

# the Phoenix Spirit

Celebrating 38 years of Recovery, Renewal, & Growth

May / June 2018



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ANNUAL RETREAT ISSUE

thephoenixspirit.com

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## Go Away to Find Yourself

by Pat Samples

**C**ould you use a break from your daily routine? Some time away for rest, reflection, and renewal? Maybe it's time to go on a retreat.

Whether you take a few hours, days, or months of downtime, going on retreat offers you a chance to unravel your thinking, be kind to your body, and revitalize your spirit.

Here are the stories of how four Minnesotans create worthwhile retreat experiences for themselves. Two go on occasional retreats. For the other two, retreats are central to their spiritual life.

### GET FAR AWAY FROM THE EVERYDAY

Since his early retirement five years ago, Mike Griffin has spent a week out of every month on retreat. From March to October, Mike takes his respite time with his wife, Terry Hagenah, at a cabin they own in a remote area of Superior National Forest. The cabin is "off the grid," with no electricity or running water, a half mile way from neighbors. Visitors are rare, and may have to snowshoe in. The isolation and the natural surroundings give both Mike and Terry the perfect opportunity for quiet time in prayer, meditation, reading, and reflection. Sometimes they do these activities alone, sometimes together. In the evening they listen to guided meditation recordings from spiritual teachers and engage in qigong or other personal development practices.

Mike finds the cabin's natural setting a great place "to focus on being in the present moment. It's a place to notice the beauty and spirit in everything, to recognize the oneness in all beings," he says. "When you get to know the animals – the bear, the deer, the chipmunks – it's more difficult to do any harm to them."

In the past, Mike went on frequent retreats at Ananda, a yoga community at the foot of California's Sierra Nevada Mountains. These weekend or week-long retreats include yoga practice plus meditation sessions lasting as long as five hours at a time, chanting and other spiritually enriching activities. In these group retreats, says Mike, "your normal life is set aside and you do your meditation and prayer practice with a group focused on similar interests." In April of this year, Mike and Terry headed to Unity Village in Kansas City for a week-long prayer retreat.

**FIND YOURSELF** to pg 6

## Take a Mini-Retreat with Aromatherapy

by Jen Shepherd

Retreats are a vital part of healthy recovery and overall wellness. They come in all shapes and sizes; with varied costs, time commitments, and focus. Taking time for a retreat encourages rest, relaxation, and rejuvenation. Integrating a mini-retreat into your daily self-care routine is a simple way to manage stress and enhance your overall wellness.

Aromatherapy is an effective and accessible wellness tool that can be easily incorporated into your lifestyle. So let's explore aromatherapy, essential oils and how they work, and how you can start to use them right away to take that much needed retreat.

**AROMATHERAPY** to pg 14

### What is Aromatherapy?

The Alliance of International Aromatherapists (AIA) defines aromatherapy as "the inhalation and topical application of true, authentic essential oils from aromatic plants to restore or enhance health, beauty, and well-being."

There are a variety of ways to use essential oils. The most common are through inhalation or applying them to the skin.

With the guidance of qualified aromatherapy practitioners, essential oils are used in integrative medicine for symptom management for stress, depression, anxiety, sleep disorders, trauma, pain, and also addiction. The next time you go to your hospital or clinic, ask what aromatherapy options may be available to you.





## CALENDAR

## UPCOMING

**Gopher State Roundup:** An occasion to share the fellowship and to carry the message of AA. This year's theme is Living in the Solution and will be held May 25-27 at the Doubletree Bloomington Hotel, (Formerly Sheraton) 7800 Normandale Boulevard, Bloomington, MN 55439. [www.gopherstateroundup.org/](http://www.gopherstateroundup.org/)

**Coffee, Croissants and Creativity:** Experiential workshops providing hands-on theater and art-making activities at Interact Center for the Visual and Performing Arts. 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](mailto:debh@interactcenter.com). 1860 Minnehaha Ave. W, St Paul, 55104.

**Minnesota Recovery Speaker Series:**

Reenergize your recovery! Join friends for inspiring conversations at the Minnesota Recovery Speaker Series on 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 [Hazelden.org/MNSpeakerSeries](http://Hazelden.org/MNSpeakerSeries) or call Brigi at 651-292-2407.

Tuesday, June 27 - *Where Love and Addiction Meet*

We may often feel fragile, but we are strong. And we are many. As parents, we have the power to overpower the destruction that addiction spreads. The power to trade shame and blame for strength. Sandy offers help and hope for parents living in the place where love and addiction meet—a place where help enables and hope hurts. For parents trying to figure out the difference between helping their child to live and helping their child to die. For parents grieving the loss of a child who is still alive. For parents needing to find a recovery of their own.

## 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](http://Reclamation-Ministries.org) or call 612-879-9642.

**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](http://www.therecoverychurch.org), or like [therecoverychurchstpaul](https://www.facebook.com/stpaultherecoverychurch) on Facebook.

To place a listing, email [phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com](mailto:phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com) or call 612-805-1959.



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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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# Spotlight on Recovery

by Jen Shepherd

Minnesota Adult & Teen Challenge, a rehab and recovery center providing services for youth and adults in the Twin Cities for over 30 years, recently held their annual gala.

Chief Executive Officer Pastor Rich Scherber kicked off the evening with an overview of MnTC's history, current programming, and hope for the future. "The men, women, and teens who walk through our doors seeking help, come from all walks of life and represent all socio-economic backgrounds," Scherber acknowledged. "All have come to us with a serious drug addiction. For most, being in our program means the difference between life and death. This program works." He also recognized his wife Lynette, for being an integral support for him and the agency.

Other speakers served to provide insight regarding the local and national addiction tenor. Anoka County Sheriff James Stewart gave an update outlining the current drug related offenses and trends that are happening within the community. United States Senator Amy Klobuchar highlighted some of the current legislative work that is going on to try and keep up with the opioid epidemic and fight opioid abuse.

Throughout the evening participants heard the angelic voices of the Mn Adult & Teen Challenge Choir. The magnitude and power of their voices was just as impactful as some of the client testimonies. Four clients shared their stories of moving from a life of depravity in addiction, to a



life of freedom and redemption. Each client attributed their success not only to the program, but also to the spiritual side of their recovery, focusing on their faith in Jesus Christ as their savior. They shared inspiration and hope as they described the benefits of their recovery, and talked about restoration and healing within themselves and in their relationships with family and friends. Restoration was also

evident in their proactive contributions to society through employment and supporting others in recovery.

Guest speaker P.J. Fleck, Head Football Coach of the University of Minnesota shared how his faith has been a positive influence on his vision, allowing him to get through challenges. He gave a powerful and energizing visualization of his "Row the Boat" mantra. There are three parts to "Row the Boat": the oar, the boat, and the compass. The oar is the symbol of strength, and people who are facing addiction and finding freedom are examples of perseverance and never giving up. The boat is the sacrifice that is made for that recovery. The more we serve and give, the bigger our boat gets. The bigger our boat gets, the larger and louder our message becomes.

Lastly, there is the compass. It shows us our way, points us in the right direction, and is kept on track by our support systems. If we create a solid support system — surround ourselves with positive people — we will recover faster.

For more information about MnTC events go to [www.mntc.org/events](http://www.mntc.org/events)

## NUWAY MOVES

In late March, NUWAY moved its 3R's Counseling Center to 1404 Central Ave. N.E., Minneapolis 55413 to better serve clients with substance use and mental health disorders.

The center was previously located at 2220 Central Ave. NE. The phone number remains 612-789-8030. The new center will serve up to 200 clients per day.

"The move allows NUWAY greater ability to serve its mission of providing extended, co-occurring substance use disorder and mental health treatment for individuals in a supportive environment," said David Vennes, NUWAY's executive director and CEO. "The new facility gives us more room and flexibility."

## 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

### **publishers**

Aaron and Jen Shepherd  
4190 Vinewood Ln. N  
Suite 111 PMB 403  
Plymouth, MN 55442  
612.615.9740

### **editor**

Julia Jergensen Edelman  
[phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com](mailto:phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com)

### **sales director**

David Goldstein  
612.298.5405  
[goldsteintc@aol.com](mailto:goldsteintc@aol.com)

### **customer relations director**

Jen Shepherd  
[jen@thephoenixspirit.com](mailto:jen@thephoenixspirit.com)

### **contributing writers**

John Driggs, Barb Kummer,  
Mary Lou Logsdon, Mark Masserant,  
Pat Samples, Daniel White

## The Phoenix Newspaper

is a bi-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 Spirit. 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.

Can't find the paper near your house or apartment? Write to us at [phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com](mailto: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](http://www.thephoenixspirit.com)

Some illustrations courtesy of Vecteezy.com

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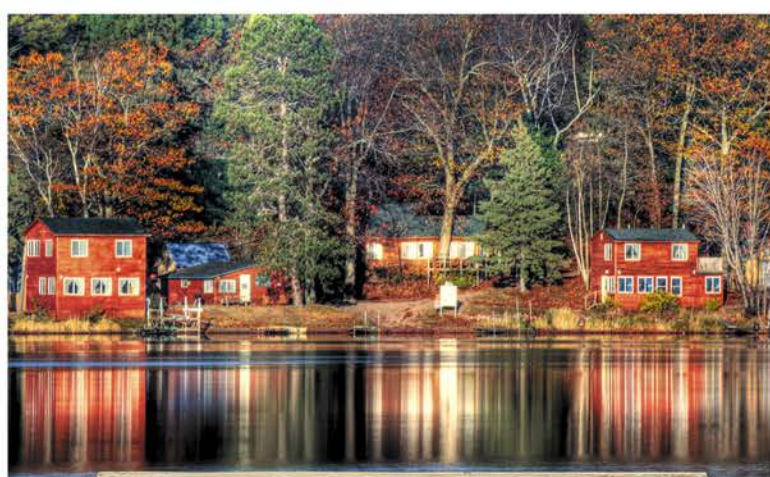
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## support groups

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SUPPORT GROUPS / PLEASE CONTACT BEFORE ATTENDING

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

**Understanding Eating Disorders, Treatment, and Recovery:** Second Monday of each month, 6-8:30 p.m. The Emily Program staff provides answers to common questions and concerns of families and friends “new” to eating disorders, treatment and recovery. 2265 Como Ave, St. Paul, 55108. Free, drop in. Visit [www.emilyprogram.com](http://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](mailto: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 [fiosmn@yahoo.com](mailto:fiosmn@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](http://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: [www.unitysouth.org/calendar](http://www.unitysouth.org/calendar) 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](mailto: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 couple-ship. 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](http://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/](http://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](mailto: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. [tcm@freenet.msp.mn.us](mailto:tcm@freenet.msp.mn.us)

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

**Workaholics Anonymous:** for people who are chronically preoccupied with work. Meets every Wed. 12–1pm in the east bldg 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://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](http://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 Christ, 3805 E 40th St., Mpls, 55406. LGBT friendly. For more info call Shea at 612-722-5064 or [sheahnsn@gmail.com](mailto:sheahnsn@gmail.com) or [www.foodaddictsanonymous.org](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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 [rwink@aol.com](mailto:rwink@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](mailto: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](http://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](http://www.clutterersanonymous.net)

**Debtors Anonymous:** men and women using the 12-Steps to solve problems with debt and other money issues.; [www.daminnesota.org](http://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 Heights. 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-judgmental 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](http://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](http://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.southsidemensgroup.org](http://www.southsidemensgroup.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: [nikkiahaven@gmail.com](mailto:nikkiahaven@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](http://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 Sun. 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](http://www.daminnesota.org) 5:30-6:30pm, Oak Knoll Lutheran Church, 600 County Rd. 73, Minnetonka, MN 55305 (enter rear of bldg, the Plymouth 2 Alanon. For more info call 612-388-2944.



# Break the Chain: Go to a Retreat

by Daniel White

Let's face it, we live in a crazy world with crazy demands on us. Always on, always on the go, always more money to make, more bills to pay. Family, friends, obligations. It's no surprise sometimes we need a break from the grind to find some peace of mind.

So let's not underestimate the power of a retreat — it can reset your life. Even just a day or weekend retreat can ground you in values and practices that empower and uplift you. A retreat can break the chain of old habits and free you to live by your highest ideals.

Retreats are powerful because they bring us together and remind us of how we want to live. In the flow of life, we can lose track of our purpose, intentions and practices. Sometimes we get caught in whirlpools of self-defeating thoughts and feelings, and habits such as unhealthy eating, not-exercising, not-going outside, not-meditating, and so on. Those ruts are no fun because the damaging habits lead to further states of malaise that then can lead to a throwing-in-the-towel on inspired visions for life. "Whatever, if I'm feeling this crappy, what's the point, at least I'll get some comfort from Netflix."

I find that when I arrive at a yoga, meditation, or other wellness retreat, I suddenly do not have the same yearnings

to engage in destructive behaviors. When I'm with a group of like-minded people who care about showing up with love and cultivating goodness in the world, I feel satisfied on a level that resolves whatever yearning I had for other stuff. This is because retreats are 1) not stressful compared to the demands of everyday life, and 2) they put us into community with supportive and committed people.

I find at retreat that I can be who I am without concern for how everyone perceives me. There is a trust that others will accept me as who I am—a fallible human who is no stranger to struggling through things. This support is priceless. Without the kindness and support of others, I tend to question my worth and have difficulty feeling love for myself. Retreat communities hold me and remind me that I, like everyone else, do matter, and that I am not alone in my struggle.

Retreats also affirm an inspired vision of life. The collective intention of a good retreat is for everyone to experience greater wellness, knowledge, or other empowerment. Being a part of this group field of energy can lock you in that grid. You may remember how good it feels to engage in practices of betterment, and those practices can become your new equilibrium point. The day after a retreat you may

wake up with determination and joy to go forth living by your higher ideals for health and happiness.

This intention, or "reprogramming" of yourself toward a better way of being, is also supported by the community of the retreat. At a retreat, we connect our individual intentions with the larger community. Suddenly it is not just me pursuing my individualized agenda, but I am uplifted by the energy of the group. Our intentions and commitments support each other, even after the retreat.

A good retreat can root you in the pleasure of living with love and taking care, inspire you to reboot your vision, connect you with a community of sustained support, and break the chain of old habits so you can pursue your path of liberation.

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

*Retreats are powerful because they bring us together and remind us of how we want to live.*

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-Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche

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# Go Away to Find Yourself from page 1

## TEACH THE CHILDREN

Spiritual growth is central to Mike's life. He's heavily involved in his church community, Unity Minneapolis in Golden Valley, and serves as a guide in the Youth of Unity teenagers' program there. Mike takes part in periodic weekend retreats with the youth, and recently he assisted them in providing an all-day retreat for adults in the congregation. These retreats include times for prayer, meditation, small group sharing ("family groups") on spiritual topics, "joy songs," and also "truth talks," during which individual teens share their own spiritual journey with vulnerable honesty. The youth not only gain experience in attending retreats but also observe how meaningful they are for adults.

Giving young people exposure to retreat experiences can help them establish a lifelong pattern. When her children were young, Constance Casey made frequent stays in a hermitage at Clare's Well (now Wellspring Farms), in Annandale, Minnesota. Her children helped her unpack, and she showed them the nature areas and the cozy geodome in which she would be staying. "They were excited for me," she says, and felt at ease knowing where she would be. She recalls them saying, "I can't wait to do this when I grow up." Now, as young adults, they are doing just that.

## SLOW DOWN AND DIVE DEEP

Constance is a Buddhist dharma teacher and a spiritual director. As with Mike, spiritual growth is central to her life.

"I love retreats," says Constance. "I've been on hundreds of them." Provided with healthy meals and the safety and comfort of a nurturing setting, she finds that she can take a deep internal dive to sort through

important matters in her life. It's a time for "clearing and clarifying," she says.

On one retreat Constance faced a long-held traumatic incident of childhood abuse and neglect by her mother. It took four days to go through the healing process. She reached out to other retreatants for support along the way. "After that retreat," she says, "that event is no longer with me."

Doing a Fourth Step inventory or other Twelve Step work is another reason Constance goes on retreat. She likes giving her full attention to writing about her patterns of behavior and having others nearby to talk to.

At times, her retreats are alone. She has pitched a tent in Glacier National Park to create her own retreat. Sometimes her retreats are silent. On one five-day retreat, she set out to contemplate the Lord's Prayer, beginning with "Our Father." "I couldn't get past 'our,' she says. "I kept exploring, what does that mean – our?"

Now Buddhist practices interest her. "I like the discipline of becoming blank and open," Constance says of Buddhist meditation. She even likes the disciplined posture of sitting upright without back support. "When I find myself slumping forward," she notes, "I question where my attention is going. Not analyzing, just noticing. It has connected me a lot with honesty, and I have found the center of my posture and my body." She also enjoys a super-slow walking meditation that fosters present moment awareness.

Last year, Constance spent several months meditating in a Malaysian monastery. "Being with a teacher who was radiating loving kindness allowed me to go deep," says Constance. The serene, supportive setting allowed her to focus

completely on her spiritual practice and enter "stream entry," a Buddhist goal important to her.

Going on retreats, says Constance, is a way to "get to know ourselves. For beginners, she recommends starting with a day or half-day. And don't spend all your time sleeping, eating, or taking photos, she advises. While sleep and food are needed, it's important to stay aware of your experience, "learning about sleep, boredom, sorrow, regret. These things are going to come up. Find out what's there." Also, she warns, it's easy to want to snap pictures in a setting of beauty, "but our eyes can get greedy, reaching and grabbing everything. Instead, go inside and see yourself as part of that beauty."

## LISTEN TO YOUR BODY, REVISIT YOUR GOALS

House painter John Armstrong likes to take time alone for an occasional retreat. "When I'm by myself, I can tap into my soul, my spirit, without a word structure," he says. "I value tuning into my body clock and my thought body." He also uses the retreat time to check in on his life goals. He doesn't do much writing, except to note a "constellation of things in my field," he says. "It's more a practice of being with my experience, and sitting with questions."

In recent years, John has been attending annual weekend retreats put on locally by Ibrahim Jaffe, a well-known Muslim Sufi teacher. The Sufi chanting appeals to John. "I am a somatic learner. The vibration of chanting connects me with my emotions, my spirit." He also likes hearing Jaffe's lectures. "I want to hear everything he has to say."

At times John carves out a three- to four-hour period at home for a retreat, where he sets aside his routine activities. "I create an intention or come up with one to three questions to consider," says John. He also takes "little-bitty moments during the day to connect with my vision."

Joining with people you know well is another way to go on a retreat. Body worker Kath Shaw and two close friends spent time at Wellspring Farms in a domed cabin, where the group made simple meals together. They stayed mostly silent during the day so they could individually explore their current life circumstances through quiet meditation, reading, reflection, walking the labyrinth, and embracing nature.

## GET GROUNDED FOR WISE DECISION MAKING

"We didn't want to waste time dredging through what wasn't going right in our lives," says Kath. "We wanted to sink into ourselves to find out what we needed to do next." Because they knew each other so well, they felt supported and understood just by knowing their friends were nearby and caring.

But they allowed each other to work through their own personal tough moments without offering advice. "We have to feel our own pain to get to the other side of it," Kath says. "We don't grow if others are there to meet all our needs." Kath was herself in the midst of deciding whether to



leave her marriage. The retreat helped her find more peace moving in that direction, trusting that she would know when the timing was right.

Kath also has gone on solo retreats. After the divorce, when her ex-husband took the children on weekends, she sometimes drove to a favorite quiet spot in Wisconsin, where she could sit on the rocks, reflect, and pray. "My life was in a state of chaos," Kath says. "Getting away helped me to find a more grounded sense of myself. I went home feeling more responsive to life rather than reactive."

"I trust my God that he'll sustain and guide me," says Kath, "but I have to go inside to get answers. That's what retreating does for me."

## STAY OPEN

That desire for internal reflection is one reason silence is maintained during mealtimes at Shalom Spirituality Center, a Catholic, Franciscan-based setting for retreats and other spiritual learning programs in Dubuque, Iowa. "We want to give people time away from both internal and external noise," says Shalom Director Sister Marci Blum. Like most retreat centers, Shalom is open to people of all faiths for group or solo retreats. Also, retreatants can meet with a spiritual director for individual guidance as needed, or daily for individually directed retreats. Some scholarships are available to offset retreat costs.

Interest in retreats is growing in our busy world, says Sister Marci. Many types of groups use centers like Shalom for their own events such as Twelve Step retreats or spiritual study. Eco-spirituality is currently a popular retreat theme, allowing people to deepen a sense of the sacred in nature.

Retreats can be "a time of transformation," Sister Marci says, "if one is open." She recommends setting an intention before you go. "Be open to what God may be asking of you or offering you."

*Pat Samples is a writer and a facilitator for creative aging, body awareness, and creative writing. [www.patsamples.com](http://www.patsamples.com)*

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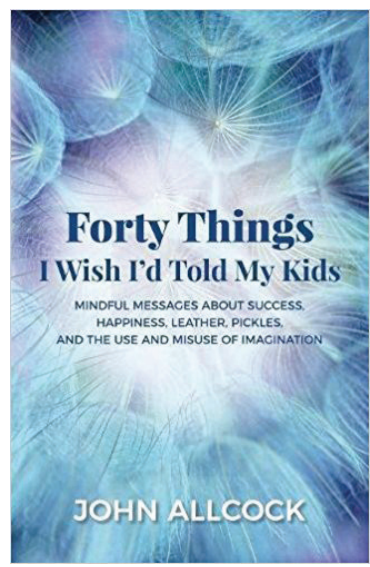
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# Books



## Forty Things I Wish I'd Told My Kids

By John Allcock  
Morgan James Publishing

Allcock says, "Ninety percent of your worries are wrong." He maintains, "What we do is not as important as how we are." And he thinks that most of what we fear is imaginary. These are some of the topics in emails he sent to his daughters, who are now grown, to demonstrate his care and concern for them. He states the information was what he wishes he'd known to teach his kids when they were young.

Readers benefit from those emails. For example, the one stating that ninety percent of your worries are wrong was the result of his worrying about an upcoming trip that was later canceled. We are victims—of our own thoughts. Allcock states, "We automatically assume those thoughts are true, when in fact they often are not."

Writing about "What we do is not as important as how we are" led him to decide, "Instead of focusing on what you do, focus on how you are—i.e., how you show up."

Readers may find these messages helpful in understanding how to live a happier and more meaningful life.

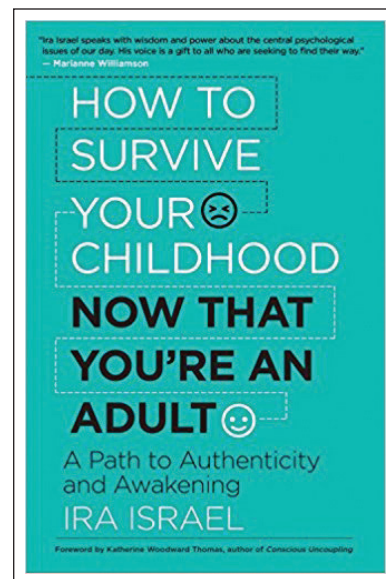
## How to Survive Your Childhood Now That You're an Adult

By Ira Israel  
Skyhorse Publishing, Inc.

Israel acknowledges that he wrote this book as a way to share what he learned from studying psychology, philosophy, sociology and spirituality. As a psychotherapist, he teaches his clients how to learn to be present and embrace every moment of life. He describes how to be authentic and live at the higher end of the happiness spectrum. Meditation and yoga are two of his recommendations to accomplish that goal.

Folks in the rooms of recovery have heard that the characteristics developed in order to get their emotional and psychological needs met as children may now be hindering them. In this book, Israel discusses all the negative language children grow up hearing and how it affects self-talk and self-esteem. He offers examples of how to mitigate or reverse the results of those experiences.

He encourages readers to give up resentments. It is up to us to break the habits we developed as solutions when they no longer work.



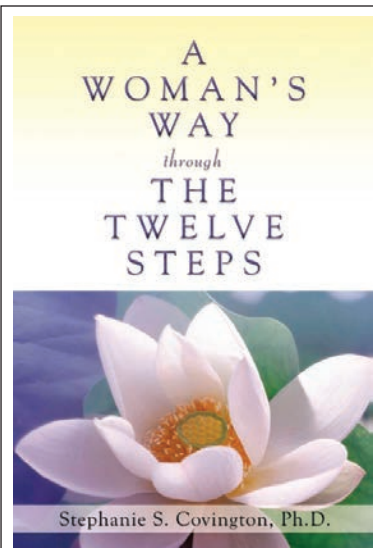
## A Woman's Way Through the Twelve Steps

By Stephanie S. Covington  
Hazelden Publishing

Although written over 20 years ago, this book still provides a valid message to readers today. Covington is nationally recognized for her work with women in private treatment and correctional institutions. Using the 12-Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, she provides a "gender-responsive approach" to addiction and recovery, relationships, sexuality, and spirituality.

In the introduction, Covington describes the history of Alcoholics Anonymous and explains why she thinks women may benefit from a more focused approach to recovery, one that is specific for women. Readers will find thoughtful and inspiring stories from women who worked the 12-Steps. A diverse group of women share their stories and challenges and they do so with honesty and courage.

Any reader, male or female, dealing with alcohol or any other addiction, will find nuggets of grace throughout this book. This book has companion pieces including a workbook, a facilitator's guide for professionals, and a DVD.



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**Boundary Waters Wilderness Area, northern Minn.** Various entry points. The BWCA is a 1,090,000-acre wilderness area within the Superior National Forest in northeastern Minnesota under the administration of the U.S. Forest Service. [dnr.state.mn.us/canoeing/bwca](http://dnr.state.mn.us/canoeing/bwca). 218-626-4300

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**Benedictine Center of St. Paul's Monastery,**  
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Contemporary monastic environment of Benedictine Sisters. [www.stpaulsmonastery.org/7-benedictine-center/retreatsonmyown](http://www.stpaulsmonastery.org/7-benedictine-center/retreatsonmyown).

**Carondelet Center,**  
St. Paul, 651-696-2750  
Historic center adjacent to the College of St. Catherine. The sisters of St. Joseph have rooms for up to 20 guests. Labyrinth and walking paths. [www.carondeletcenter.org](http://www.carondeletcenter.org)

**Christ the King Retreat Center,**  
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Oblates of Mary Immaculate offer accommodations in a retreat house that overlooks Lake Buffalo. [www.kingshouse.com](http://www.kingshouse.com)

**The Christine Center for Spirituality**  
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**Dunrovin,**  
Marine-on-St. Croix, 612-433-2486  
The Christian Brothers have two suites and 38 single rooms available for private retreats in their center on the St. Croix River. [www.dunrovin.org](http://www.dunrovin.org)

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**Franciscan Retreats and Spirituality Center**  
Prior Lake, MN  
[www.franciscanretreats.net](http://www.franciscanretreats.net)

**Franciscan Life Center,**  
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**Loyola Spirituality Center,**  
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# Wandering the Wild

by Mary Lou Logsdon

*The earth is a living thing. Mountains speak, trees sing, lakes can think, pebbles have a soul, rocks have power.* HENRY CROW DOG

I awaken anew each spring. The earth comes alive and so do I. A variety of body memories accompany spring's sensual feast: the melodious calls of red wing blackbirds, a quick shiver with morning's early mist, a whiff of ozone after a cleansing rain, the pungent taste of that first stalk of rhubarb, vibrant colors bursting from dreary gardens.

My daily walks take me to a city park where I lose myself in spring's slow unveil. Like a gallery opening, new sights and sounds await me — without the crowds. Nature rolls out her green carpet. I accept the invitation.

While my neighborhood park provides a sample taste of what my winter weary soul longs for, when I yearn for greater immersion into the natural world I know it's time to head deeper into the wild. I visit a state or regional park with an expanse of wildness and miles of unpaved trails to wander. Here I escape concerns of home, the political prattle no longer confined to its own season and task lists on hold for another day.

As I begin meandering I feel my body relax, my focus narrow, my gait slow. It takes a while — 20 to 30 minutes or more — for this to happen. As I slow I notice a patch of white anemone blossoms peeking through dried oak leaves or catch sight of a flitting warbler made known by its short chirps. I feel alive and in tune with something greater and timeless.

The Japanese have a name for this experience, Forest Bathing, or Shinrin Yoku in Japanese. It's an immersion into our natural world. The idea is quite basic — if one simply visits a natural area and walks in a relaxed way, one can experience calming, rejuvenating and restorative benefits. Such benefits include reduced blood pressure and stress, improved mood and sleep, as well as increased energy level.

The Japanese, of course, are not the first to acclaim the benefits of spending time in nature. John Muir, born in 1836 and considered the father of our National Park System said, "Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out that going to the mountains is going home. Wilderness is a necessity."

On a visit to Norway last July we found people out and about in the long summer days undeterred by the 40 degree temperatures or persistent rain. Native Americans have long reminded us of the sacredness and healing powers of the earth. "There is a way that nature speaks, that land speaks. Most of the time we are simply not patient enough, quiet enough, to pay attention to the story," says Chickasaw writer Linda Hogan.

Japan's medical community is promoting Forest Bathing as a way of dealing with stress, depression and self-focus. The idea is to let nature enter our body through all five senses. Japanese scientists are documenting the physiological benefits through measuring hormones and monitoring brain activity. People on nature walks tend to engage in less rumination or negative self-talk common with depression.

How do we go Forest Bathing? Slowly, deliberately and clothed. Those promoting this activity have a few suggestions.

**Go untethered.** Leave your phone and camera behind. When I don't, an invading text brings me right back to tasks or concerns or ruminations I was just trying to shed.

**Leave your goals behind.** Step counters are not needed. I don't have to get somewhere or go so far or accomplish it in a set amount of time. Not every moment needs to be purposeful.

**Practice silence.** Even if you bring a friend, be still. It is amazing how much we share an experience without speaking a word.

**Allow yourself to wander.** Follow a trail or simply meander in the woods. I remember doing just that, meandering in a woods when the leaves were still tightly held in spring buds. I noticed a brand new fawn nestled in autumn's leftover leaf debris, curled up like the fiddle-head of a fern. The doe was nowhere to be seen. The fawn was still and so was I, present to the awe of new life.

**Touch the earth.** Go barefoot in the open grass or the soft moss of summer woods. Feel the cottonwood's rutted rugged bark, the dandelions' soft seed heads, the cold stream fed by a natural spring.

**Stop to sit.** Listen to the sounds, notice movement, smell the earth. As I am quiet I notice the active life around me — floating butterflies or colorful insects or cranky chipmunks. I miss so much when I whiz by.

While I appreciate all the health benefits of being outside, be they physical or psychological, I am also drawn by the spiritual gifts. The beauty and power of the wild remind me of the vicissitudes of life, the comings and goings, the birth and death cycle that we all share. Spring's new growth builds on autumn's death and winter's pause. Spring flowers — ephemerals like Dutchman's Breeches, Hepaticas and Trout Lilies — gladden me as they bloom for but a few days. Such beauty is as delightful as it is fleeting.

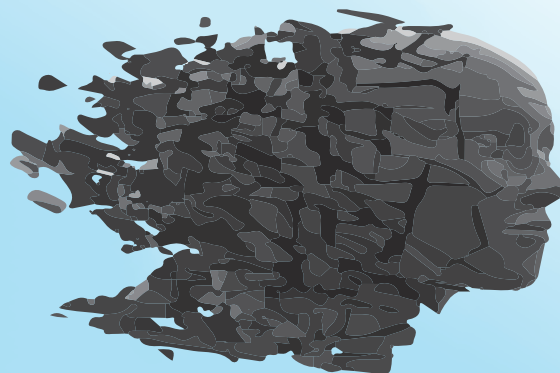
Writer and Quaker Parker Palmer says, "in the visible world of nature, a great truth is concealed in plain sight: diminishment and beauty, darkness and light, death and life are not opposites. They are held together in the paradox of "hidden wholeness." We leave the linear world of accomplishments and notice how we are all part of a great cyclic whole held together by a creative spirit that flows in and through us all.

The Japanese have given us a new word for this experience, but we know it in our bodies and in our souls. We are one with the living earth. Let us reconnect. As poet Mary Oliver reminds us, "Pay attention. Be astonished. Tell about it."

*Mary Lou Logsdon is a Spiritual Director and retreat leader located in the Twin Cities. She can be reached at logsdon.marylou@gmail.com.*

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## A Local Playwright's Odyssey through Work and Self-Discovery

by Beck Lee

When I started writing the play "Subprime," running at the Mixed Blood Theatre in May, I wasn't setting out to write a play about addiction, brimming with abuse, co-dependency and alcoholic behavior. I was writing about my experience being air-dropped into the Twin Cities, commuting back and forth between New York and Minneapolis to pursue a romance.

I was writing about my new neighbors in Linden Hills, these bright, sensible and nice people who seemed like they could do no wrong. Yes, I thought I was a bit of a sociologist. Modeling my characters after my neighbors, I was convinced I was writing a play about the Midwest, about people who were in denial about the true state of their marriages and finances and their identities.

While commuting back and forth, I seized on the idea that my characters were doing their best to ignore the signs that the economy was teetering on the edge of collapse. The play is set in the summer of 2008, just a few weeks before the demise of Lehman Brothers, and the cascade of bad news that led to the credit meltdown and Great Recession... a time when many of us were clinging to the idea that the economy would bounce back.

I was sure I was writing about that American trait that has us seeing the bright side of things, believing the lies people tell us when the truth is inconvenient — that can-do spirit, verging on gullibility. I was convinced I was writing about the wall of denial we erect to block out the true state of our lives.

Ironically, I didn't comprehend the extent this problem pervaded my own life and was part of a deeper matrix of insecurity, co-dependence, and dishonesty. I was writing about my own denial and fail-

ure to see the truth and to live grounded in reality.

My first clue about this disconnect came when Peter Moore directed the play's first reading in 2010. When it was over he announced he didn't want to continue. "You haven't found the humanity in these people yet," he said. "They are not honest, vulnerable people... they're stick figures." Instead of choosing a new director, I implored Peter to tell me more. I learned I had far to go to understand the characters I was creating.

Miraculously, "Subprime," which was my first foray as a writer since throwing in the towel back in my drug-riddled, alcohol-fueled post-college days, became an opportunity for me to learn about my addiction, co-dependency, and fear.

I can't say exactly when this started happening, but the play became my companion and teacher. As I learned how my ego needed to be coaxed out of the director's chair, I learned about the power of humility. Then, the characters in my play started to reveal themselves. Now I was learning, and a mirror was held up to me.

Finally, the play molded itself into a tribute to humanity — to neighbors, and friends who want to lead good, fulfilled lives, who just need a little help to do it without flinching, and turning away from themselves into addiction and self-deceit

*The Phoenix Spirit co-hosts a talk-back with Beck Lee following the Thurs., May 17, 7:30pm performance. The talk-back includes a brief reception with cast members and complimentary non-alcoholic refreshments. To purchase your tickets in advance visit [www.subprimetheplay.com](http://www.subprimetheplay.com) The Mixed Blood Theatre is located at 1501 S 4th St, Minneapolis, MN 55454.*

## Resource Directory

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### WOMEN'S MENTAL HEALTH

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# When You Were Parented With Shame

JOHN DRIGGS



*"Often the battles we fight today are the forgotten struggles in our childhood against impossible odds for which there are no words. Yet we fault ourselves today for losing them without knowing why and we absorb other people's failures as if they were our own. It's the price we pay for wanting to be loved." ANONYMOUS*

*"I'm sorry but I have to cancel our dinner date. I have the flu. I know this is the second time I've done this and I wouldn't blame you one bit if you gave up on me. Or, maybe if you let me pay for dinner next time, we can still be friends. I can't thank you enough for wanting to get together with me. I'm lucky to have you as a friend. Love ya."*

Shame definitely has a place in our lives when we've done something wrong or hurt someone else. But it has no place in our lives when all we are doing is simply being a human being or being different in some way we cannot help. Some of us expect the impossible of ourselves out of fear that we will never be loved. We may get into patterns of self-sacrifice and being scapegoated as we go through life constantly feeling ashamed of ourselves for no observable reason. Life may often leave us with constant feelings of anxiety and depression for no apparent explanation and we may underachieve in our life aspirations. We may see ourselves today as flawed without seeing how our early childhood years have set us up to be who we are. We seldom see other choices other than apologizing for being alive. We deserve a lot more out of life than we are getting.

However, we are the only ones who can save ourselves and unfortunately, sometimes we lack the tools. Perhaps this article can give you some direction and some hope.

*"No one can make you feel inferior without your consent."*  
—Eleanor Roosevelt, "This Is My Story," 1937

## DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HEALTHY AND PATHOLOGICAL SHAME

When you've harmed someone it's healthy to feel guilty about what you did and be ashamed of the part of you that made a bad choice. However, when you hate all of who you are simply for living or making a mistake or not living up to some ideal standard, you are exhibiting pathological shame. Pathological shame is about who you are and healthy shame is about what you did. Pathological shame

often lies hidden in us and is frequently the root of our addictions. Making amends may alleviate healthy shame. Pathological shame appears unforgivable.

## EXAMPLES OF SHAMEFUL PARENTING

The following examples are ways our parents, often unintentionally, may have caused us to feel persistently bad about ourselves throughout our lives:

- *being told directly or indirectly that you will never amount to anything or that you are better than everyone else*
- *getting blamed for all the troubles in a family*
- *receiving indifference from parents when you achieve or are in trouble*
- *having your feelings and perceptions regularly discredited or minimized*
- *being left home alone with no adult guidance*
- *being sexually or physically abused*
- *getting the constant message that you are "never good enough" no matter what you do*
- *having parents in the room but uninvolved with you*
- *regularly being called derogatory names*
- *being consistently and unfavorably compared to a sibling*
- *being made responsible for adult problems*
- *being catered to by your parents*

Frankly most of us would rather not remember such experiences; we repress memories of them and see no connection to how we are affected today by shame parenting.

*"I was not born to be what someone else said I was."*—James Baldwin

## IMPACT OF PATHOLOGICAL SHAME

No greater harm occurs to children than being treated as worthless or being told you are better than others. Adults from such families often feel like imposters in life. On the outside you appear normal but on the inside you hate yourself. You may not want anybody else to find out who you really are or allow anyone to be intimate with you, even when you've done nothing truly wrong. You likely are socially avoidant and underachieve in career aspirations. You cannot

accept praise and see yourself as unlovable. You shun real love and instead you unconsciously choose to be in hurtful relationships (or no relationships at all) repeating how you were raised as a child. You may feel strangely validated when people mistreat you and may even try to get abused in healthy relationships.

Or just the opposite may be true. In fact you may enjoy inflicting harm on others simply to relieve yourself of the omnipresent burden of internalized shame. You may resort to impulsive violence or exploit others to relieve yourself of your ever-present envy. Most burdensome of all, you likely feel responsible for other people's problems even when there is no apparent reason to do so. Essentially you repeat the same problems you grew up with because you feel you have no other choice. It is inconceivable and terrifying for you to receive authentic love or be peacefully in charge of your own life all on your own. The movie "Ladybird" painfully portrays this ordeal with an unexplained happy ending. It is a miracle that most of us harmed by shame in childhood do not permanently hurt others or ourselves.

Often the impact of childhood shame seems burned into your brain like any trauma experience. Fortunately our brains are malleable in the hands of careful and persistent interpersonal healing. You can overcome the scourge of pathological shame if you have the courage and help to face it.

*"And even in our sleep pain that cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the heart, and in our own despair, against our will, comes wisdom to us by the awful grace of God."*—Aeschylus (Greek playwright, 525-456 BC)

## OVERCOMING SHAME: THE LONGEST JOURNEY TO HEALING AND FORGIVENESS

Use this article to see if internalized shame is a theme in your life. Often shame lies hidden in people's lives and appears in the form of irrational behavior, like avoiding comfort from others, underachieving in career aspirations, and shunning intimate relationships. If you consistently describe yourself or others harshly you are likely plagued by shame. Such a wound cannot be healed by simply reading self-help books, reciting self-affirmations, or being successful in your career. These efforts generally make you feel worse about yourself as they feel inauthentic and shallow.

The key to overcoming shame is to return to the scene of the crime. If you were hurt by shame in important relationships then you need emotional relations to heal. You cannot correct shame on your own. You may need to make emotional corrections with people who truly love you and allow you to openly acknowledge both good and bad aspects of yourself as they stay connected to you. A good self-help group like Alanon and an in-depth relationship with a trusted healer may do the trick. In the process you may see your value as a person not in what you do but in who you really are. It's the being, not the doing that corrects shame. Often you learn that the worst aspects of yourself serve a useful purpose for you and even benefit others.

You may also learn that your apparent angelic qualities are actually not always so holy. For example, your withdrawing from others in a problematic group may signal to others that they ought to wise up and do the same. Your generosity towards others may be more for your sake than actually benefiting others. Your undesirable qualities may put others at ease as they too share limitations. Sometimes the company of misery is worth a lot more than the lonely adulation of success. The famous old-time movie star, Tallulah Bankhead said it best: "If I had to live my life all over again, I'd make all the same mistakes—only sooner."

Clearly making amends to those whom you've hurt also ought to be part of shame recovery. Think about starting with yourself. Are you still acting out in your addictions and neglecting your health and psychological needs? Do you use derogatory language toward yourself? Do you continue to avoid healthy relationships out of fear and entitlement? Are you not allowing yourself to be appropriately angry with people who have hurt you in your lifetime? And to limit your contact with people who hurt you today? Are you not recognizing the plethora of people who care about you today? Reading *The Gifts of Imperfection* by Brené Brown (Hazelden Publishing, 2010) may help you in your personal inventory. Then it is best to take a one-day-at-a-time approach in making amends to others whom you've hurt, provided it is safe to do so. Discover what you've missed all these years while also staying away from people who continue to hurt you. Your current bittersweet relationship to your parents may require careful scrutiny and reevaluation with the assistance of trusted others.

You will need to spend the rest of your life on your healing journey. You may wonder why it takes so long to heal shame. It's because shame is a trauma whose memories physically reside in your body and soul and is intimately wrapped up with your identity and has been since your childhood. Although current shame may roll off you like sweat with a dry rag; childhood shame occurred when your brain was newly forming and resides in your very being. The stubbornness of your injury is a testimony to your resilience and strength like nothing else in your life.

The good news is that you don't have to wait a lifetime to get relief from shame. The mere walking into a room of recovering people and declaring your wish to heal can be like feeling the relief of an air-conditioned room on a hot day. Your body gets the picture right away! In a reasonably short time people, even those you don't know, will favorably comment on you saying, "You look a little different today" or "You seem much happier" or "What's got into you?" Your body will be the first to let every one know that you are well on the road to healing and health. Just realize that you didn't do it alone and you have many people to thank, starting with yourself.

*"Hold fast to dreams, for if dreams die, life is a broken-winged bird that cannot fly."*—Langston Hughes

*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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# Take a Mini-Retreat With Aromatherapy from pg 1

## HOW DOES AROMATHERAPY WORK?

For thousands of years, humans have been using natural plant materials for medicine, spiritual and cultural rituals, beauty treatments, and perfumery. It has been said that a human's sense of smell is the strongest of the five senses. The olfactory system is a direct link to areas in the brain that regulate the body's reactions to stress, as well as emotion and memory.

Think back to a positive memory, perhaps even of a retreat, or a vacation. Imagine yourself in that place. What do you see? What do you hear? Are you touching anything? How about taste? Now, what do you smell? When you encounter that smell again in a different environment, does it take you back to that fond memory?

Aroma and olfactory experiences differ between individuals. It is important to know that, what works for one person, may not necessarily be effective for the next. Different memories and emotions can be attached to distinct aromas, and this can result in either pleasant or unpleasant responses.

This is particularly true when it comes to aromatherapy and using essential oils. A good example of this would be with Cedarwood, Atlas (*Cedrus atlantica*). One person may smell it and immediately think "It reeks like cat pee! My old cat used to pee all over the house. I hated that cat!" Another person may smell it and say, "I love it! It reminds me of my favorite vacation when I spent time hiking in a forest." Two very different responses to the same essential oil!

## WHAT ARE ESSENTIAL OILS?

Essential oils come from aromatic plant material such as: bark, roots, rinds, leaves, buds, seeds, flowers, and needles. They are extracted from plants by either steam distillation or expression (cold pressing). Each essential oil has its own special make up based on its chemical constituents, therapeutic properties, and aroma profile.

The results of human and animal research studies support various therapeutic properties of essential oils. Some are known to be more calming or sedative, while others are known to have more uplifting or stimulating qualities.

## ESSENTIAL OILS FOR YOUR MINI-RETREAT

Essential oils can overlap in some of their chemistry and therapeutic properties. What this means is that if you don't like lavender (or, you're one of the people that finds it stimulating instead of calming), you could try frankincense instead.

- **Lavender** (*Lavandula angustifolia*) is the celebrity of essential oils. It is usually the gateway into the world of aromatherapy. Commonly used for calming and relaxation, it is versatile and generally safe to use. It has been shown to reduce anxiety, stress, and pain perception. Its aroma can vary depending on the variety you purchase, but overall, it has a lovely fresh, herbaceous, and floral aroma.
- **Orange, Sweet** (*Citrus sinensis*) essential oil is made by expressing the rind of the fruit. It has been shown to uplift mood, decrease anxiety, and aid in stress management. If you're looking for an oil that is both cheerful and upbeat, this may be the one to start with. Its aroma is light, refreshing, citrusy, and sweet. It is one of the few citrus essential oils that is not considered phototoxic and it is generally safe to use.

- **Vetiver** (*Vetiveria zizanioids*) is distilled from the roots of a grass. It has a deep, heavy, rich, earthy, and smoky aroma. Anecdotally, it is known for grounding and centering, just as the roots are to the plant. Some people enjoy blending it with other essential oils to help balance it out. A little goes a long way.
- **Frankincense** (*Boswellia carteri*) comes from distilling a tree resin. The resin itself can be burned as incense. Throughout history, frankincense has been incorporated into spiritual practices by various religious groups. The chemistry of frankincense supports its calming and relaxing effects. It has a woody, fresh, earthy, and slightly spicy aroma.

Additional essential oils that could be used for a mini-retreat include citrus oils like grapefruit, lemon, and mandarin. Other pleasant additions could include sweet marjoram, rose, patchouli, ylang ylang, and petitgrain. There are many different essential oils that are available for you to explore.

## MINI-RETREAT WITH AROMATHERAPY

Taking time out for yourself doesn't have to be an elaborate and time consuming process. A mini-retreat with essential oils can last anywhere from 30 seconds to 30 minutes. Think about incorporating the essential oils with other self-care practices that you already use such as meditation, stretching, deep breathing, or progressive muscle relaxation. Essential oils can enhance the benefits and boost your overall wellness.

The quickest and most convenient way to experience the effects of your essential oils is by breathing them in through your nasal passages. This method is considered the most effective for managing stress and enhancing overall emotional wellness. Options for inhalation can include using an aromastick, cotton ball, tissue paper, aroma jewelry, and diffusing.

For your mini-retreat, try any combination of the four essential oils — lavender, sweet orange, vetiver, and frankincense. Enjoy connecting with the essential oils and the various combinations of the aromas when you blend them together.

To ensure that you are the only one that is inhaling the aroma, use a more contained method, such as jewelry, or an aromastick (also called an inhaler). There are a few local Twin Cities based aromatherapy companies that sell pre-made aromasticks. You can find affordable and fun aromatherapy jewelry online. Another option is to take an aromatherapy class and learn how to make your own personalized aromastick or aromatherapy jewelry. Another great idea for a mini-retreat!

Other aromatherapy mini-retreat ideas:

- **Place one to two drops on a cotton ball or tissue.** Close your eyes and breathe in as you connect with the aroma and also your higher power. You can also leave the cotton ball or tissue in a small glass bowl to allow the aroma to fill a space around you. Proceed with some additional deep breathing, stretching, or other calming activities that you enjoy.
- **Drop one to two drops on a wooden clothes pin** (or a diffusing car vent clip), and place that in the vent of your car. Breathe in the aroma to reduce your stress level during traffic. Turn on some relaxing music to enhance feelings of peace and calm.
- **Dilute one drop of essential oil in a**

**teaspoon of carrier oil or lotion.** Rub onto your back, shoulders, and back of the neck to reduce tension. As you connect with your higher power, breathe in the aroma, and imagine all of the muscles in your body relaxing.

If you have more time available for a longer respite, you can incorporate other ways to use essential oils such as an aromatic bath, using them in a diffuser, or getting a massage.

Additional safety information: be mindful of medical history, allergies, medications, pregnancy, age, application method, dilution, knowledge of the particular oil, and phototoxicity. If you begin to have an adverse reaction, stop using the essential oils immediately and seek medical attention. The information in this article is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease. Consulting with your medical professionals, and a qualified aromatherapist, prior to using essential oils can help ensure that you have a safe and positive experience.

Jen Shepherd, MSW, LICSW, CCA, is a clinical social worker and clinical aromatherapist in the Twin Cities.  
[www.shepherdwellnessmn.com](http://www.shepherdwellnessmn.com)

## An Overview of Aromatherapy for Mental Health and Emotional Wellness

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## 2 MINUTE AROMATHERAPY MINI-RETREAT

*The aromatherapy mini-retreat can be done on the fly and in a short amount of time. Incorporating this approach into your wellness routine will have lasting benefits for your overall health and well-being.*

1. Stop what you're doing and be in the moment
2. Put 1-2 drops of essential oil on a cotton ball or tissue (you can also use aromatherapy jewelry or an aromastick)
3. Connect with your higher power
4. Inhale aroma through nose
5. Breathe in calm, safety, and peace
6. Breathe out and release stress, fear, and anxiety
7. Repeat 3x
8. Relax in this safe space you and your higher power have created
9. Repeat as needed throughout the day

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## BREAKOUT SESSION SPEAKERS & TOPICS



Rev. Eyglo  
Bjarnadottir



Rev. Jack Abel



Michael  
Borowiak



Emilee  
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Pastor Tom  
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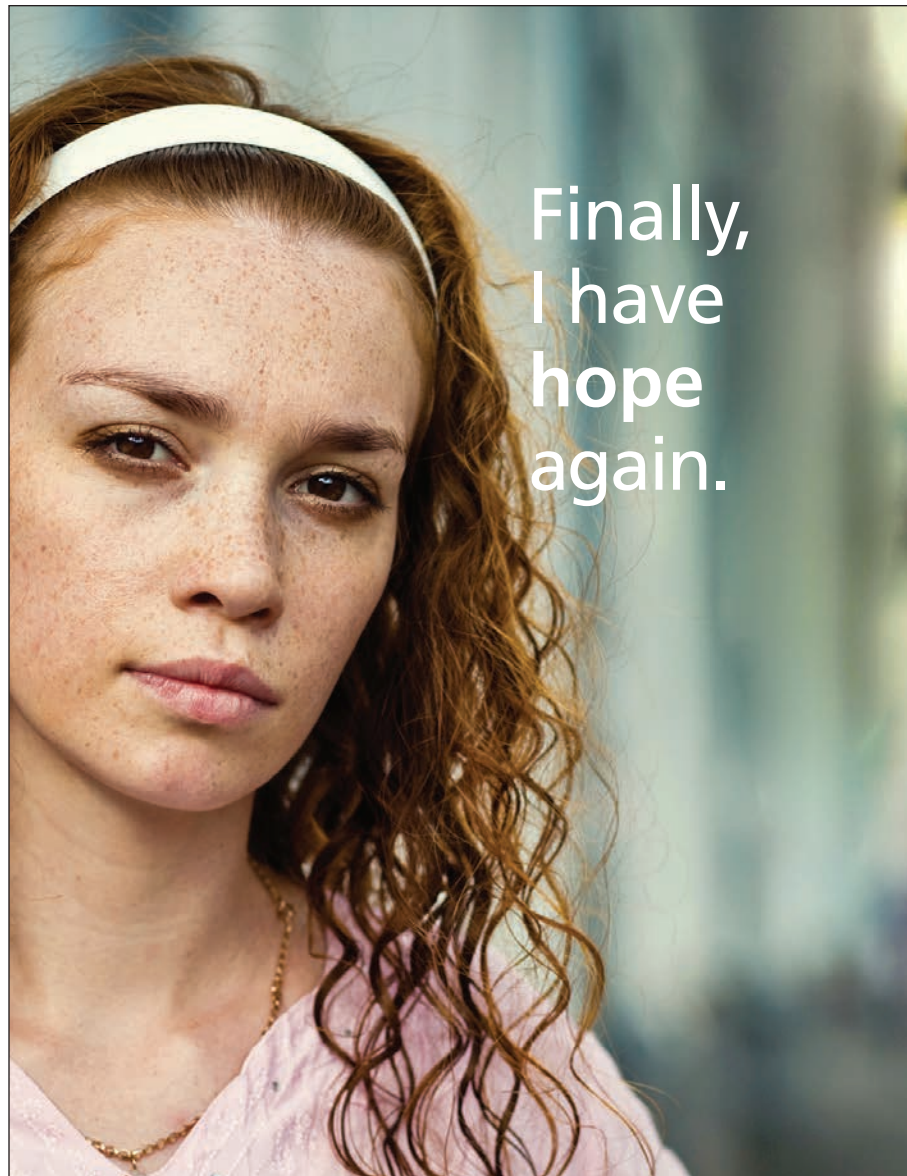
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## Memo from **God** MARK MASSERANT



I arrived at St. Paul of the Cross Retreat Center in Detroit, Michigan on a warm, sunny weekend in the late spring of 1991. My sponsor hinted strongly that I should attend the weekend gathering. Now that I was no longer suggestion-proof, I was discovering what he meant by going to any lengths. His timing was perfect, as usual. It felt like everything was caving in on me again. I needed some help.

I sobered up and was divorced almost simultaneously early in 1987, one of the most difficult periods of my life. Now, four years later, disappointment and sadness had revisited me. I wondered if I could go on. Strangely enough, I always wound up in the right place to get the message. It never failed—whenever I assembled a glob of painful past events to stare at, my sponsor would inquire, “All of this happened today?” As far as I was concerned, that was not a compassionate question.

*Why did I always have to be so damned dramatic?*

Despite my shortcomings, I thought my life should have come together much sooner than this. I’d come a long way, yet I still wasn’t getting the results I hoped for. Certainly, I was grateful to be alive and sober. Even so, I was already thirty-six—time was passing me by. If you asked me, patience was overrated. So much for A Day At A Time.

I wondered if I’d get the second chance at life so many others experienced. I wasn’t so sure. Hope was like a flimsy reed, and I wondered, “Should I reach for it again?” I was tired of being disappointed. Nevertheless, I knew if I was going to continue this way of life, I had to take care of my spirit. No one else could do it for me. The retreat, with its intangible ambiance and nearly one hundred men joined together in fellowship, was the perfect place for me.

For months, I was hoping to stumble upon the magic words that would inspire me to become more of the person I wanted to be. Perhaps then, my life would come together—I still felt like I had too many missing puzzle pieces. Then, during one of the afternoon sessions at the retreat that weekend, a particular talk revealed and underlined what I’d been missing all along. It was an ‘aha’ moment that I would need to digest.

A lengthy break followed the meeting, allowing ample time for discussion or contemplation. I thought a walk and a bit of fresh air would do me some good. Several lush, wooded acres with winding, paved paths stretched behind the retreat house. Once outside, I noticed the grounds were centerpieced by a grassy knoll, landscaped elegantly with rocks, shrubs and a full kaleidoscope of flowers. Rising from its crest was a statue of Christ. I approached and chose a spot on the turf about twenty feet away, a site perfect for reflection. I sat small and silent, yet churning inside.

Lost and anxious, I wanted to pray that ultimate prayer but didn’t know what to say or how to begin. I was un-

able to arrange into words what I felt in my heart. I let go and rested quietly, absorbing the gentle moments of great peace that surrounded me. Within minutes, without warning, it emerged—not the prayer of a spiritual giant, but rather, a frail litany voiced, freed like a flash flood. I uttered, almost gasped, “God...I’m lonely, I’m tired, I’m confused; I’m afraid...” Nearly choked with tears, no word followed. My mind, always loud but suddenly quiet, had stopped for once.

Instantly, a calming, soundless voice within my head added, “*And foolish too...*”

Where did that come from? I was astonished. “Foolish?” I sat there in awe. The message was clear; it was directly to me, but not from me. Finally I understood. My inner turmoil was unnecessary—I wasn’t trusting God, nor was I turning my life over. I only thought I was. I was running my life just like before, relying on my brains and my map. Now I knew what self-will was. The answer to all of my troubles was delivered in one miraculous memo—three simple words that were the whisper of grace.

Stunned, I tried to grasp the present, unexplainable wonder, but couldn’t. Moments later, I rose and brushed off the seat of my pants. With a slight chuckle, I grinned and said softly, “I won’t tell anyone if you don’t.” I slowly left that sacred place, pausing to look back more than once. My heavy heart was lifted, saturated with new hope.

Naturally, I haven’t kept it to myself; I share the encounter when I think it can make a difference. It’s one more story of how we are not alone.

There are many who might claim I was emotionally ripe for such an event to occur, wishing to explain it away. Nevertheless, I can’t remember ever using the word ‘foolish’ in my life—lots of other words, but not that one. It certainly wasn’t an answer I could give myself, nor was it one I was searching for. After that moving experience, I reached again for that flimsy reed, knowing that my life would get better. As time passed, I recalled that moment at the foot of the hill through the good and the bad times. Guided by the Unseen Hand, this alcoholic can live in the ‘Great Right Now’.

Even though I have long-term sobriety, I have to hang on to my miracles—I don’t get one every day. They are the tangible grace sent by my Higher Power that girder what I have come to believe in. Holding on to them is holding the hand of God.

*Mark has written articles for recovery magazines since 2016—his works can be found in Step 12 Magazine, Recovery Illustrated and others, as well as some recovery websites. His poetry has also appeared on websites and in print. He and his wife, Danette, live in a small town near Ann Arbor, and a daughter attending college. He can be reached by email at [dmmasserant@yahoo.com](mailto:dmmasserant@yahoo.com).*

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