

WHAT'S INSIDE

Calendar / 2

Letter From the Editor/ 3

Support Groups / 4

The Devastating
Consequences of Addiction
/ 5

Gift Guide / 8-9

Living a Better Financial
Story / 11

Books / 12

Sesame Street Uses Muppet
to Address Addiction / 13

Prayer Primer / 16

My First Sober

Holiday.

by Olivia Pennelle



How three leading women in the recovery community handled their first holiday season sober.

Holidays aren't always picture perfect, with families sitting around the dinner table, laughing and joyful. This is especially true of families in recovery, as the effects of addiction weave throughout the family unit: Dysfunction, codependency, stress, and burnout are common themes among recovering families. This scenario can be especially challenging for anyone in recovery to navigate, but particularly so for those in early recovery who are less practiced.

It is possible, however, to get through a Holiday, maintain your recovery, and keep your sanity. Who knows — you might even enjoy yourself!

I spoke to three leaders in our recovery community about how they handled their first Holiday season and what key lessons they learned. They also shared their top tips for someone newly in recovery, about to experience their first Holiday season and how to protect their sobriety.

But first, a little bit about these amazing women and their achievements serving our community.

LISA MCLAUGHLIN

Lisa McLaughlin, who is in long-term recovery, is the founder and Co-CEO of Workit Health, where she leads a team offering an innovative and digital approach to addiction care. Lisa has held several leadership positions, mentors women in recovery, and has served as an innovation fellow at the University of Michigan's School of Information. She is one of the most inspiring leaders I know in the recovery community, providing innovative and accessible addiction care.



FIRST SOBER HOLIDAY to pg 6

DEBTORS ANONYMOUS

Recovering the Joy of Giving

by Anonymous

With the Holiday season drawing near, my thoughts are turning to Christmas gift-giving. Who should be on the list? What should I give? Do I have to give a gift to co-workers? Bosses? Mail delivery persons? In the midst of all this mind chatter I like to slow down, think and get clear about the spirit of gift-giving. Why give gifts and what is gift-giving about? I'm not even a practicing Christian anymore. What does Christmas mean to me? In our culture, it's become a secular Holiday as much as a religious Holiday and has become conflated with gift-giving. Sorting out my feelings about the season is particularly important to me as a recovering compulsive debtor. For me, compulsive debting expresses as unsecured debt (such as credit cards), a terminal vagueness about money, avoidance of monitoring my finances, and an inability to identify or fulfill my personal needs. The Christmas season can be especially charged for me and others with this specific issue.

I am a member of Debtors Anonymous and have been abstinent from incurring unsecured debt since 2000. Yep, I live without credit cards. Beyond that, the 12 Step program of Debtors Anonymous ("DA") has helped me to live a joy-filled and prosperous life.

JOY OF GIVING to pg 7

The Gift of Self-Forgiveness by John H. Driggs, LICSW

"If I had to live my life again, I'd make all the same mistakes—only sooner." — TALLULAH BANKHEAD (1902-1968)

One of the most hidden and powerful aspects of human identity is how many of us have shame and harsh judgments towards ourselves. Some of us are barely aware of our self-contempt; others are drowning in a sea of self-revulsion and have no way to save ourselves. Most of us alternate between denial and harsh self-criticism. We are so overwhelmed by this self-devaluation that we often unconsciously choose to not acknowledge it in ourselves. Often, we don't

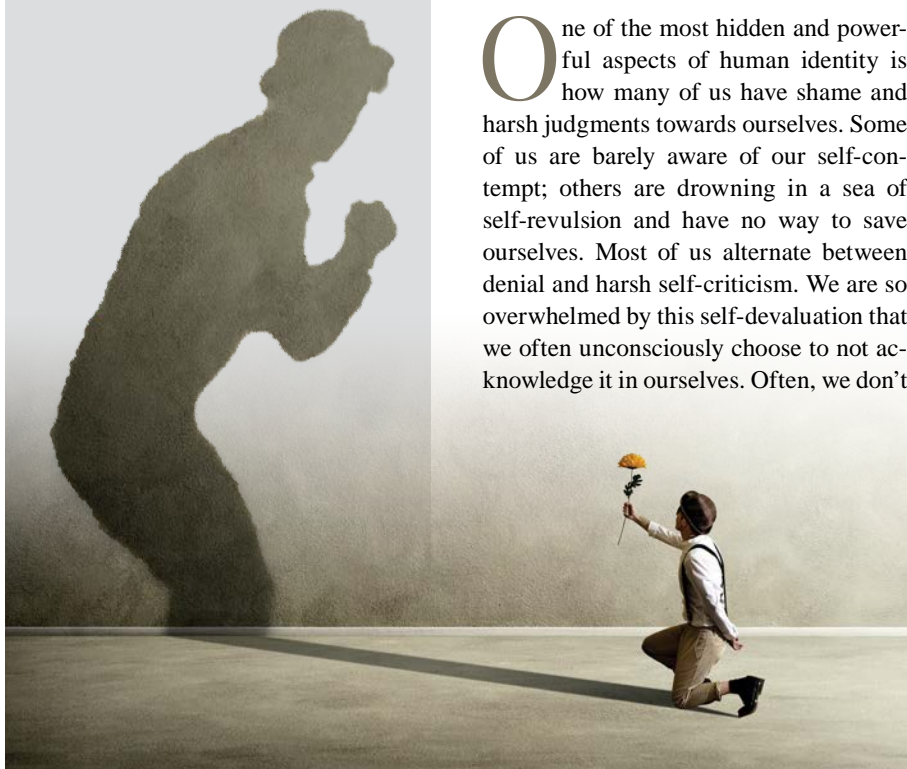
know why we hate ourselves. Perhaps we would rather not know.

Thus, we go about the business of living with little self-awareness or self-observation. We skim across the surface of life. We focus instead on externals: Our career attainment, our social status, our financial success, whether our kids are getting into the best colleges and what kind of electronic devices we own. Although many of these goals may be valuable to pursue, we often overlook other, more meaningful, aspects of life: Are we leading a life that matters? Do others see us as a good person? Do we see ourselves as a good person? Do we really matter to anybody? What is our legacy in life? How do we face our own ultimate mortality? Thus, hiding from our own self-contempt causes many of us to be clueless in answering the ultimate question of life: Why have we been placed on this earth and what purpose have we served?

Wouldn't it be a lot easier to face these questions if we could be more aware of ourselves and forgive that which is not forgiven in ourselves? In fact, there is an old saying that goes: *As I forgive myself, I change.* Indeed, it is in this forgiveness that we become able to answer the ultimate questions of life and to know that our life matters. Self-forgiveness is the root of all personal growth. Actually, attaining success without self-forgiveness is a living nightmare as the following example illustrates:

A very kind and intimate friend of mine, Marcus, came to me in significant distress. He was preoccupied with his oldest son Michael who had recently successfully finished an opioid treatment program. Instead of being delighted he was distraught.

SELF-FORGIVENESS to pg 14



CALENDAR

UPCOMING

Opioid Overdose Prevention: Narcan Training: Wednesday, November 13 from 6:30 to 8:00 pm at Seward Community Co-op, 2823 East Franklin Avenue, Minneapolis by Stephanie Devich, Valhalla Place. You will learn about local opioid trends, high risks of overdose, signs of sedation versus overdose, and how to administer the lifesaving drug Narcan in an opioid overdose situation. You will also learn the laws protecting you in case of an overdose reversal. All attending will receive a free Narcan kit to take home. Free but space is limited. It is advised you register in advance at Eventbrite.com.

NAMI Minnesota: Hope for Recovery: Saturday, November 16, from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm at NAMI Minnesota, 1919 University Ave W, Suite 400, St. Paul. Obtain information about mental illnesses, treatments, crisis management, suicide prevention, the mental health system and local resources along with practical strategies for helping a loved one or friend. This includes learning the LEAP strategy for improving communication: Listen, Empathize, Agree-on what you can, and Partner. This is a six-hour workshop for family and friends of a teen or adult living with a mental illness and people living with a mental illness who are doing well in their recovery. Free. Register at Eventbrite.com.

ArtLab: "Who Am I?" Exploring Your Spiritual Identity: Saturday, November 16, from 1:00 - 3:00 pm. at Art Lab Rx (on Maggie at the parking lot of Adler Graduate School), 10225 Yellow Circle Drive, Minnetonka. Are you allowing negative thoughts and labels from others to define you? Come explore the truth of what God says about who you are through a meaningful, collage-like layering process that is simple and easy to do. There is no right or wrong to this process, you DO NOT need to be an artist. Tickets are \$55 through Eventbrite.

Healthy LIFE EXPO™: Saturday, November 23 to Sunday, November 24, from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. Minneapolis Convention Center Ballroom, 1301 2nd St, Minneapolis. Explore up to 200+ exhibitors offering everything for health, balance and success in all areas of life. Stages of on-going speaker presentations, and demonstrations. New this year is three Stages with non-stop speaker's presentations. Product sampling, hourly drawings and free health information. See the lat-

est in nutrition, fitness, men's & women's health, medical information, weight loss, health services, and more. Seminars, product demonstrations, entertainment, and shopping all weekend long. \$6 at the door or FREE with food shelf donation.

Gingerbread Wonderland: Saturday, November 23 to Sunday, January 5, 2020 at Norway House, 913 East Franklin Avenue, Minneapolis. 10:00 am - 4:00 pm, Tuesday-Sunday, closed Mondays. General admission: \$5. Members: free. Children under 12: free.

Founder's Day Weekend: Friday, November 29 starting at 4:00 pm to Sunday, December 1. DoubleTree Hotel, 7800 Normandale Blvd, Bloomington. \$20 early bird registration, \$25 at the door. Founder's Day Weekend in Minnesota is an Alcoholics Anonymous celebration of recovery from alcoholism, and is in tribute to that day in 1940, during the Armistice Day Blizzard when the message of recovery was carried from Chicago to Pat C. by two men who came to Minneapolis for the University of Minnesota football game. More information and to register: FoundersDayMN.org.

Helping Families Heal - Treatment Through the Lens of Family Systems Theory: Friday, December 6, at 11:30 am to 1:00 pm, 2118 NUWAY Counseling Center, 2118 Blaisdell Ave, Minneapolis. Family involvement in treatment is one of the most critical factors in long-term positive outcomes. State and Federal regulations and guidelines stipulate the necessity of family engagement, however funding for family-related services is woefully inadequate. This presentation will offer some ideas for improving family services without putting untenable stress on your facility's operating budget. Speaker: Rick Dauer, LADC. Event is free. Register through Eventbrite on November 6.

ArtLab: Discover Your Support thru Process Painting: Saturday, December 7, from 1:00 - 3:00 pm. at Art Lab Rx (on Maggie at the parking lot of Adler Graduate School), 10225 Yellow Circle Drive, Minnetonka. Life is challenging and how well we cope often has to do with the people and resources around us. We thrive best when surrounded by a supportive community. Often we either don't recognize how much support we have, or don't realize we need it until we're already in a tough place. In our *Discover Your Support*

thru Process Painting wellness workshop you will use art-making to explore and discover where your hope comes from and identify areas of potential gratitude for those who support you. There is no right or wrong to this process, you DO NOT need to be an artist. Tickets are \$55 through Eventbrite.

Greater Minneapolis Intergroup Winter Open House: Saturday, December 14 from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm at 7204 W. 27th Street, Suite 113, St. Louis Park.

26th Annual Women's Art Festival: Saturday, December 14 from 9:30 am to 4:30 pm at Colin Powell Center, 2924 4th Ave S, Minneapolis. Over 130 local women artists show and sell their wares in a variety of genres including jewelry, pottery, fiber, photography, painting and more. There is live music by women performers throughout the day and a women-owned coffee shop providing food, beverages and treats. Free admission, free ramp parking, all are welcome.

Brooklyn Recovery Ministry: Christmas Eve Service: Tuesday, December 24 at 9:00 pm, Brooklyn United Methodist Church, 7200 Brooklyn Blvd., Brooklyn Center. Everyone welcome. Also, Recovery Workshops, Sundays at 5:30 pm.

ONGOING

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. Call 612-584-4158 for more info or go to www.minnesotarecovery.org.

Dissonance Presents: Story Well: Mondays from 6:00 - 7:00 pm at The Warming House, 4001 Bryant Ave S, Minneapolis. Held the first Monday of every month — is a time to share and discuss the various ways we can help and care for each other and others. Whether you have substance use or mental health concerns, feel depleted by everyday life, have a friend or loved one who is sick or suffering, or just want to connect with others around the idea of being well, this is a place for you. Everyone welcome.

Hazelden's Second Sunday Retreats: The second Sunday of each month everyone in recovery is invited to Hazelden in Center City, MN (Cork Center) for an

inspirational day of workshops, fellowship, sharing and fun. Open to anyone 18 or older involved in a 12-Step program. \$15 if you register online, \$20 (in-person) includes a buffet lunch and information packet. 9 am to 2:30 pm.

9 am - Register at the Cork Center
9 am - Introductions and orientation
10-11 am - Lecture
10:30 -12:45 - Small group discussions
12:45 - 1:30 pm - Sunday buffet
1:45 pm - Small group discussions or Meditation group
2:30 pm - Relaxation group

November 10
Higher Power Relapse Prevention

December 8
Staying Sober

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

To place a listing, email us at phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com. Or David Goldstein at david@thephoenixspirit.com to explore advertising or promotional offers.



WRITERS / ARTISTS

The Phoenix Spirit is interested in writers and artists with experience writing about recovery & addiction. Or are in recovery themselves.

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

A Season For For-giving

by Louise Elowen (pen name)

"Forgiveness does not change the past, but it does enlarge the future." — PAUL BOESE

The Holiday season is traditionally a season of giving. But what greater gift than giving could there be but for-giving? One of the definitions of the word *forgive* in Webster's New World College Dictionary is "To give up resentment against or the desire to punish; stop being angry with; pardon." Yet, if someone has "wronged" us how can we possibly remove that sense of anger, or desire to punish, when they have created such an effect in us? How can we let go, and move on? Or, what if the person you are asking forgiveness from doesn't give you the forgiveness that you seek?

Living with an addict and abuser for nearly a decade taught me a lot about forgiveness. Both the act of forgiving someone and seeking forgiveness in yourself. Just because you forgive someone doesn't mean the hurt goes away. Sometimes the apology given is not really an apology at all. And, if the person you seek an amends from is not forthcoming with it, perhaps the greatest gift that you can give is either to forgive them, or forgive yourself and move on, if that is what gives you the most peace. Forgiveness does not equal forgetting. It does not give someone the right to continue to treat you in such a way. Nor does it allow for continuing to treat yourself in such a way. However, it does give you the power to let go and give up that resentment, anger, and the desire to punish, which will otherwise eat away at you to the detriment of your own health, if you don't put an end to it, one way or another.

As hard as it is, we must learn to for-

give *ourselves* in these situations, perhaps an even harder act than forgiving someone else. Whether you are the person doing the forgiving, or seeking forgiveness, this is probably one of the most important takeaways from such a situation. You can't control the actions of others, but you can control how you treat yourself. Remove the blame. Remove the self-pity. But above all else, forgive *yourself*. Only then can you move on and "enlarge your future."

So, whether you are on the giving end of forgiveness, or the receiving end of forgiveness, this Holiday season, try to give yourself the gift you deserve the most. Forgiveness. Whatever the reason.

And that's what this issue is about: A Season for Giving or For-giving. Our articles in this issue touch upon a first-person account of addiction and the devastating consequences of actions surrounding this addiction. How do you move on from such a situation? The gift of self-forgiveness, as I've started upon here, is looked at in more detail and how we can take steps to practice this. And how do you use prayer? Is it a case of asking? Or listening? Or is it a bit of both?

In closing, I want to say that I was honored to be asked to take over the Editor's role for the *Phoenix Spirit* by Aaron and Jen Shepherd. My goal is to continue to bring insight and good editing form to the readers and writers of this wonderful publication, as they have enjoyed for many years under the leadership of past Editor Julia Edelman.

Have a blessed and safe Holiday season.

the **Phoenix Spirit**

RECOVERY • RENEWAL • GROWTH

*Every trial, and 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.*

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.

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SUPPORT GROUPS

MONDAYS

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

Online Gamers Anonymous and Olganon: Mondays at 6:30 at the Cavalier Club, 7179 Washington Ave. South, Edina. Cavalier Club is located on the corner of Valley View and HWY 169.. Plenty of free parking! If video games or other excessive tech use is making your life unmanageable or if someone you care about is gaming excessively, we'd love to meet you. More info on this emerging 12 Step Movement at www.olganon.org

Understanding Eating Disorders, Treatment, and Recovery: First Thursday, every other month, 6-7:30pm. 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.

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

Richfield Codependents Anonymous: 7pm, men & women Richfield Lutheran Church, 60th and Nicollet or call 952-649-9514.

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 952-953-8438. Tues, 7-8 pm, Unity Church Unitarian (H), 732 Holly Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55104.

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. More locations.

Overeaters Anonymous Roseville: Meetings are held from 10-11am (and Saturday's from 8-9) 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 pm, 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.

WEDNESDAYS

AA Meeting, 6:30 - 8:30pm St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, 2300 N. Hamline Ave., Roseville. Call 651-639-4246 for more info.

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, 952-545-2586.

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 @ 7-8:30pm. 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: 7:30:9:30pm 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.org

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: A 12-Step program of recovery for people addicted to non-stop work or continuous activity. Meetings every Wednesday, 12:30 p.m., Brooklyn United Methodist Church, Brooklyn Center. Call Pat with questions: 763-560-5199, or visit www.workaholics-anonymous.org.

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

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 Thurs. 6-7:15 p.m. Christ Presbyterian Church, 6901 Normandale Rd. Room 210 North entrance, enter door on left. Call before attending for any schedule or location updates. Liz 612-229-8930, Gretchen 615-423-9444 email: wafindingbalance@gmail.com

New CoDa East Metro Group: Rasmussen College, 8565 Eagle Point Circle N, Lake Elmo (exit north to Radio Dr. on I-94 E). 6:30-7:30pm. Joseph H. at 715-497-6227 or La'Tosia 651-319-2554.

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.

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. 952-582-6000 or www.ldaminnesota.org.

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 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.

SATURDAYS

Overeaters Anonymous Meeting: 9am at Macalester-Plymouth United Church, St. Paul. For those still suffering from compulsive overeating, bulimia and anorexia.

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

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; 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 8-9am 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.org

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 am, 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 at Faith Mennonite Church, 2720 E. 22nd St, Minneapolis. Website: tinyurl.com/tccodsg. Call before coming for direction. Burt at 612-547-6388.

Adult Children of Alcoholics & Dysfunctional Families: Saturday, 10am, 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.

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

SUNDAYS

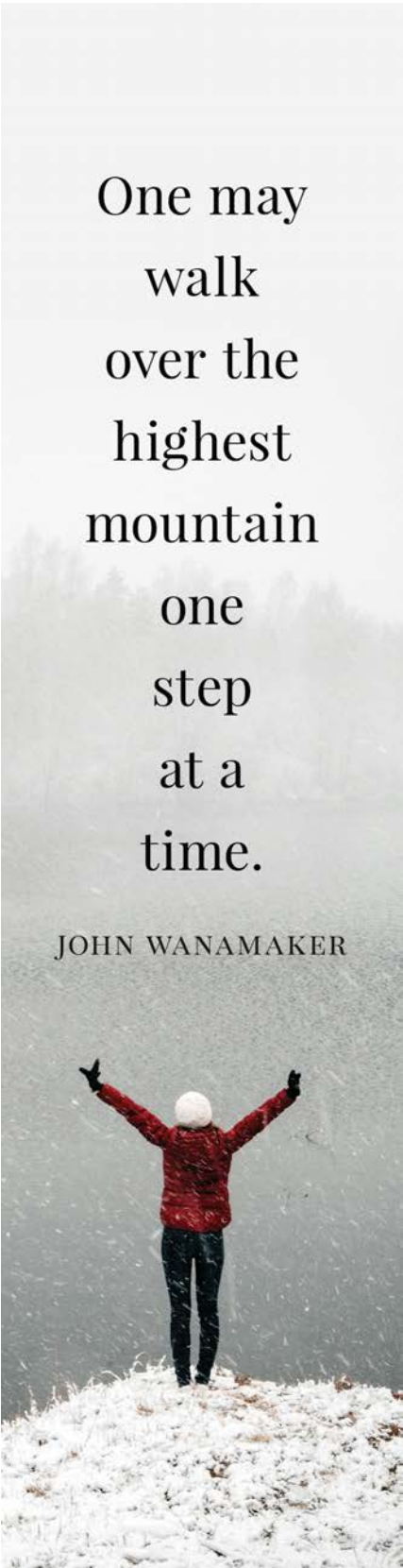
Big Red Book ACA, 11:15am at the Cavalier Club, 6123 Wooddale Ave., Edina, MN 55424. Call Therese S. at 952-927-6761 for more info.

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.

Opiates Anonymous: Sunday Evenings at 7 pm at Unity of the Valley Spiritual Center, 4011 West Hwy 13, Savage, MN. OA is the first 12-step-based group in the state of Minnesota offering help and support for anyone with a desire to stop using opiates and all other mind altering substances. If you think that you may have a problem with opiates or other mind altering substances, attending one of our meetings may help you decide if you are an addict. If you want to tap into help and support from people and a program with proven success, this is the place for you. No sign up or registration is needed. Just show up at 7 pm on Sunday evenings. If questions contact Ron Benner at 952-657-9119

ABOUT THE LISTINGS

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the support groups on this page. However, we recommend that you contact the group before attending. If you have a listing and need to make a change OR you would like your group included (and on our website), please reach out to us at phoenix@thephoenix-spirit.com. Thank you.



The Devastating Consequences of Addiction

by *Ethan Fisher*

It's hard to imagine myself drinking or using again. It's been so long since the last time I got drunk or high that it seems like an alternate life. The old me is a far away, distant memory. No more hangover headaches punishing me for the previous night. That past life of alcohol and drugs is gone and I'm so much happier for it.

My battle with addiction started as a battle with depression. I started having depressive thoughts in 8th grade and, over time, those thoughts slowly ate away at me until my depression became all-encompassing. I began to self-medicate. Alcohol was my biggest demon. It had a grip on my life and wouldn't let go. I knew I was hurting myself; I was self-aware enough that I could step outside myself and watch as I destroyed friendships, failed classes, lost college basketball scholarships. I watched myself through a haze of alcohol, weed,

prescription pills, cocaine, ecstasy, hallucinogens... basically, anything I could drink, smoke, or snort that would make me momentarily forget that I hated myself and wanted to die. And sometimes, in the darkest times, I used because I was trying to die.

November of 2019 marks 16 years since the tragedy that set me on my course to recovery. In that time, I've attended countless AA meetings, participated in cognitive education courses, and fulfilled each requirement set in front of me by the State of Colorado and the Colorado Department of Corrections. And while each class or session I've attended has provided a brick in the foundation for my lifelong path of recovery, nothing has had more of an impact than the tragic night that set everything in motion. That night was the most eye-opening, life-changing, rock-bottom night that I can imagine, even though I can't actually remember it.

I woke up in the hospital after a 24-hour blackout to the news that I had driven drunk, caused a car accident, and killed someone. This news was unbelievable, and yet, I knew it was true. I was alive, and an innocent man was dead; I was the same, and yet everything was different. My path to recovery started the day I found out the news.

My prison sentence felt like an impossible task. Ten years to a twenty-four-year-old might as well have been a lifetime in those cells surrounded by negativity and criminals. Shock and fear at the gravity of my situation kept me sober through sentencing. I was given the opportunity to volunteer for the Colorado Department of Corrections Military Boot Camp Program, a grueling 90-day program, that, if I completed it, would shave time off my sentence. I was devastated, depressed, but boot camp gave me a goal and a purpose. My sobriety began the day of sentencing and it was fortified through my daily routine during boot camp. I was lost, but by the end of the boot camp program, I was starting to find myself again.



Flat out, boot camp was the best thing that could have happened to me at that point in my life. I truly believe that it took me from a punk-ass impulsive kid that made horrible choices to the man I am today. The military accountability, the workload and routine of the program, shifted my mind set. The structure I learned in this program gave me the tools I never had. They are the tools I use today to continue my sobriety.

I was released to a halfway house in 2007 and continued the rest of my sentence until 2014. I remained as part of the Department of Corrections prison system as ISP (Intensive Supervision Program) inmate status, then completed my sentence on parole. Not once did I ever have the desire to drink again.

I re-enrolled in college and was unbelievably fortunate to find a small college basketball team that I could play for. The support of my teammates and coaches (in addition to the random house checks from my parole officer and nearly daily breathalyzers and UAs) helped me maintain my sobriety. I've had a lot of issues with the Department of Corrections (DOC), but I will be the first to say, the DOC system held me accountable. It was strangely comforting to know that if I relapsed and got caught, I would go back to prison. I could never envision my life being surrounded by razor wire and guards again.

More than the risk of recidivism though, was the simple knowledge that I took a man's life. That catastrophic reality replays countless times throughout my thoughts, EACH and EVERY DAY. Every day I'm reminded of the devastating consequences of drugs and alcohol. There is no greater or harder forced path to sobriety than what I caused. I pray for the victim's family every night and throughout the day. My 15 plus years of sobriety is significantly influenced from the pain I caused, the life I took! No prison sentence can bring back the man, the father, the husband and grandfather I took from their family. My sobriety is built on the reality of the pain I caused. I never want to go back to my life before the accident. Drugs and alcohol destroy lives. My sobriety means everything to me, and I will never drink again.

Ethan Fisher is a keynote speaker, president of Life CONsequences a non-profit that needs readers' donations to provide mental health and drug and alcohol awareness programs for students across the country. Submit your 1st Person story to phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com.

***I was alive,
and an
innocent
man was
dead;
I was the
same,
and yet
everything
was
different.***

Resource Directory

Counseling

Lehmann Counseling

Help for individuals and families dealing with addiction. Kate Lehmann is an experienced professional offering client-centered substance use counseling. Discrete, flexible, private pay. www.katelehmann.com for more information.

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 or treatment. Melrose Center has 5 metro area locations. Visit melroseheals.com or call 952-993-6200.

Living Proof MN

A mentoring program for those who've been impacted by eating disorders. We know healing comes from within; we are here to guide you, from the heart, with real world experience and love, through the darkness to take back control and to live life as you deserve. Visit www.LivingProofMN.com, email shira@livingproofmn.com or call 612-207-8720

Drugs and Alcohol Treatment

Minnesota Teen Challenge

If you or a loved one is struggling with drugs or alcohol, we're here to help. In addition to our effective and affordable residential Licensed Treatment, faith-based Long-Term Recovery and convenient Outpatient program, we have extensive prevention and transitional/aftercare services. Freedom from addiction starts here. 612-FREEDOM or mmtc.org

Narcotics Anonymous Helpline

Drug Problem? We Can Help! Call Now 24-hour 877-767-7676. Also, check out www.namimnnesota.org For a complete listing of meetings, upcoming events, camp-outs, and service opportunities.

Workaholics Anonymous Meeting

Burning out? Workaholics Anonymous provides steps and tools to break free from non-stop work and activity — or work avoidance. Meetings are every Wednesday, 12:30 p.m., Brooklyn United Methodist Church, Brooklyn Center. Newcomers welcome. Learn more: 763-560-5199 or www.workaholics-anonymous.org.

To place a Resource Directory listing call David at 612-298-5405 or email at david@thephoenixspirit.com



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My First Sober Holiday from page 1

DR. JAMIE MARICH

Jamie Marich, Ph.D., is in long-term recovery and has significant expertise in the fields of trauma, recovery, yoga, expressive arts therapies, EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing), and mindfulness. What I respect and adore most about Jamie is her passion, expressive nature, and empathy. She creates freedom for people by providing a fluid and creative approach to what is often heavy emotional work. Jamie travels internationally speaking in her fields of expertise, while maintaining a private practice in her home base of Warren, OH. She is the developer of the Dancing Mindfulness practice. Jamie is the author of five books, including the popular *EMDR Made Simple* and *EMDR Therapy and Mindfulness for Trauma Focused Care*, as well as *Process Not Perfection: Expressive Arts Solutions for Trauma Recovery*.



MARIEL HUFNAGEL

Mariel is in long-term recovery and is well-known for her advocacy and incredible leadership at the Ammon Foundation. She has battled substance use disorder, bipolar disorder, and bulimia nervosa. What is evident in Mariel's work is her passion for mental health, addiction, and criminal justice reform. She believes in health equity, person-centered systems of care, and the importance of a full continuum of care for addiction that includes, importantly, recovery support services. Mariel holds a Master's in Public Administration degree. She has worked as an advocacy organizer with the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, and as a chapter manager for Young People in Recovery. In addition to her role as the executive director of the Ammon Foundation, Mariel sits on numerous boards and coalitions. Her work has been recognized through prestigious awards both nationally and locally. What I admire most about Mariel is her tireless commitment to improving the lives of people in recovery through education.



THE MAIN CHALLENGES FACED DURING THEIR FIRST HOLIDAY SEASON IN RECOVERY

Most challenging for Lisa during her first Holiday season was people who were intoxicated and feeling guilty for their behavior. She recalls: "Definitely the buzzed people apologizing to me for being triggering while slurring and making mock gestures to 'hide' the bar from me."

For Jamie, her first Holiday season wasn't the most challenging — that came later in recovery. She says, "No one particular thing was challenging about the first one. Years three to four were actually harder."

And for Mariel, her challenges weren't limited to recovery from addiction. I think she speaks for a lot of us in recovery, who also have experienced eating disorders. She explains:

Honestly, I was a little unprepared for my first Holiday sober. Luckily, I had a strong network of peers in place...

"Being in recovery from not only alcohol and drug addiction, but additionally an eating disorder, brought on a whole slew of challenges at my first Holiday sober. For me I didn't find food or alcohol itself 'triggering' per se, but the excess around alcohol and food was really overwhelming for me."

She continues, "I also found that navigating my family dynamic particularly challenging. Honestly, I was a little unprepared for my first Holiday sober. Luckily, I had a strong network of peers in place who were not only a safe place to share my thoughts and feelings, but also held me accountable to doing things I needed to do for my recovery."

KEY LESSONS IN NAVIGATING YOUR FIRST HOLIDAY SEASON

Recovery is the great revealer: It helps us uncover why we used drugs and alcohol — for instance, as a balm for our social anxiety — as well as unnoticed behavioral issues and a lack of coping strategies or boundaries.

Lisa explains, "I learned that I had been medicating my social anxiety a ton with using." However, she realized that stopping drinking didn't mean she was lacking in experiences: "I wasn't missing out on quite as many deep artistic uninhibited convos. Mostly dumb stuff was

said by many after 10 p.m. I drank warm cider and felt grateful I wasn't 'accidentally' vomiting anywhere."

For Jamie, she learned that letting go of expectations was key: "I find that not getting swept up by what society expects a Holiday to be or look like is critical. This can include setting boundaries with families about the need to make a Holiday one's own. As my first sponsor told me: 'At the end of the day, it's just one more day you are being asked to stay sober.' So, sticking to your regular, daily wellness practices is critical."

Mariel recounts a crucial lesson that we learn in recovery: There's something empowering about walking through any challenge we face. She says, "I think every time I walk through something that

is difficult or uncomfortable, I come out on the other side better — more confident in myself and more aware about myself and others. I think my first Holiday sober really helped define that for me recovery was about so much more than abstinence, but really about assimilating back into the real world — including challenging 'people, places and/or things.' This in turn gave me confidence and courage."

TOP TIPS FOR NAVIGATING YOUR FIRST HOLIDAY SEASON IN RECOVERY

Having a plan is central to any strategy for navigating the Holidays, whether you are new to recovery or 17 years down the road. When you value your recovery as a precious gift, you are more likely to protect it.

For Lisa, it's about support networks: "Get support via text from a person in recovery, a Facebook group, some sober tweeps. We're everywhere!" She also recommends, "Drive separately, always." And, lastly, "Don't host boozy family parties where people are going to leave alcohol at your house."

Jamie echoes the same advice on driving: "I parked where I could easily get out and leave if I had to. Seventeen years later I still do this!" She also reminds us that recovery support should be constant throughout the year: "The importance of daily recovery practice no matter the day or the expectations will not fail me. That is the biggest lesson I learned, and that I can trust myself as long as I practice what works."

Mariel reminds us that our well-being is paramount, and not to overextend ourselves. "Self-care, self-care, self-care!" she says. "If you feel comfortable, it may be helpful to be honest with people about your newfound sober lifestyle — this

way people are aware that you won't be drinking or partying, so it might limit your exposure. Make sure that you are scheduling time to unwind and engage in activities that enhance your recovery. Don't spread yourself too thin — you don't need to be at every party, gathering or event. If you are going to something that you anticipate being particularly difficult, bring someone sober with you! Or bookend it with other obligations — this gives you an "excuse" to arrive/leave at certain times. And always remember, 'No' is a complete sentence."

Located near Portland, Oregon, **Olivia Pennelle** (Liv) is an experienced writer, journalist, and recovery advocate. She is the founder of the popular site *Liv's Recovery Kitchen*, a site dedicated to providing the ingredients to help people thrive in their recovery. She also co-hosts the popular podcast *Breaking Free: Your Recovery. Your Way.*

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Recovering the Joy of Giving from page 1

I'm much like Alcoholics Anonymous ("AA") members who have stopped drinking one day at a time and have realized the AA promise that states, "We are going to know a new freedom and a happiness."

Prior to DA, anxiety and fear surrounded my gift-giving and the Christmas holiday. My character defects reared their very ugly heads, too. Gift giving is a natural human behavior. It is wired in our brains, is a part of the mesolimbic reward system, and is about social attachment. Giving a gift makes us feel better about ourselves. Giving can actually make us happier and see the world as an overall better place. However, what if that natural inclination has gone awry? For me, in the throes of my debting and vagueness about my finances, the joy I might have felt in gift giving were replaced with worry, resentment and fear. I measured my worth by what I could give, more accurately, by how much I spent! I used credit cards to purchase gifts, especially at Christmas, and got myself further and further into debt. I spent much more than I could afford. I thought giving expensive gifts showed others my good taste. For me, this was a particularly pervasive and harmful form of "big shot" syndrome. The gift was no longer about giving and the receiver, but about me. Additionally, I set myself up for resentment when the person failed to reciprocate my good taste and provide an equally expensive gift to me. I did harm to myself both spiritually and financially. I gave beyond my means and gained a resentment. Another common behavior I used was to offer dinners

or lunches out as a gift. Because I did not manage my money and was deep in debt there really was no money for such things, even for myself, let alone enough to treat another. Therefore, it was an offer I could never fulfill. This was inherently dishonest, but somehow in my vagueness, I thought it got me off the hook of having to give. Gift-debting if you will. All in all, I did not experience happiness and my world was not a better place from my gift giving.

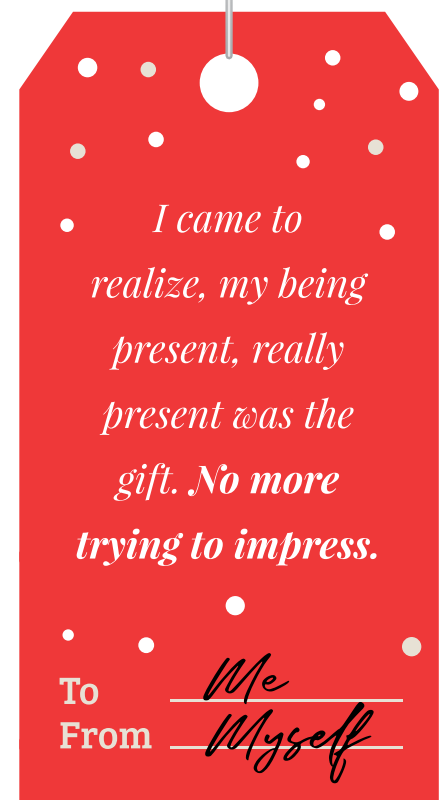
There are other very large and debilitating symptoms of my money issues including bankruptcy, foreclosure, utilities shut off, furniture and car repossession and finally the thoughts of suicide. The gift-giving season is only one aspect of the larger debting issue. However, it was a source of pain and anxiety for me, especially because of how the Holiday gift-giving season is portrayed in our society and represented in advertising. I'll never forget the surprise on a retail clerk's face, my first DA Christmas, when I paid cash for my purchase!

By working the program of DA, angst-free gift-giving has become a part of that new freedom and an abundant life. Once in the program, I cut up my credit cards and I stopped debting one day at a time. I attended meetings, became willing to keep records of my spending and my income, became willing to monitor my bank account at last, rather than ignoring and pretending that the balance never changed (despite my spending). I got a sponsor and followed the other 12 Tools of the Program. One of those Tools was

to create a Spending Plan (a budget). With the help of my Sponsor, reaching out to DA members, and asking for help, I was able to adhere to the Spending Plan and my life got better, one day at a time. My first Christmas was difficult. I only spent what I had. Sometimes that meant not giving gifts at all. I came to realize, my being present, really present was the gift. No more trying to impress. My spiritual awakening around gifts was that no family member, friend or loved one who cares about me wants me to go into debt to give them a gift. Taking care of and valuing myself is the first and most necessary gift. Only then, am I truly able to give freely without guilt, without obligation, or to look good, or to prove my worth.

As I continued in the DA program, the Spending Plan included savings for gifts. Now I put away a monthly amount toward gifts. I no longer worry about birthdays, anniversaries, Christmas or any other occasion. I give within my means and there is enough. The spirit of giving is present in me. Giving brings me joy and I do believe the world is a better place.

If you would like to know more about Debtors Anonymous, visit the website: debtorsanonymous.org or the MN DA Intergroup website at daminnnesota.org. Phone: 952-953-8438.



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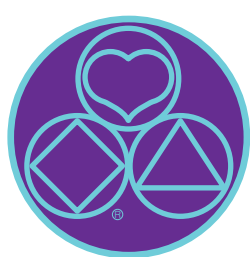
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*In early recovery,
how did you
practice giving?*

The gift
of time.

Ted

I went to many
AA meetings
and sponsored
women.
Volunteering
and doing what
I was asked
to do.

LORI

I don't think I really
gave back until many years later.
That just wasn't part of my vocabu-
lary for a number of reasons. I did
participate in meetings as much as I
could and was leader and treasurer
for 6 month periods each. It wasn't
until much later that I was able to
practice forgiveness and sharing at
a much deeper level.

BRIAN



Giving back to others by serving on food lines for the homeless during the holiday.

Molly



In early recovery, I practiced giving myself and others the gift of forgiveness.

Ellie

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She's a soul, funk, and jazz singer, a dancer and choreographer, and she's a Vinyasa yoga instructor in Minneapolis. Vie Boheme loves her Spectacle Shoppe glasses because they're every bit as unique as she is.



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Living a Better Financial Story

by Matt Bell

“He said a meaningful life is one that attaches itself to something larger than we are, and the larger that something is, the more meaning in our lives.”

In his book, *A Million Miles in a Thousand Years*, Donald Miller tells a powerful story he calls, “How Jason Saved His Family.” After returning from Los Angeles, where he took part in a storytelling workshop, Don got together with his friend, Jason, and learned of some trouble Jason and his wife were having with their 13-year-old daughter.

She was dating a guy who was bad news; she was even experimenting with drugs.

With the workshop fresh on his mind, Don made an offhand comment that Jason’s daughter “wasn’t living a very good story.” Jason was intrigued and asked Don to tell him more about the elements of a good story.

YOU CAN REWRITE YOUR STORY

A few months later, Don saw Jason again and things had changed. Jason said his family was living a better story. Now it was Don’s turn to be intrigued.

Jason explained that during their previous conversation he realized that his daughter wasn’t, in fact, living a very good story. And it dawned on him that he hadn’t mapped out a story for his family, so his daughter had chosen her own story, one in which she was wanted, even if she was only being used.

Jason decided to create a better story to invite her into.

Remembering that every good story involves someone who wants something and overcomes conflict to get it, one

night he heard about an organization that builds orphanages. He found out that it costs \$25,000 to build an orphanage and on the spot decided that his family would fund one even though they didn’t have the money.

It sounded like a story worth living.

IT WON’T BE EASY

When Jason told his wife and daughter about it, they were so mad they both refused to talk to him. He realized, of course, that it was a mistake not to have included his wife in the decision. However, after explaining that they weren’t taking any risks – they weren’t helping anyone – and how their daughter was losing interest, his wife got on board.

Soon enough, his daughter got interested. So much so that she wanted to visit the country where the orphanage would be built, take pictures of the kids, post them on her web site, and see if others would help.

Then she broke up with her boyfriend.

As Jason explained it, “No girl who plays the role of a hero dates a guy who uses her. She knows who she is. She just forgot for a little while.”

I love that.

LIVING FOR SOMETHING LARGER

As I read that story, I remembered the words of one of the leading researchers on human happiness, Martin Seligman. He said a meaningful life is one that attaches itself to something larger than we are, and the larger that something is, the more meaning in our lives.

Donald Miller puts it this way: “People can’t live without a story, without a role to play.”

Recently over dinner with my family, Aziz came up in conversation. He’s a boy in Burkina Faso we sponsor through Compassion International. When we’ve sent him extra money in the past, he has sent back pictures of what he did with the money. One shows him with soap he bought for his family. Another time he bought extra rice.

My wife, Jude, mentioned that Aziz has a birthday coming up and one of our kids was quick to suggest that we all chip in to send him some extra money. They were all genuinely excited about contributing to the cause.

We’re not funding an orphanage (at least, not this year!). We’re just sending some money to one young boy who has so much less than we have. But it’s a good

step, a very tangible way we can work as a family to invest in something larger than ourselves.

IS YOUR STORY BIG ENOUGH?

If you listen to the chatter of our culture, it’s easy to think that our lives are mostly about cars and clothes and where we’re going on vacation this year. It isn’t that such things are unimportant or that we should feel guilty for pursuing them. But I think deep down we all know who we are. We know we were made for a bigger story.

We just forget sometimes.

Matt Bell is a full-time personal finance writer and speaker, serving as Managing Editor at Sound Mind Investing while speaking at churches, universities, and other venues throughout the country. He is the author of four books that were published by NavPress and two video-based small group studies (including the Money. Purpose. Joy.). He also writes at Matt About Money.

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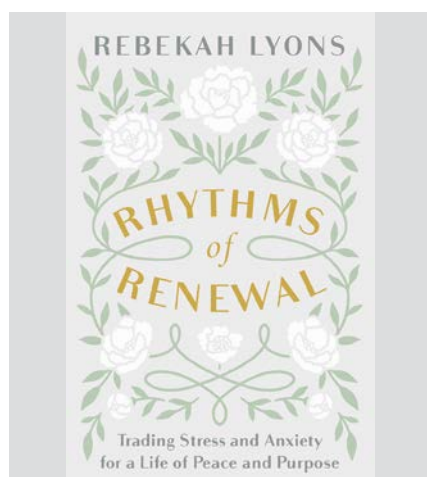
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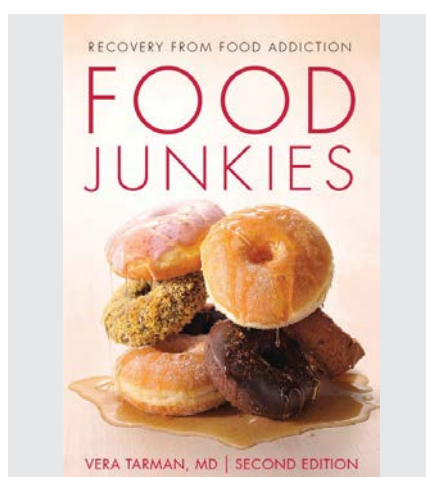
Trading Stress and Anxiety for a Life of Peace and Purpose

By Rebekah Lyons
ZONDERVAN

Drawn from her own battle with depression and anxiety, beloved author Rebekah Lyons shares a journey to creating life-giving habits that quiet inner chaos and make space for flourishing. With Scripture, heartening messages, and simple steps, Lyons charts a path through four profound rhythms to the vibrant life you were meant to live. In the practices of Rest, Restore, Connect, and Create, you will discover how to:

- Take charge of your emotional health and encourage your loved ones to do the same
- Break free of fear's influence and live confidently
- Discover what brings you light and joy even when the world around you seems chaotic

Lyons writes with the vulnerability and practical guidance of a friend who has walked this road before and is reaching back to encourage others along the way. With deep warmth, she welcomes you into the intentional and lifelong journey to sustainable mental health. This guide is your daily rescue and the way forward to the balance, grounding, and peace your soul longs for.



Food Junkies (2nd Ed)

Recovery From Food Addiction

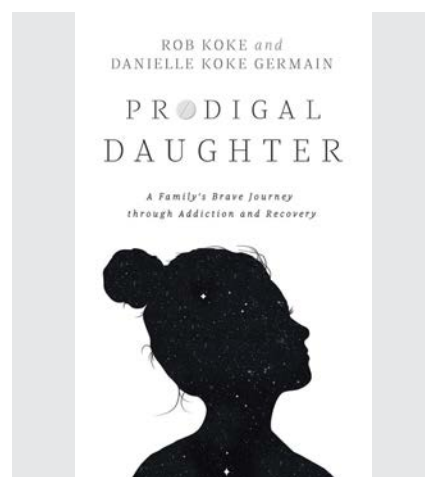
By Vera Tarman, M.D.
DUNDURN

Drawing on her experience in addictions treatment, and many personal stories of recovery, Dr. Vera Tarman offers practical advice for people struggling with problems of overeating, binge eating, anorexia, and bulimia. Food Junkies, now in its second edition, is a friendly and informative guide on the road to food serenity.

A fact-filled guide to coping with compulsive overeating problems by an experienced addictions doctor who draws on many patients' stories of recovery.

Overeating, binge eating, obesity, anorexia, and bulimia — Food Junkies tackles the complex, poorly understood issue of food addiction from the perspective of a medical researcher and dozens of survivors. What exactly is food addiction? Is it possible to draw a hard line between indulging cravings for "comfort food" and engaging in substance abuse? For people struggling with food addictions, recognizing their condition remains a frustrating battle.

This revised second edition contains the latest research as well as practical strategies for people facing the complicated challenges of eating disorders and addictions, offering an affirming and manageable path to healthy and sustainable habits.



Prodigal Daughter

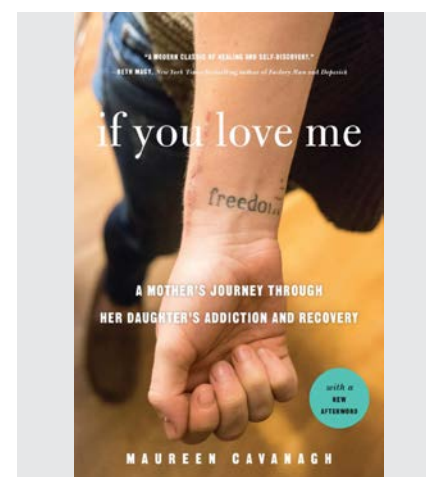
A Family's Brave Journey through Addiction and Recovery

By Rob Koke / Danielle Koke Germain
ZONDERVAN

Unashamed and heartwarming, Danielle shares intimately about her teenage alcohol abuse and dependence on marijuana and Adderall. She offers a rare, first-person insight into the mental and emotional effects of addiction, and what it takes to get and stay clean. Rob tells about his struggle with his daughter's addiction, dealing with its effect on their family, and the reality of what it looks like to love someone battling addiction in your own home.

In a raw, real-time glimpse, father and daughter reveal the vulnerable letters they shared with each other during Danielle's rehab. With transparency, Rob and Danielle disarm the shame factor, and share lessons and resources to prevent and overcome setbacks.

This book is your field guide in the battle of addiction. Whether you're longing for freedom, or helping a loved one along the journey toward recovery, you're not alone. Danielle and Rob's story will challenge you with truth, equip you with strategies for the journey, and infuse your heart with hope.



If You Love Me


A Mother's Journey Through Her Daughter's Addiction and Recovery

By Maureen Cavanagh
HENRY HOLT AND CO.


Fast-paced and heartwarming, devastating and redemptive, Maureen's incredible odyssey into the opioid crisis—first as a parent, then as an advocate—is ultimately a deeply moving mother-daughter story. When Maureen and her ex-husband Mike see their daughter Katie's needle track marks for the first time, it is a complete shock.

Like the millions of parents and relatives all over the country—some of whom she has helped through her nonprofit organization—Maureen learns that recovery is neither straightforward nor brief. She fights to save Katie's life, breaking down doors on the seedy side of town with Mike, kidnapping Katie outside a convenience store, and battling the taboo around substance use disorder in her picturesque New England town. Maureen is launched into the shadowy world of overcrowded, for-profit rehabilitation centers that often prey on worried parents. As Katie runs away from one program after another, never outrunning her pain, Maureen realizes that even while she becomes an expert on getting countless men and women into detox and treatment centers, she remains powerless to save her own daughter.

The synopsis of these books were taken from the publisher's overviews. If you have a book you'd like featured or have an old favorite you'd like to share with others, please contact us at phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com.



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Sesame Street Uses Muppet to Support Children Affected by Parental Addiction

One in eight children, live in households with a parent who has a substance use disorder

Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit educational organization behind Sesame Street, is announcing an initiative to support children and families affected by parental addiction. The initiative features Karli, a 6 ½-year-old Sesame Street Muppet whose mom is dealing with addiction. In new videos and other content, favorite Sesame Street characters like Elmo and Abby Cadabby learn what Karli is going through and help their friend to cope. The resources, which are part of the Sesame Street in Communities program and freely available on SesameStreetinCommunities.org, deliver the words children need to hear most: You are not alone. You will be taken care of. Addiction is a sickness and, as with any sickness, people need help to get better. And most importantly: It's not your fault.

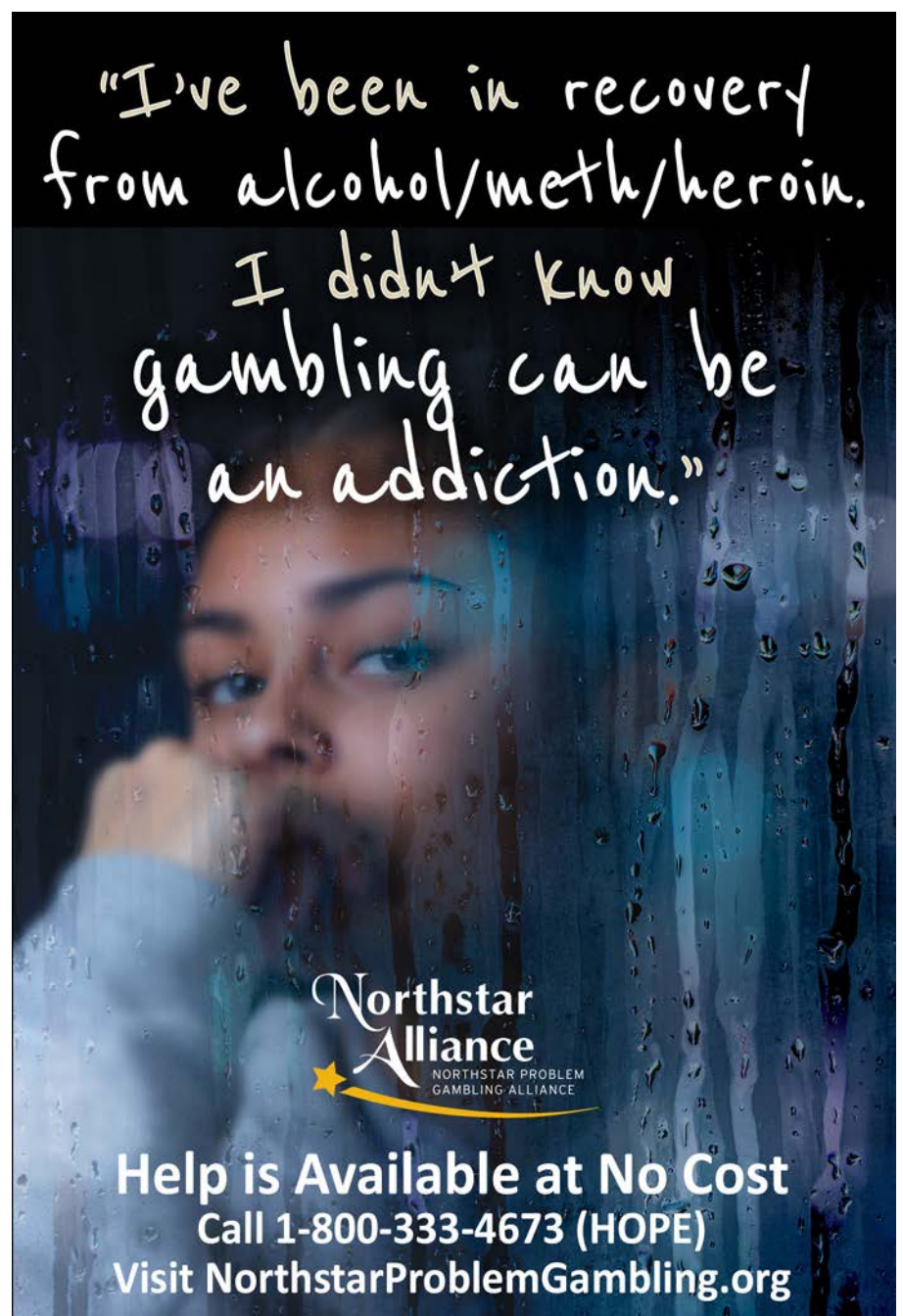
In the United States, there are 5.7 million children under age 11, or one in eight children, living in households with a parent who has a substance use disorder—a number that doesn't include the countless children not living with a parent due to separation or divorce, incarceration, or death as a result of their addiction. One in three of these children will enter foster care due to parental addiction, a number that has grown by more than 50% in the past decade. The trauma of parental addiction can have lasting impacts on a child's health and wellbeing, but children can be incredibly resilient; the effects of traumatic experiences can be mitigated with the

right support from caring adults like the parents, caregivers, and providers this initiative targets.

Created in consultation with experts in addiction and early childhood development, these engaging bilingual resources model strategies to help children overcome the trauma of parental addiction and build resilience, while providing age-appropriate messages and tools for those caring adults to help children cope.

"The significance of Sesame Workshop's new initiative on parental addiction cannot be overstated," said Jerry Moe, National Director of Children's Programs at the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation, and key advisor on the new initiative. "There have been precious few resources to help young children, so this initiative is a game-changer for the important work we do with kids at Hazelden Betty Ford and for professionals everywhere on the front lines of our nation's addiction crisis. For children who connect to Karli, hearing, 'It's not your fault—you are not alone, and there are safe people and places that can help,' opens a path to hope and healing. This Sesame Street in Communities resource fills a huge void for millions of families hurt by addiction and helps kids be kids again."

For more information visit www.sesamestreetincommunities.org.
Report taken from Sesame Street press release.



The Gift of Self-Forgiveness from page 1

He said that to replace the opioids his son had taken up vaping and was \$13,000 in debt over his nicotine addiction. He wanted his son to recover since he felt guilty that during Michael's childhood he had devoted himself almost exclusively to his business demands and neglected to spend time with his son. He felt there was a link between his neglect of his son years ago and his current problems with addiction. He said he had to save his son due to his own guilt.

This was the second time his son had come to him for money even though Michael had a good job and made a good income. Clearly Michael had completed his opioid program without coming to grips with the self-hatred of his own using. He had simply replaced one drug for another. He had neglected to heal himself inside and was likely using his dad's guilt to manipulate him. Finally, my friend asked Michael to be honest about what was driving him to abuse chemicals.

His son described how he could never measure up to his dad who was very athletic, successful in business, a great performing guitarist, and good with people. Michael knew his dad's stories of sports achievement, career and financial success and dynamic community leadership. In fact, Marcus often was image-conscious, driving a blue Ferrari, wearing Italian designer suits and looking like he could be on the cover of GQ magazine. Marcus was a hard-driving man who always expected the best of himself. It became pretty clear to him why his son had spent his whole life not feeling acceptable. He was following his dad's example.

As I sat across from Marcus I looked him in the eyes and said, "Your son's addictions are due to his incomplete lack of recovery for which only he can be responsible. Your image is pretty amazing. But that's not the best part of you. I enjoy you as a friend because of who you are, not what you do. Your heart is bigger than life." I reminded him that I too had let my son down in his early years and that I struggle with guilt over it. I find the best way to deal with this guilt is to hang out with him in a positive way and let him know that he is loved for who he is already. Marcus reciprocated. He told me that what draws him to me is that I am a nerd and don't worry about image. I reminded him that his son is a nerd as well. I said that maybe you should get over saving him and just hang out with him as you have been doing. We were both close to tears with each other.

Marcus took this magical moment and ran with it. He realized he needed to forgive himself in a big way. He told Michael that instead of giving him the \$13,000 he would do something more than that. He acknowledged that he had played a role in his son's childhood pain and had overemphasized achievement over simply accepting his son as he is. He would stay out of his son's recovery and do something his son had asked him to do for years—to teach him how to play the "Star-spangled Banner" the way Jimi Hendrix played it. Sure enough, Marcus and Michael play guitar together today and just hang out, the same as I do with my own son. And his son now does a mean version of the "Star-spangled Banner."

Please don't get the idea that self-forgiveness is as easy as this story illustrates. It isn't. Marcus and I took many years to work up to that exchange. In my opinion, what's important in this story is that it often takes a caring relationship with a significant other to help us lessen our shame and guilt, something that is virtually impossible to do all on our own. We all need other warm human beings to go inside our souls to lighten up on ourselves. Such transformations don't happen overnight. Marcus and I have been friends for years and we each have more work to do on ourselves. But life is much brighter for both of us.

SIGNALS THAT WE NEED FORGIVENESS

Seeing is an important part of healing ourselves. What we cannot see we cannot heal. The following signals may indicate that you may need help with your own shame and guilt:

- Withdrawal from your life goals and giving up on hope in yourself.
- Persistent perfectionism and excessive striving for status and success.
- Unwillingness to talk about certain important parts of your history.
- Criticism and extreme prejudice towards others.
- Occasional loss of control over minor offenses in others.
- Glassy-eyed optimism over how well you are doing.
- Cluelessness towards how you affect others.
- Excessive acts of atonement over seemingly minor errors.
- Compulsive and addictive behaviors.
- Repeated efforts to control others.
- Failure to see the bigger picture of how others have scapegoated you or you have involuntarily sacrificed your well-being for others.

WHAT STOPS US FROM FORGIVING OURSELVES

Some of us feel hating ourselves is our lot in life, as if we have no other alternative or were born that way. We may be quite unaware of how other people have emotionally neglected us, blamed us or had a stake in making us feel bad. We wouldn't know where to begin in truly forgiving ourselves. Others feel that we deserve to be punished because our current life is unsuccessful, we are too interested in self-indulgence, or life has not lived up to expectations. Often such beliefs are caused inadvertently and mistaken self-blame for causing some perverted behaviors in others. Some of us enjoy wallowing in our own misery or inducing guilt in others for our own suffering. Finally, many of us are too isolated and are cut off from spiritual or palliative resources. Some of us truly lack resources or have an exaggerated notion of how we alone should be able to solve our own problems. Perhaps we refuse genuine gestures of support by others due to our own false pride or fear of being exploited. Some of us would rather suffer as a means of belonging to a group of suffering souls. Some of us stay in shame to fuel our impulses to stay addicted and get high as a poor substitute for real self-esteem and serenity, which we find elusive. Finally, there are some of us who enjoy inflicting our misery on others because it is the only power we have in life. These are the so-called "bad asses" of life.

Some of us flee from self-righteousness and would rather be sinners than saints. Others prefer self-righteousness over true self-forgiveness as it gives us power over others who are less perfect than us. The variety of roadblocks to overcoming shame and guilt are a testimony to our passion to survive. Far better to roast in hell with other devils than to be cast out into nothingness.

Before you embark on a journey of revenge, dig two graves. — CONFUCIUS, 551-479 BC

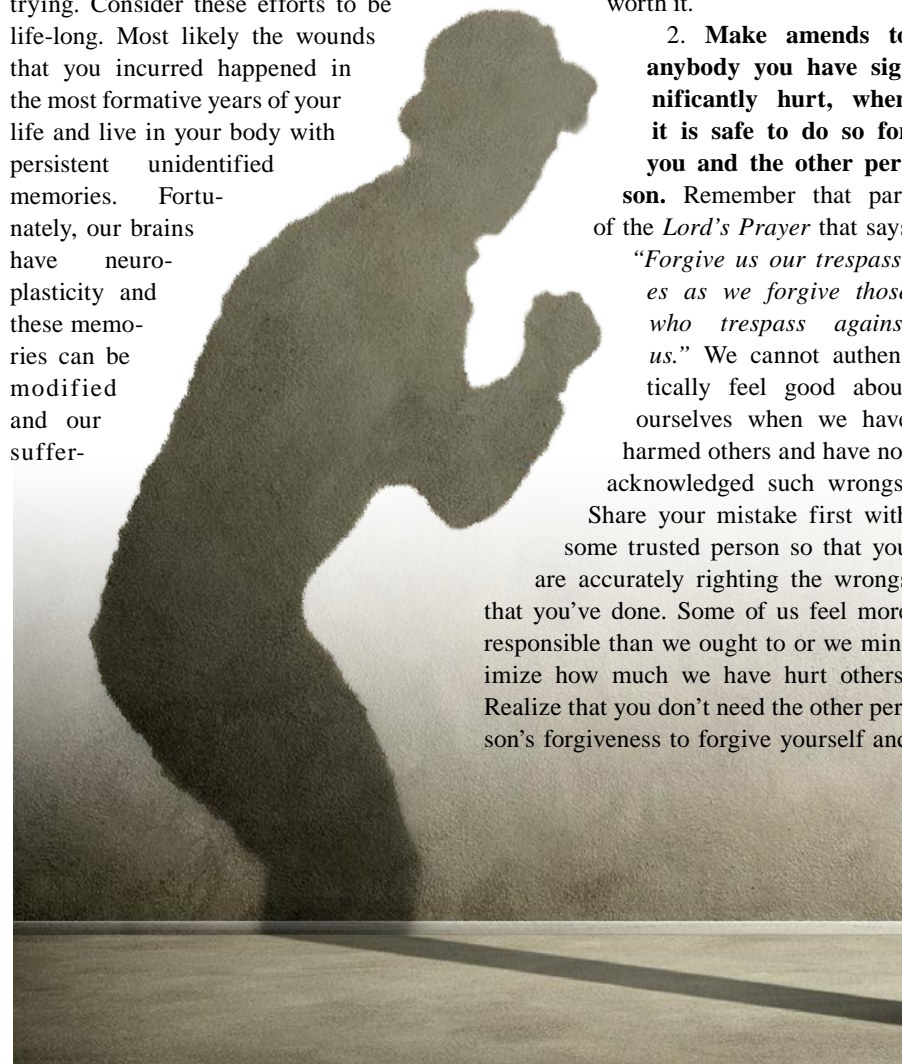
STEPS TOWARDS SELF-FORGIVENESS

Let me walk you through some tried-and-true strategies for being less guilty and ashamed of yourself. All of these ideas require real effort on your part and will not happen magically or quickly on their own. However, you should begin to experience some small moments of peace and relief as you work on these ideas. It's best, and perhaps necessary, to do these strategies with a trusted helper or support group like a good Al-anon or spiritual study group. What got hurt in you occurred in a relationship and you need a healing relationship to correct these wrongs. Give yourself credit for even trying. Consider these efforts to be life-long. Most likely the wounds that you incurred happened in the most formative years of your life and live in your body with persistent unidentified memories. Fortunately, our brains have neuroplasticity and these memories can be modified and our suffer-

ing eased. Think of self-forgiveness as a healing biological process that occurs much like a head injury or back injury gets mended. You go one step at a time over a long journey. You may get impatient as your personal miracle does not happen fast enough. Look real close at yourself and you will see the miracle as it gradually unfolds before your very eyes. I can tell you from personal experiences that miracles really do happen. There is hope for self-forgiveness! Here are some steps:

1. Read everything you can on healing shame and forgiveness. I like all the writings of Brené Brown, especially *Gifts of Imperfection* (Hazelden Publishing, 2010) and *Forgive and Forget*. Some true stories may also help. Read *A Mother's Reckoning* (Broadway Books, 2017) by Sue Klebold and *Amish Grace* (Jossey-Bass, 2007) by Donald B. Kraybill and Steve M. Nolt. These are amazing stories of forgiveness and the value of forgiveness. It is not easy to put things behind us, forgive others or feel self-accepting when we have been abused. But it's possible to have them take up less space in our awareness, to be less wounded by our traumas and to move on with our lives in a way that makes us stronger. All of this takes lots of time but is well worth it.

2. Make amends to anybody you have significantly hurt, when it is safe to do so for you and the other person. Remember that part of the *Lord's Prayer* that says "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." We cannot authentically feel good about ourselves when we have harmed others and have not acknowledged such wrongs. Share your mistake first with some trusted person so that you are accurately righting the wrongs that you've done. Some of us feel more responsible than we ought to or we minimize how much we have hurt others. Realize that you don't need the other person's forgiveness to forgive yourself and







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Continued from page 14

you will never be able to remove the damage you have already caused. Just knowing that you have come clean with another will lessen your load.

3. **Realize that the lion's share of your self-condemnation is not due to wrongs you have done but to the wrongs that have been done to you throughout your lifetime that you're often not aware of.** Those 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. Much of the shame we carry today is due to other people's failures who were also imperfect.

4. **Get savvy to the great extent that this materialistic culture contributes to your shame and guilt.** You have not learned to hate yourself all by yourself. You've had a lot of help to do that. The majority of television advertising is about how there is something wrong with you and how only their product can correct this. Although some information on TV is informative, most of it only reconfirms how you are not enough—thin enough, attractive enough, or are not doing enough for your children. You also have way more substance to you than the superficial entertainment pabulum that passes for news or family programming. While there is nothing wrong with occasional splurges of silly entertainment, certainly a steady diet of it will leave you feeling mindless and empty. Consider joining a great book discussion group or going to the library and rediscovering reading as a way to challenge yourself and expand your horizons. You have everything you already need to be a wise and attractive full person.

5. **Heal yourself with vibrant love from others in your present life.** Love always trumps hatred if you are willing to receive it. Get involved in a good Al-anon group that helps you witness your strengths and opens you up to receiving from others. The

spiritual blessings of 12 Step Groups cannot be overstated. Self-forgiveness comes from knowing what you mean to others and feeling what they mean to you. You will become more self-reliant as you open yourself to love.

6. **Develop a strong observing self and let that person guide and challenge you.** He or she is your best friend. Look at that person in the mirror, talk to him or her out loud and let that person be your conscience, your inspiration and your affirmer. If your inner critic arises thank him or her for being so loyal to you all these years but ask him or her to step aside as you already have a new guide and a new way of doing things. Don't cast your inner critic aside much like you wouldn't disown an old relative. Just let him or her fade away as you move on with your observing self. Let that part of you appear in your dreams and speak to you out of love. Don't be afraid of that person. He or she is there to protect you. You will be amazed at what you see and hear. Often that person is the reincarnation of anyone who has authentically loved you, like a deceased parent, beloved aunt or uncle, dear sibling or your Higher Power. All the people who have ever truly loved you live inside you all the time. I hope you take a part of me with you too.

"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)

John H. Driggs, LICSW, 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.



Self-forgiveness comes from knowing what you mean to others and feeling what they mean to you

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Prayer Primer

by Mary Lou Logsdon



What is prayer? Prayer is conversation with an inner voice, a higher power, a felt presence. Many call this conversation partner God. Some use other names: YHWH (Jehovah), Allah, Gaia, Spirit. Whatever the name we give it, we seek contact through prayer and meditation.

I learned the basics of prayer as a child. Since then I've learned to read beyond Dick and Jane and solve problems beyond arithmetic. Too often our prayer skills stop at a third grade level. As I age, my conversations with friends and partners grow more complex, nuanced and intimate. Now I need prayer practices that meet the needs, yearnings and complexities of my adult life.

I used to approach prayer as though I had to convince God, to plead, to bargain. Those are my "please, please, please" prayers. Please keep the plane in the air. Please let me win the lottery. Please keep my secret—I promise to quit. My prayer meshed with magical thinking. While I know prayer can be powerful and miracles happen, I find that I am the one changed through prayer. I accept what I could not. I see a new way. I recognize the Holy already present in my life.

How we pray reflects who we are. Some talk, others listen. Some pray with their whole body as in yoga; others challenge their body such as through fasting. Some pray in sacred temples; others find a cathedral in the natural world. Some kneel, others dance.

Prayer can be communal or solitary. I need both. Most Sunday mornings I spend an hour praying with a church community. I sing prayer as I join other voices in blended harmony. I resonate with sacred readings and ancient stories that speak of God's love and human failings. I listen as a pastor opens those stories to explore universal truths from the container of myth, parable and metaphor.

At other times I need to pray alone. Most days I sit cross-legged on my couch or cushion to spend 20 minutes in silence, practicing presence. Each time my mind wanders, I bring it back with a sacred word: Love, peace, hope. Both my solitary and communal prayer times feed me.

What kinds of prayer are there? One of the first and easiest is a prayer of thanksgiving. I walk into a gorgeous day and say, "Thank you!" I gather around a holiday meal with family or friends and say, "Thank you!" I end my day recalling its blessings and say, "Thank you!" Another type is supplication, aka HELP!! Help me get through this. Keep my loved one safe. Heal my friend struggling with addiction. There are prayers of contrition: I may have hurt someone, not lived by my values, let my ego dominate. I acknowledge my wrong and seek wisdom in making amends.

Finally there are prayers of praise, celebrating the astonishment of being alive. Rabbi Abraham Heschel says, "To pray is to take notice of the wonder, to regain a sense of the mystery that animates all being, the divine margin in all attainment; prayer is our humble answer to the inconceivable surprise of living."

Prayer opens us up to what is important. What is it I really want? A bigger house? A different job? More toys? What is it I really want? As I linger with that question, my desire becomes clearer. I really want to be present in my life. I real-

ly want to be healthy and whole. I surely want to love and be loved. I can go into prayer with one want only to move into another. A friend describes the turning point in his prayer, when he stopped praying for his 101-year-old mother to get well and started praying for her to have a good death. In prayer we are transformed.

How can prayer help when choices arise out of our dualistic view of the world: Good/bad; true/false; always/never? Little in life is black and white. In prayer I hold my either/or choice open and wait for a third one to make itself known. I picture one choice in each hand. Then I wait. Inevitably a third one appears. It arises from patiently holding the tension, not forcing a decision. The third one is not a compromise, it's a new choice that supersedes the dualistic one.

Years ago, I worked in business and considered getting a master's degree. I debated between a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree or something more technical. Neither seemed worth the hard work required of my overflowing life. When I retired years later I knew I would begin a master's degree in theology. The third way opened. My decision was easy.

Prayers I memorized as a child don't go away. When I awaken in night's dark hours those familiar prayers comfort me. My father, in the depth of his dementia, could not name his children or construct a full sentence, but he was fluent in the Our Father as we recited it together.

Must I always speak nicely to God? Never raise my voice? Suffocate my anger? God is not a delicate flower easily damaged, nor does God need to be appeased. Our higher power is big enough to hear our cries of outrage and despair. Prayer is a safe place to bring my anger, hurt and sorrow. Eventually I move into acceptance, resolution and even peace. God is present through it all.

Tangible objects aid me in prayer: Scripture, poetry, art, icons, journals, paints, beads, candles, shawls, photos. We can create personal altars. A photo of my young self reminds me of the hurt child who still keeps residence. A cairn of rounded Lake Superior rocks symbolize strength. A simple collage sparks new insight. We all have artifacts that remind us of our own sacred stories.

I move part of step 10's daily inventory into step 11's prayer, journal handy. I look at both the gifts of the day and its challenges. Questions I ask myself include: Where was my higher power present? What enlivened me? What opened me to love? Where was God absent? What drained me of life? What blocked my love? I record these answers. Later I read what I've written to recognize repeating patterns: Where I struggle and with whom, where I find life and love, where I am growing and where I am resisting. From here I learn what I must accept, what I need to change and seek the wisdom to move through.

Good conversations ebb and flow between talking and listening. Is it time to change up the conversation? What do you want to say? What do you need to hear?

Mary Lou Logsdon, is a spiritual director who companions people on their spiritual journey. She can be reached at logsdon.marylou@gmail.com.