are all part of belonging to this community.

I enjoy making vulnerable lines and let them incubate on a shelf for a period of time. Later I shade up these lines with colors. This is addictive.

Peter F. Hinze

I work in many different mediums. My first love was watercolor painting, which I began to study at about age 15.

I do not like doing art by myself at home. It feels very isolating to me. Being in the art collective makes all the difference in world. In 2011, I became a member and do most of my work in our shared studio space. I find the support of the other artists, all of whom are living with a mental illness, very helpful. Expressing my emotions and my creativity through art has been a vital part of my recovery; it allows me to connect with others in a way that goes beyond words.

When I am working on a piece of art that I am really invested in, I get into it. It helps me stay focused and in the present. This keeps me from thinking about past things or worrying about the future. Doing, thinking about, and reading about art and artists reduces my stress, too. For example, in a book I recently read about Charles Pollack by Terence Maloon, the

author refers to art as a "form of communion, as a momentary release from the affliction of loneliness, as a intermittent overcoming of alienation, as a kind of transcendence." I deeply relate to this enlightening and validating statement.

Sjolin

I have been a drawer and painter for about 50 years. I started drawing at the age of five with pencils. I like working with other artists in a creative atmosphere. I come to the studio about two days a week, when I don't have to work. Art and community have brought me healing by helping me be involved with others. Being social inspires me to be more creative and do more art. I am making friends and am involved in arts shows, art projects, and I go on art outings. My time in the studio with others is positive.

My art has always brought healing through good times and bad. I remember when I was in the hospital with depression and how art classes helped me. It gives me a purpose in life. It gives me fulfillment. It takes time to make art and it is satisfying to finish a piece of art, especially when other artists comment on my artwork. I wouldn't get that feedback if I was doing my art alone.

I like to draw every day - in the morning and evenings. It helps me manage the stress in my life. I hope that my art provides larger healing for others as I tend to create landscapes and abstract images that are soothing, nature based, and meditative.

Shining Starr

I am and always have been an artist; a new creation everyday, myself a canvas. I have lived and breathed art since I was able to create any shape, sound, or color. Like a ballet choreographed, practiced over the over again.

My photography gives me peace as I walk around and look for art to be my subject. I use it as a way to show viewers how I interpret the world around me. I keep a sketchbook with me, along with my camera. I also like to "fast paint" for instant gratification.

Being part of a collective gives strength to our voices. We are working against the stigma of mental illness. We get to share and learn from each other as we create art, which is part of maintaining our mental health.

Art is what unites us, but it is the initiative to end mental health stigma that connects us to our larger community. Stigma can make

someone feel fear, shame, and hopelessness around living with a mental illness. Stigma can stop someone from reaching out and connecting with others. This ultimately can cause someone to isolate and not get the help they need. The National Alliance on Mental Illness encourages the following nine ways to fight mental health stigma: talk openly about mental health, educate yourself and others, be conscious of language, encourage equality between physical and mental illness, show compassion for those living with mental illness, choose empowerment over shame, be honest about treatment, let the media know when they are being stigmatizing, and don't harbor self-stigma.

Each step towards creating a stigma-free society matters. Will you work on challenging stigma, too? Together we can band as one collective voice. Together we can thrive. Together we can heal.



Avivo ArtWorks Collective Members Peter F. Hinze and Sjolin selling at a recent ArtWorks Winter Market

Artist Collective Member Shining Starr gives a talk at the Avivo ArtWorks show at Orchestra Hall



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Mental Illness gets a Hearing from pg 1

the purple heart for the wounded, and asks, “Where is my mental illness pride power?” It’s not easy to be proud of being disabled, he says, in part because of “my own self stigma.”

Fear, stigma, and a history of being ignored and scorned mark the harrowing trail for Beebee and many others who live with mental illness. On this February evening, their voices are heard. In a History Theatre project funded by the Minnesota State Arts Board designed to draw out the

their writing aloud and get feedback and encouragement from each other and the instructors.

The theme may be seasonal, like Halloween. One man shares a recollection of his sister receiving a kitten instead of candy on a trick-or-treat outing and how furiously his dad reacted, going out in pursuit of the “perpetrator.” Another theme, “Nobody knows,” generated these lines: “I was a pompom girl in high school” and “The hockey team I played for won third



photo by Justin Cox Photography

stories of these unheard Minnesotans, four theatre artists have been teaching members of Vail Place in Uptown Minneapolis and Hopkins how to write and perform their stories. Tonight these members share their art with the public, revealing what they care about and how they live with severe social anxiety, schizophrenia, PTSD, or other psychiatric disorders.

“Not knowing is scary,” reads Vail Place member Jane Dixon, gray and thin in a creamy orange shirt over faded jeans, as she tells of her experience with a blackout. Managing the daily challenges of her mental discord requires both discipline and improvisation. She says, “I’m under reconstruction every moment of my life.”

Another woman reads, “When I was a child, I thought being an adult was a finite thing. I thought you were done.” Not so, she found out. “I’m constantly morphing...changing old habits. I want to let go of old negative coping skills like eating sugar to soothe painful feelings [and] going to three movies in a row, then on a computer for five hours so I go to bed at 4 a.m.” Unraveling the knots of her illness takes a lot of work. She never feels like she’s done. “I want more. I want better. I want me to be more better. I want. And I’m tired.”

These two pieces were written in response to the group’s theme one week: “under construction.” A prompting phrase is chosen each week to spark the creative juices, and everyone in the group of a dozen or so people begins writing. They read

place in nationals” and “I won the 1993 Bob Dylan sound-alike contest.” The writings reveal a wide range of stories that matter to the writers. “I am a performer,

performing part of my life,” explains Beebee in an interview before the event. “I am not my illness. I am not a case study.” He spent 25 years as a mental health worker, and has been a writer much longer than that, having self-published two books. Schizo-affective disorder, anxiety and panic attacks have taken a toll along the way. This writing group is therapeutic, he says. “You clarify your own mind by writing.”

Concentration is difficult for Beebee, and early dementia has taken hold. He can no longer engage in his favorite activity, reading. “Too many years of illness,” he says. “Too many meds. They can’t help me anymore. It will only get worse.” He still writes with a certain wry brilliance (gallows humor he calls it), as in this piece he titled “Conversational Dementia”:

“In my 20s, I was talking to a psychiatric nurse. I was shooting my responses toward her rapidly. She stopped me and said, ‘David, you’re not listening to me. What did I just say?’ I summarized the last three minutes of our conversation. Her mouth dropped open. ‘You know what I said better than I do.’ That was in my 20s. Today I’m 66 and I’m listening, but I have no idea what you just said. I mean that. I repeat, I have no idea what you just said. I just take off on my own tangent for the conversation.”

Julie Tate, another writer, appears much younger than Beebee, though she has been a Vail Place member for 18 years. In a conversation after the show, she

spouts off a list of conditions that derail her at times: depression, social anxiety, hearing voices, ADHD, past abuse, PTSD. “But I’m still a very functioning member of society who cares for her mother and volunteers with kindergartners,” she says, with a sparkly smile on her round face. “I just happen to have to deal with this too.”

Tate wears a large plastic support device around much of her short body and uses a walker. A brain tumor resulted in her spine crumbling, and after eight surgeries she’s now beginning a two-year series of treatments to rebuild her bones. She’s not worried, she says. “People have good lives in wheelchairs just fine.”

Tate attends the Uptown clubhouse and raves about all the kindness and good conversations she experiences there. She knows she won’t be lonely there, she says, and she realizes that her own pleasant hello might be the bright spot in another member’s day. In the writing group, members trust each other with deeply vulnerable truths.

“We’re all on a level playing field,” she says. “We’re all dealing with mental illness. Nobody makes fun of how I look and am. Everybody just is here.”

“There are men I’m afraid of in Uptown that might harm me,” Tate adds. “But there’s not a single man I’m afraid of at Vail Place, not one I feel uncomfortable with.”

Tate writes about the terror she feels riding a bus when her PTSD is in full flare. She listens to recorded books to redirect her mind. Yet when a man with alcohol breath sits next to her and wants to snuggle, she feels trapped and panicky. In the writing group, she is gaining confidence in dealing with PTSD, and she shares some of her writing with her therapist.

The therapist now invites her during their sessions to put in writing what’s too hard to say. She welcomes this chance to get on paper such hard-to-speak thoughts as the graphic description of what she feels like doing to her abuser.

For her and other Vail Place members, writing is both art and medicine. Tate advises anyone with mental illness, “Write it down. Spelling doesn’t count. Grammar doesn’t count. It’s writing for your own journey and healing. And as I tell my kindergartners, nobody has to like your art but you.”

Sharing your writing in a group is also a way to bond deeply with others. Fatuma Ali, a native of Somalia, says she was shunned and shamed for her schizophrenia growing up. Vail Place in Hopkins has embraced her. “People like me there,” she says. “I finally have a place where I belong. I’ve been looking for somewhere to belong all my life.”

Onstage, Ali moves gracefully, her young face glowing as she reads, her head covered by a hijab dotted with shiny gems. She appears at ease. “I was very nervous,” she declares afterwards, laughing. “I have social anxiety. But now I feel great. It was like graduation!”

After “graduation,” seven male members of Vail Place and three staff members raised money for the organization through “Shaving Grace.” They shed years of hair growth to barbers onstage in exchange for audience and online bids. At the end, David Beebee’s chin was clean and his smile wide.

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

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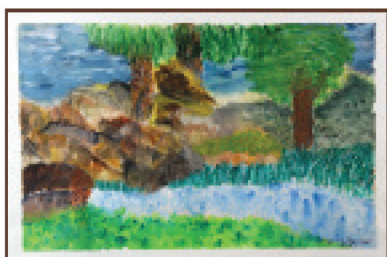
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