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## WHERE THE HECK Can I Go on Retreat This Year?

by Pat Samples

With virus-related restrictions in place, you may not have access to a resort or retreat center for a quiet time of self-reflection this year. But closer to home are some pristine, tucked-away woodlands that invite relaxation, gently adventurous discoveries, and communion with self and nature.

### WAKING UP IN CRYSTAL MAC WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

The northwest Minneapolis suburb of Crystal is home to a quiet gem of marshland and woods, with an easy walking trail to take you around and over the water. Next to Crystal Airport, this small, out of the way wildlife area is owned by the Metropolitan Airports Commission.

I enter the park over a new sturdy wood bridge that appears to be air-supported just above the water. Crossing it, I pass close to cattails and other reeds broken and beaten by winter. I wonder if these reeds are the kind suitable for basket-making. What patience and respect it must take to shape and dry them so they can hold together and give service as a thing of beauty. *Could I learn such reverence for how living things hold together and serve us, by honoring their needs and their generosity?*

I feel a kindred spirit with a lone duck that seems content idling solo amid the reeds. Then its sudden flurry of movement rolls out an enticing palette of blues across the surface of the high waters this spring day. My eyes widen in awe at the



many surprising hues. *Did I never notice before that water is not one color?*

Surrounding the marshy area are sky-reaching trees. Each one has its own bends, shoots, textures, size, colorations. No one-size-fits-all when it comes to describing a tree. I can't see the roots, but I know that some have been extending themselves there for dozens, even hundreds of years. They reach out generously to each other, sending signals and nutrients among this entire stand for mutual support. *We have much to learn from them.*

One sprawling, dead tree trunk is suspended between two tall neighbors. On one section of it I see a substantial cluster of sizeable holes, obviously created by more than just woodpeckers, but by what? Which insects or other creatures are finding its contents worth massive numbers of chews or pecks to reach? And why this particular trunk in this particular section of it? *What draws me to give immense effort to one thing versus another?*

WHERE THE HECK CAN I GO to pg 8

JOHN H. DRIGGS, LICSW

## When You Live Through Another Person

*"You were born with wings, why prefer to crawl through life?"*  
— RUMI

First a note to my readers. I've decided to not write about the coronavirus (COVID-19). There is already so much written about this topic, often for very good reasons. These are times when following the guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is a very good idea. However, we also need to listen to ourselves and be connected to others. For now, I just don't want to give this disease more air-time than it deserves. In time we will overcome this malady. It's the rest of our lives that concerns me. Let us focus instead on having a strong and resilient identity no matter what other people think or what is going on around us. We are all capable of that. Let us balance relying on others and listening to our own heart. This is what will keep us safe.

There is such a thing as healthy mimetics. We humans, like all mammals, are fundamentally imitative beings. We both need and like to learn from each other, especially in our early childhood. Our brains are wired through evolution with mirror neurons. This means that our brains light up the same way as another human being doing a certain task when we watch them doing that task.

LIVING THROUGH OTHERS to pg 14

## Shelter-in-Place Self-Care

by Wendi Wheeler

Even if you did not fully listen to the pre-flight safety presentation the last time you were on an airplane, I am willing to bet you can recall the flight attendant's advice to put your mask on before helping others. The reason is simple: You cannot help anyone else if you are in danger of running out of oxygen yourself.

This advice is also useful now that many of us are working from home while also caring for our families, helping children learn, and tending to the needs of our significant others. With increased demands in an environment that is at times stressful and anxiety producing, the need for self-care is even more important than it has ever been. Caring for ourselves allows us to better care for others. But, oddly enough,

finding the means or the time to care for ourselves can add to our stress levels.

Self-care can take many forms: Exercising, eating foods that nourish and sustain your body, relaxing, or making meaningful connections with others. If deciding what to do or finding the time to do it adds to your anxiety, try to follow advice you may have received from friends in the recovery community and KISS (Keep It Simple Sweetie). Do what you can, when you can, to care for yourself so that you can be the best worker, partner, par-

ent, homeschool supervisor, or friend.

The following suggestions may serve as guidelines or inspiration:

SHELTER-IN-PLACE SELF-CARE to pg 6



## BULLETIN BOARD

## UPCOMING (Online events)

## Minnesota Plants: A Webinar Series

Live on Thursdays, May 14 - September 10, 7 pm - 8 pm. Calling all gardeners, landscapers, and nature enthusiasts- this free weekly webinar series is put on by the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum. Join local horticultural experts for a closer look at the plants that grow in Minnesota. You'll get to explore collections, backyards and gardens from your armchair as you learn more about trees, perennials, edible plants, houseplants and more. To join or for more info, visit: <https://sites.google.com/umn.edu/mn-plant-spotlight-series/home>

## Virtual Event: Susan Lanzoni: A History of Empathy

Thursday, May 28 at 12:00 pm. Despite the ubiquity of the word empathy today, few people know the fascinating history of its origin in 1908 and shifting meanings over the following century. Susan Lanzoni, historian of psychology, psychiatry and neuroscience at Harvard University's School of Continuing Education, and author of *Empathy: A History*, will share her research on the earliest conceptions of empathy—initially a term to describe how spectators projected their own feelings onto objects of art and nature—and how this has transformed into its present meaning of grasping the feelings and emotions of other people. More info at: <https://new.artsmaia.org/event/susan-lanzoni-a-history-of-empathy>

## Walker at Home

While their galleries are currently closed, the Walker has made it possible to connect with art and artists through their website at [walkerart.org](http://walkerart.org).

## IN A CRISIS?

If you are experiencing a crisis, you can text **HOME** to **741741** to be connected to a crisis counselor. Or visit [crisistextline.org](http://crisistextline.org).

## Finding Isabelle "Ma Belle" London Jefferson: A New Orleans Family Matriarch

Wednesday, June 10 from 6:00 to 7:30 pm. via Navigating African American genealogy can be very challenging. Moreover, searching for maternal ancestors who were recently enslaved can be tedious and difficult. Yet, Isabelle "Ma Belle" London Jefferson was worth the years of research and challenges. After emancipation, many African Americans lived and worked on the same plantations where they were formerly enslaved. Gaynell Brady will examine African American genealogy through the lens of the Greens, Meyers, and Jefferson families who lived in Clinton, Des Allemands, and New Orleans, Louisiana. Free to register. More information via Eventbrite.

## Something Good Comedy Show

Monday, June 15 at 9:00 pm (livestream). Something Good is a free comedy variety show about how to feel happy in a world of s\*\*\*. Hosts Chloe Radcliffe (*The Tonight Show*), Caitlin Pelluffo (*The Late Show*), and Ben Katzner offer a bright spot in the darkness...and a head-on look at the darkness, because 'good vibes only' doesn't always work. Register for a link to the livestream page, or just copy-paste this address into your browser at 9pm EST on 5/12. [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXoCbhgXBGGVIsA7v\\_qdXEQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXoCbhgXBGGVIsA7v_qdXEQ)

## 2nd Annual 2218 Ride for Recovery

Saturday, June 27, 8:00 am at Bison Motorcycles, 2967 Hudson Road, Oakdale, MN 55128. (Alternate date due to COVID-19: September 12). Ride to support 2218 - the world's longest continuously running Alano. Live music, BBQ, guest A.A. speaker, medallion meeting. Featuring Zeew Factor and Happy Wednesday bands. Ride starts off with a pancake breakfast and registration at 8:00 am. Admission wristbands \$20 in advance, \$25 day of event (donation includes ride, dinner, dance and silent auction). Text ride questions to 763-464-2753 and other event questions to 763-464-2754.

## ONGOING (May be postponed due to COVID)

## Dissonance Presents: Story Well

Mondays from 6:00 to 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.

## Caring Families Online Support Group

Every Tuesday at 6:00 pm CST, online at [TheDailyPledge.org](http://TheDailyPledge.org). A support group for parents and family members of loved ones that are struggling with alcohol and or drug addiction; mixed/open to the public. It may seem counterintuitive or even selfish, but finding a way forward for your family starts with getting help for yourself—regardless of whether your loved one seeks addiction treatment. For more than 65 years, Hazelden Betty Ford has devoted each new day to helping individuals and families reclaim their lives from the pain and chaos of addiction. They know from experience that life gets better. Questions, contact Jeremiah at 651-213-4754.

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

To place a listing, email David Goldstein at [david@thephoenixspirit.com](mailto:david@thephoenixspirit.com) to explore advertising or promotional offers.

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## WRITERS / ARTISTS

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

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Retreat

by Louise Elowen

“In order to understand the world, one has to turn away from it on occasion.”  
— ALBERT CAMUS, THE MYTH OF SISYPHUS AND OTHER ESSAYS



Before

Since I wrote my last *Letter from the Editor*, the world has changed in so many ways. Yet, in others it has not. If we cut out all the noise and chaos of the outside world for a moment, we are faced with the stark reality of ourselves. For many, confronted with this unscheduled time at home, the thought of spending time in “isolation” is downright scary. For others, it has been a gift. In a world where everyone (or everything) seems to clamor for attention or recognition, spending time alone, or just some quiet time, is a luxury many can ill afford. Or is it?

Retreat, in the sense of spending “time out,” should not be a gift or luxury, it should be a necessity of life. A necessity we seem to have forgotten in our 24-hour, always “on” world. How can we possibly tune out this noise, learn to separate fact from fiction, if we don’t take a step back and get back-to-basics once in a while? And when I say back-to-basics, I really mean back to nature, back to our origins, back to (or discovering) our true selves.

My personal retreat is my garden. Five years ago, after separating from an extremely unhealthy relationship, my “garden” was little more than patchy “lawn” (which was a generous description to say the least). There were a few plants in desperate need of love, surrounded by an old, falling-down garage. I thought I’d throw up a fence, contain my dog from the rest of the land, and call it good. But it was not to be.

I began to think: *Why not put in a plant box or two and grow some herbs and veggies? Some flowers, even?* And, so it began. As I added to my garden piece-by-piece, my soul began to feel nourished



After

Photos courtesy of Louise Elowen

again. The positive side of my emotional self began to emerge once more. As I tended to my garden, fed each plant, pruned back trees, literally pulled up paving stones, and painted the old garage into a workshop and studio for my business, I found my spirit healing – nourished and healthy again. The fear and uncertainty I had felt in the past few years dissipated, slowly but most certainly surely.

People asked me: *What do you do in the garden all the time?* Sometimes I wasn’t doing. I was being.

I sat. Listening to the birds merrily chirping away in the bird bath, splashing happily in the water. The buzz of the hummingbirds as they fought with each other over the feeder, then buzzed me as if to “tell” on each other. The toad I found hopping around the garden as secret spaces evolved for it to hide. The chipmunks darting across the patio, no doubt digging up some of the seeds I had just planted and taunting my dog as he slept. Sunflowers reaching for the summer sun. Roses fragrant in the air. This was my sanctuary. My retreat. And it healed me; it heals me.

A retreat can mean many things, but you often don’t have to go far from home to find it. It begins with ourselves.

So, you may not be able to go far to retreat this year but take a look around your community. Check out the nature walks and parks. And get back to nature. You never know what you might discover.



The Phoenix Spirit

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find and face holds within it  
the seeds of  
healing, health, wisdom,  
growth and prosperity.  
We hope you find a  
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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.

PUBLISHERS

Aaron and Jen Shepherd  
4190 Vinewood Ln. N  
Suite 111 PMB 403  
Minneapolis, MN 55442  
612-615-9740

EDITOR

Louise Elowen  
phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com

SALES DIRECTOR

David Goldstein  
612-298-5405  
david@thephoenixspirit.com

COMMUNITY RELATIONS DIRECTOR

Jen Shepherd  
jen@thephoenixspirit.com

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

John Driggs, Mary Lou Logsdon,  
Pat Samples, Rachel T. Schromen,  
Wendi Wheeler

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SUPPORT GROUPS / MANY MAY BE NOT BE MEETING DUE TO STAY-AT-HOME ORDERS

MONDAYS

**1900 Mens Al-anon**, 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](http://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](http://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](mailto: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](http://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](http://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/](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.

WEDNESDAYS

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

**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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://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](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.

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](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:** Saturdays 12pm-1:30pm, Suburban North Alano at 15486 Territorial Rd. Maple Grove 55369. Open to men and women. For more info contact Janine 763-458-0812; <http://www.MinnCoDA.org>

**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 8-9am 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](http://www.clutterersanonymous.org)

**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 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](http://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](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.

**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.southsidemensgroup.org](http://www.southsidemensgroup.org).

SUNDAYS

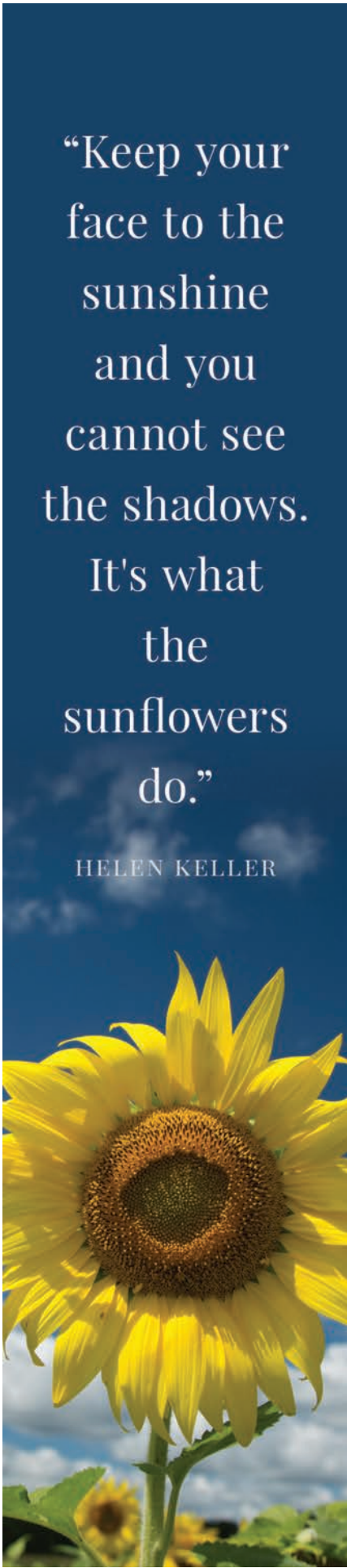
**Big Red Book ACA**, 11:15am at the Cavalier Club, 6123 Wooddale Ave., Edina, MN 55424. Call Therese S. at 952-927-6761 for more info.

**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. Call Jim B. at 651-779-6828.

**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](mailto:phoenix@thephoenix-spirit.com). Thank you.





# Becoming: Growing Into Myself in Sobriety

by Stephanie P.

God having a plan for me is evidenced in reflection of the events throughout my life. As a child, I had struggles that I remember and can feel, but no longer identify with. The growth that comes with age, brain maturation, experiences and learning shape who we are at different times. I think of that struggling little girl, and want to give her the knowledge, resources, and insight I have now. It's scary being young, not knowing you are capable, and that your story continues.

I often felt trapped in a body paralyzed by fear and anxiety, and boy was it my cross to bear! I shared recently at a meeting how I prayed every night during my formative years for God to lift this burden. I was discouraged that I did not get an answer to my prayers, my young self not knowing how God “answers” prayers. I kept on praying, mostly out of superstition. *What if things got even worse if I stopped praying?* Because of the anxiety, I fought to keep attention away from me—*No, please pick someone else to play Vanna White in the eighth-grade talent show! I have to present in front of the class? God help me do a cartwheel in front of the entire fifth-grade gym class!* These things caused me great stress, headaches, and lost sleep. I felt I couldn't navigate through them as a normal person. *God lift this burden from me. Let me feel normal.* I felt the burden was lifted when I was introduced to alcohol, and then alcohol became my God.

**“...AND THEN ALCOHOL BECAME MY GOD.”**

My growth was largely stunted during the next period of active addiction, but “it worked” for a long while. In hindsight, I see that I achieved “despite of” my alcoholism, not because of the perceived benefits. I got through that presentation to the entire department of communications disorders...they didn't see me be sick in the public bathroom stall afterwards. I was free of nerves before my big date... he had to carry me up a flight of stairs, to get me to the hospital, because he didn't know what was wrong with me. When I first started taking benzodiazepines, my now husband thought I had had a stroke. *Was it working?* That voice in my head asked that question for another decade. I had children and tried to survive motherhood. It was a morning years ago, as I sat defeatedly on the bathroom floor trying to start my day with a pledge not to drink, that I fully conceded that this “was not working.”

With 6+ years of sobriety, I feel I am living my best life as an actualization of self and by working the program. The Steps have shown me how to live honest-



ly, and most importantly “live my truth.” By living my truth, I am, by default, honest with others. How liberating is it walk through life as I am intended! I recently read that the two most important days of a person's life are the day you were born, and the day you realize why you are born. It took the descent into addiction and hitting my bottom, and the rising up from that, to get to the newest chapter of spiritual growth. God has a plan for me which includes struggles and not knowing. I get to now live each day excited about what's next for me, and what I can contribute to my loved ones and society.

**"GOD HAS A PLAN FOR ME WHICH INCLUDES STRUGGLES AND NOT KNOWING."**

I am reminded of a spring day at the height of my addiction when I was visiting my mother with my toddler son. She insisted I come out with the two of them to help water the flowers.

“It's beautiful outside.”  
*Is it?* I didn't know or care. I was stuck in the misery of that particular circumstance of addiction meeting the demands of real life—the sun was too bright, I couldn't feign interest and enthusiasm, I felt the burden of having to care for a small child, my head hurt and my mind was spiraling, and I resented my mom who was acting as my child's mother when I couldn't.

My spring days of this coronavirus quarantine involve my now 11-year-old son “waiting” for me to finish up my work so we can go for a walk—three times a day. And it is a gift. My oldest daughter calls out, “You can walk by yourself you know!” But he waits. He rides on his scooter while I walk the dog, and I actually see the memories forming in real time because it is just so special.

*Please send your 1st Person story to phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com. We'll connect with you if we choose to publish your piece in a future issue. Thank you.*

***It took the descent into addiction and hitting my bottom, and the rising up from that, to get to the newest chapter of spiritual growth.***

## 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](http://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](http://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](http://www.LivingProofMN.com), email [shira@livingproofmn.com](mailto:shira@livingproofmn.com) or call 612-207-8720

### Substance Use Disorders

#### 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 [mntc.org](http://mntc.org)

### Narcotics Anonymous Helpline

Drug Problem? We Can Help! Call Now 24-hour 877-767-7676. Also, check out [www.namimnnesota.org](http://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](http://www.workaholics-anonymous.org).

*To place a Resource Directory listing call David at 612-298-5405 or email at [david@thephoenixspirit.com](mailto:david@thephoenixspirit.com)*



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from page 1

## Stay-in-Place Self-Care

### HIRE A VIRTUAL TRAINER

Many independent personal trainers and those who work at privately-owned facilities are eager to work with you virtually. Contact your gym to find out if individual or group training is available at this time. If you do not belong to a gym, contact a local facility or ask friends or work colleagues if they can make a recommendation for you. If you do have a personal trainer and they have not already made an offer to provide virtual training sessions, ask if they will. All businesses and service providers are learning new ways of working, and they may welcome the opportunity to learn a new skill.



*If you do not belong to a gym, contact a local facility or ask friends or work colleagues if they can make a recommendation for you. If you do have a personal trainer and they have not already made an offer to provide virtual training sessions, ask if they will.*

### DO AN AT-HOME WORKOUT

If hiring a trainer or paying for classes is not financially feasible, an at-home workout is a great way to stay active. Your workouts need not be overly complicated. Work the major muscle groups including legs, arms, and back, and get your heart pumping by doing jumping jacks, push-ups, lunges, and squats. I also recommend adding triceps dips to help tone up your “bat wings” if you, like me, are blessed with them. Do dips on a heavy and stable piece of furniture like your couch, a chair, or a bench.

Either schedule a time in your workday to complete an entire workout or simply add activity into your routine at random intervals. An easy and fun workout involves a deck of cards. Assign an exercise to each suit; for example, spades are squats, hearts are jumping jacks, clubs are pushups, and diamonds are sit-ups or crunches. Aces are a water break and jokers are ten burpees or another challenging exercise. The number on the card tells you how many repetitions of each exercise to perform, and face cards are 11 repetitions. Draw a card, perform the exercise, and then take a break or keep drawing until you are finished.

Finding a free online workout these days is easy. Google “at home workout” or “quarantine workout,” and you will find many options. If you find an instructor you like, subscribe to their YouTube channel or bookmark their website and show them some love by sharing your activity on social media to help promote them.

### DRINK WATER

Drinking water promotes digestion, aids in the transportation of nutrients to your cells, and helps maintain a safe body temperature.

It is recommended that you aim to drink half your body weight in ounces of water. For example, if you weigh 150 pounds, you should aim to drink 75 ounces of water. A typical drinking glass is about 16 ounces, and a measuring cup like one you would use for baking is 8 ounces.

There are apps available for iPhone and Android devices to help you track your water intake. Find a free one in your app store and get started using it. Or if you want to track your water intake the easy way, judge by the color of your urine. If it is light yellow, you are doing well.

### GO OUTSIDE

For many of us, going for a walk, run, or bike ride is still an acceptable way to practice safe social distancing. Even a walk around the block can provide a few minutes of rest and relaxation. If for some reason you cannot fit an outdoor activity into your day, at least move outside to work for part of the day. Some of our most enjoyable Zoom conference calls have included colleagues who are working while sunning on their patio.

### TAKE BREAKS

Working from home, especially if you are supervising children of any age, can mean you forget to take the regularly scheduled “fifteens” that you may have become accustomed to taking when you were working at the office. Make some time to move away from your workspace if you can, or at the very least, to do something other than work.

My favorite non-work activity during our quarantine has been watching “Some Good News” by John Krasinski, also known as Jim from “The Office.” Krasinski broadcasts weekly on Facebook or his YouTube channel, sharing stories and events that will make you laugh, cry, and help restore your faith in humanity. His 20-minute videos, which feature special guests including his former costars, have become a highlight of my week.

### CONNECT

Now more than ever, the need to connect with others – specifically people outside of our homes – is important to our health and wellbeing. Many recovery groups are holding meetings online, and you can even choose to attend an online meeting in another state or country if you wish. Check your local Intergroup or Area website for details.

You can also schedule a Zoom meeting with a friend or use Facetime or Google duo to see friends and family members while you are chatting with them. Or you can try the Marco Polo app to send video messages to individuals or groups.

A fun, old school way to connect is to send a card or letter. Most of us rarely receive any fun mail these days. Your friend or family member will appreciate receiving an interesting piece of mail, and the United States Postal Service will appreciate your business.

### ALWAYS DO YOUR BEST

The fourth agreement of Don Miguel Ruiz’s book, *The Four Agreements*, is “always do your best.” This does not mean you always have to be perfect, always earn top marks, or always win the approval of your two-year-old. It means do your best and recognize that your best on one day may look very different than your best on another day. On some days you will be a model of self-care, and on other days you will be a mess. Give yourself grace and, try if you can, to extend that grace to others.

*Wendi Wheeler is a writer and a runner who has completed several marathons, half marathons, and other races. She has worked as a trainer and coach and currently resides in Minnesota.*



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## How Has COVID-19 Affected You? *We asked providers and people in recovery*

**MOLLY GILBERT, VINLAND**

Only our outpatient facility has switched over to telemedicine; our residential facility continues to work in the same manner as before, though we have spaced seating in the group rooms so that each client is 6 feet apart from the next. We've also put 'x's on the floor for those waiting in line for meals, so they are reminded to stay 6 feet apart from each other. We've placed hand cleaning gel at various points throughout the buildings so both clients and staff have immediate access if needed.

We have also posted our procedural response to COVID-19 on the front page of our website.

**BRIAN ZIRNGIBLE, LMFT**

I am a Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist and am currently only seeing clients with secure and confidential on-line therapy. I haven't decided yet when I

will start to see clients face-to-face in my office, but am following the CDC, WHO and the MN Dept. of Health very closely with updates.

**TED N., PERSON IN RECOVERY**

I've continued to meet with my psychologist and also attend 12 step meetings virtually, both of which have been almost seamless. We've had some excellent meetings week after week and have had guests attend from various states who otherwise would be unable to due to location. I serve on the board of a treatment center and we're doing all we can to stay accessible and protect clients while also acting responsibly and within the shut-down guidelines.

**KATE LEHMANN, LADC**

I'm a solo private practice substance use professional serving individuals and families with assessments, individual

therapy, and recovery support.

I am now conducting all sessions via secure telehealth. It generally works pretty well but it is more challenging and more tiring for me. I don't anticipate switching back to in-person sessions for some time to come as I think it would be even more challenging to wear masks while engaged in therapy sessions. I'd rather see people's faces on the computer screen.

**BRIAN G., PERSON IN RECOVERY**

The largest impact for me is AA meeting attendance. I live in a rural community and we are doing conference calls. I also do Zoom meetings from my hometown that have been a complete delight, partly because I have a meeting history with some of the people. Also the meetings are more solution based. My fear is that when the Zoom meetings end going back to live meetings where I live will be

a let down. I have very limited options here. I guess I'll have to cross that bridge when it comes.

**JEREMIAH GARDNER., HAZELDEN**

In just over a week's time, we transitioned about 1,300 people nationally who were in our on-site outpatient programs to our new, secure virtual platform. A week later, we began accepting new patients directly into virtual services. Today, six weeks since our launch, we have served well over 3,000 patients nationally in virtual, insurance-eligible outpatient addiction treatment and mental health services.

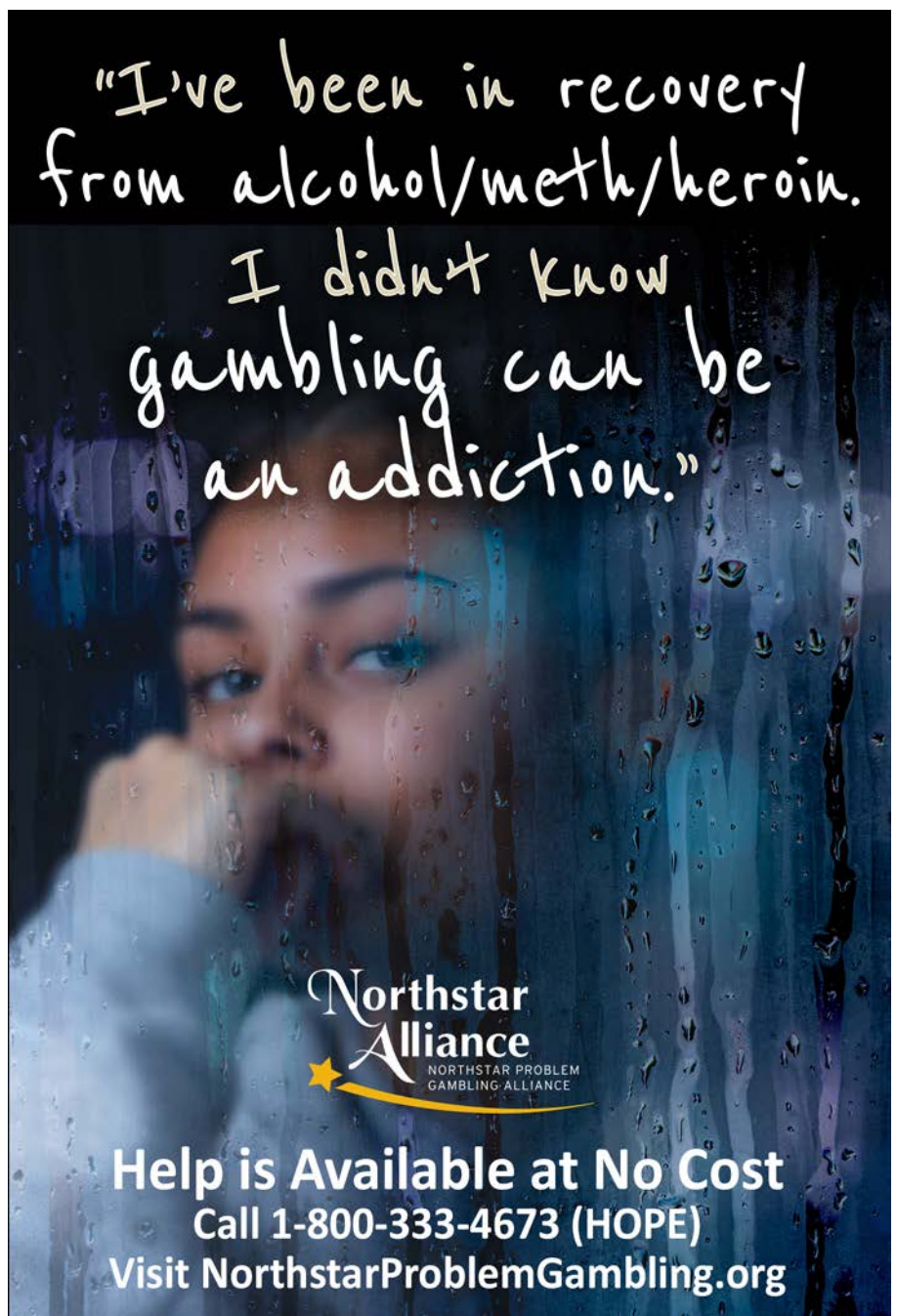
More responses online at [www.thephoenixspirit.com](http://www.thephoenixspirit.com). We'd love to hear how the virus has impacted you and how you believe it will alter your future.



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from page 1

## Where the Heck Can I Go on Retreat This Year?

Another tree, standing tall, has a hole in its side at human eye level, two inches wide and deep. Is this a knothole without a knot? *Might I find holes in myself that need filling? Or ones that are best left alone?*

The floor of this woodland is carpeted with layers of tan leaves scattered months earlier by oak branches above. My feet and my ears discover that these layers have not lost their crunch. My eyes catch multitude shades of tan – not such a boring color as I had always thought.

A blackbird perches next to the trail on a willow shrub (pussy willow, I wonder?), calling and being called by potential mates nearby. Hints of green on the ground and in the branches offer glimpses of new life emerging. As I leave this haven of wildlife after my leisurely stroll, I am refreshed, ready to bring forth new life myself.

### OBSERVATIONS FROM A LOG IN WOOD-RILL

Not a sound greets my friend and me as we meander into the Wood-Rill Scientific and Natural Area in the western suburbs near Long Lake. Wood-Rill is one of dozens of preserved natural areas in Minnesota that offer the solace and renewal of quietude and natural wonders. These Scientific and Natural Areas (SNA's), cared for by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, are less known than state parks, yet easily accessible and generally uncrowded.

Situated near Long Lake, just off Highway 112, Wood-Rill offers a small parking area near a trail entrance, but no other amenities. No buildings. No wood bridges over the water here, just a thrown-together collection of long branches, where needed, that walkers have put in place to keep from having to step into muddy trickles of water along the way. An old board stretched across one such muddy spot tips like a teeter-totter when I step onto it. *Where in my life do I have to make do with whatever is available to get through slippery spots?*

Smattering of fresh grass tufts and moss growth show up as we amble up and down hilly terrain full of basswood, oak, and sugar maple reaching skyward. Dead trunks sprawled everywhere remind me of the long-evolving transience of living things and the value of what remains after death.

I spread out my body on one of the logs. After adjusting to its uneven support along my spine, I spy the highest tree branches, and my breath slows as I notice them waving gently back and forth. They entrance and comfort me, like a lullaby. I could stay here for hours but for the body's awkward positioning. Too often at home I let my body keep straining past the point it should, lulled there into some false comforts offered on a screen. *Could I learn to let enough be enough?*

Nearby I spot meal leftovers on a log -- acorn shells, probably left by chipmunks. We are careful as we walk not to leave behind anything unnatural to this sacred space.

Up the trail a short way my friend points out a few blood root plants showing off their small white petals. They seem brave, poking out before the sure end of snow season. *How willing am I to show my fledgling brightness when things still look bleak around me?*

### RED SURPRISES IN WOLSFELD WOODS

A few days later, another friend and I visit Wolsfeld Woods, another SNA, along Highway 6 near Long Lake. A bombast of chirpy sound greets us. Birds? Frogs? Crickets? We move near a marsh and the sound abruptly stops. As we move away again, they break out in full volume. *How little I know of our woodland friends, I realize.* I become more attentive, watchful.

Outcroppings of mushrooms grab my attention. Not the ones found in the produce aisle. Rather, white fan-shaped ones, bulky shelf-like protrusions, and then bright red ones. Yes! After being dismayed by what I thought was plastic discarded by some wayward visitor, I leaned over to discover garnet-colored red growths on one small branch. I nearly danced with delight at my discovery. How could this be? Such bright declarations of color on a gray day! *What bright glory right at my feet evades my attention in my everyday life, I wonder?*

Twelve thousand years ago, this area was a spruce forest. Now basswood and maple flourish in the hilly terrain near the 35-acre Wolsfeld Lake. While Wood-Rill and Wolsfeld Woods are in western Hennepin County, similar SNA's are found all around the fringes of the Twin Cities and beyond, and no fees are charged for their use. Nor – be aware – are bathrooms or parking lots generally provided. Some don't welcome dogs. Visitors are asked to be respectful, leaving no trash and being careful not to track invasive species in or out of these pristine areas. I find them to be worthy of revisiting to observe the changes in growth and sounds over different seasons.

### STATE PARKS

Turns out I'm not alone. Many who are in addiction recovery, or who just appreciate self-renewing opportunities, also seek soulful discoveries in nature's havens.

Melissa O., with her husband and two teen children, frequent Lake Maria State Park, another less-used natural get-away spot west of Monticello. If you like horseback riding, backpacking, or hiking, you'll enjoy this hilly area of the Big Woods dotted with lakes and wetlands.

During a recent visit, says Melissa, "I noticed how secluded it was, even though the parking lot was full." She and her family walk in this park quite often. "There are benches along the way that usually overlook a pond or some other scenery." She describes "a cool well there, where you hand-pump water."

On Lake Maria itself, you can kayak and canoe. If you like backpacking, there are remote campsites, "pretty far away from each other," she points out. Do we all need time alone? Even in this time of virus "isolation"? Perhaps we do. Or maybe we do as well if we enter these serene places with family or just one friend, maintaining social distance as we go.

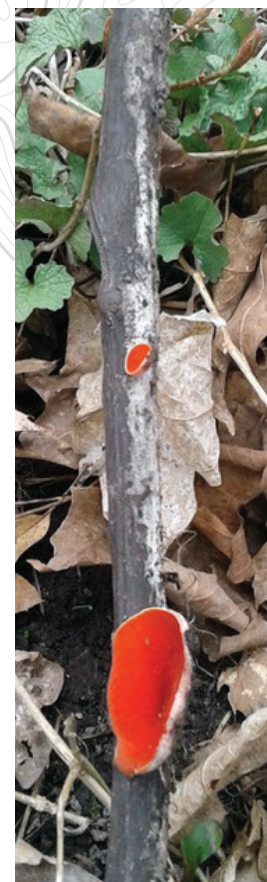
Growing up with a mother fond of birdwatching, Melissa has recently started her own watching and listening for birds. She can remember from her childhood the distinct call of the black-capped chickadee, which she thrills to hear again with fresh interest. When she doesn't recognize a sound she hears, she snaps a photo of the bird and asks her mother to help her identify it. Sometimes, like Melissa, we deepen our connections with family members by reviving past enjoyments we had with them in nature.



Walkway at Crystal MAC Wildlife Management Area



The writer at Wolsfeld



Top left photo provided by the City of Crystal. Others by Pat Samples.

Suzanne found her getaway early this spring at Wild River State Park, walking along the St. Croix River with a friend. "I was aware I need to be in nature," she says. "The quietness was lovely, renewing." Despite the damp coolness of the day, she says, "We laid down in some leaves for a while. It was comforting, very relaxing, looking up through branches."

Yes, I remember the feeling.

"It was grounding," she says, and she is so right. Touching our earth and all it grows brings us home to ourselves.

*Pat Samples is a Twin Cities writer, writing coach, and champion of creative aging. Her website is [patsamples.com](http://patsamples.com)*

## Virtual Support for Your Recovery

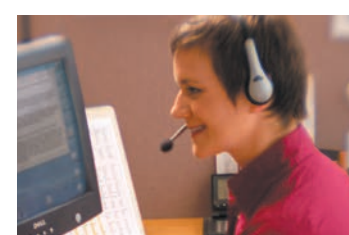


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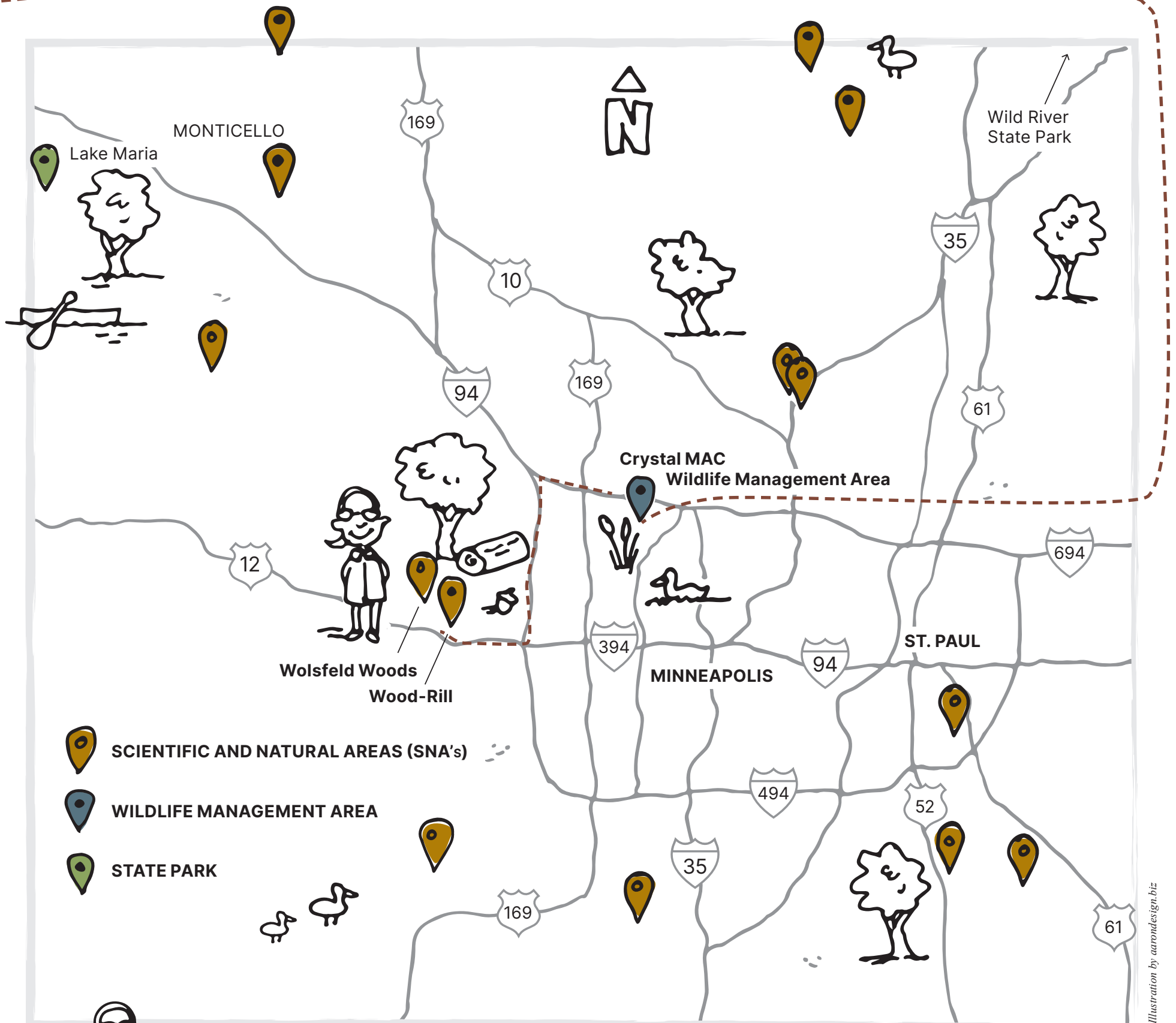


Illustration by aaronadign.biz



#### KIDS (AND ADULTS!)

Color in the map or add more details to it (like lakes, rivers, animals or foliage). You can learn more about each SNA by visiting the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources website at [www.dnr.state.mn.us/snas](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/snas). We'd love to see your completed maps too! Send to [phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com](mailto:phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com). Have fun exploring (and coloring)!



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# Managing Cross Addiction

by **Rachel T. Schromen**

One of my favorite analogies that I have heard while in recovery is that working through a recovery program is like playing a game of whack-a-mole – the minute one addictive behavior is pushed down (or quelled for the time being), another one pops up to be dealt with. I heard this analogy while sitting in a 12-step meeting and, while it made me laugh to visualize my addictions popping up and me bopping them with a toy hammer, it also gave me a sense of ease, knowing that my experience was not abnormal.

Describing my path in recovery as an ongoing game of whack-a-mole is a very accurate description. When I first got sober from alcohol and substances, I started smoking cigarettes. When I stopped smoking, I cross-addicted into relationships. When I finally decided not to date while in early recovery, I turned to sugar. When I stopped eating sugar in nauseating excess, I started exercising more and more. When I injured my back after training for and running a half marathon, I threw myself into work. The ongoing game of cross-addiction whack-a-mole is something I am still actively working on, partly because not all of my cross addictions have entirely negative consequences — at least not initially.

When I found recovery in 2012, I was entering my last year of law school – a rigorous degree that in its very nature requires excess. A year later I entered the legal field – an industry that (like many other industries) rewards long hours. When I first worked for an employer, I was given accolades for the long days that I would put it, and the number of billable hours I worked. I was provided remote access and a laptop so that even when I was not in the office, I could still work -- and I would, often up until it was time to go to bed and, of course, on weekends. This practice was met with bonuses and the general sentiment that I was meeting the base standard for what it meant to practice law.

In 2016 I started my own firm. Becoming a business owner added fuel to the fire of working long hours. The positive affirmation and rewards that came with long grueling hours now felt more amplified, if not more necessary. Friends and family would voice concern about how much I worked, but having my own business served as the ultimate justification for working 90+ hour long weeks. This approach to my career (which I defined as my “high drive and work ethic”) had a number of positive outcomes.

My business grew quickly – I was practicing the law the way I wanted to, with clients I loved working with. I was becoming well known in the communities I worked in and building a great reputation. The work itself was immensely rewarding and gratifying. As time went on, however, I started to realize the thin line that existed between my “high drive and strong work ethic” and my “addictive behavior.”

For me, a cross addiction or cross addictive behavior is characterized by the fact I do that thing, or behavior, to *excess*, and to the *detriment of my well-being, relationships, and recovery*. Even as my business became more established, my hours did not decrease. My relationships were impacted, my health suffered, and I was taking on more work than I could reasonably be expected to handle – which just led to more hours. All I did was work. All I talked about was work. Heck, all I thought about was work. Starting to sound familiar?

Much like my substance use, I found myself stuck in a tailspin. I would set a business goal, and say “Ok, once I hit THAT goal...I will ease up.” Only I set another goal as soon as the previous one was achieved. I mention the positives that came along with this behavior because these were elements that served to make addressing this cross-addiction even more challenging.

One day, when discussing my work hours and business goals, my husband looked at me and asked, “How do you know when you’ve made it? What is enough?”

It dawned on me – for me, there is no “enough.” We hear this commented on frequently when discussing substance use disorder. People with substance use disorder often relate with the sentiment that they do not have an “off” button or “enough” point when it comes to drugs and/or alcohol. But, for me, this is not necessarily limited to drugs and/or alcohol. While I have been fortunate to have maintained my sobriety, learning to navigate cross addictions and “addictive tendencies” and live in active recovery has brought its own unique challenges.

In recovery, many of us find ourselves dealing with a cross-addiction where abstinence is not an option – such as when it comes to working and/or eating (work addiction and/or food addiction). I had to up the ante with my recovery work. I leaned into my recovery program, and I started facing past trauma that I had been avoiding. When I first started working less hours, I struggled and, you guessed it, my sugar intake increased. Then I stopped eating sugar and started kickboxing 6 days a week...and so continued the game of whack-a-mole!

It has not been a straight uphill journey, and I don’t anticipate that it will ever be “smooth sailing” indefinitely – after all, I have learned to strive for progress, not perfection. I continue to have a high drive and strong work ethic. I love working because I enjoy the work that I do. I receive genuine gratification from serving my clients and running my business. However, I am learning to identify which behaviors are in line with those traits, and which are fueled by my addictive tendencies. I set firm office hours, and actually follow them. I schedule my self-care. I put 6 days of kickboxing on my calendar, and then go back later and remove 3 days. Progress. Not perfection.

I share this aspect of my story because it is not something that I anticipated when I first started on my path in recovery, and it is something that took me years to identify as even being part of my path on recovery. My substance use was never just about the substance. It was about avoidance, managing (or not feeling) emotions, and chasing a “high” – three things that I have found can be achieved through a variety of excessive behavior...not just substance use.

Substance use disorder, as a disease, can insidiously touch every aspect of my life. For me, I find it to be constantly changing, growing, and evolving – meaning that my recovery program must do the same. Fortunately, the programs of recovery that I am familiar with are designed to be applicable to all aspects of our lives. For me, working a consistently active program of recovery has not always been easy, and the longer I am sober, the “deeper” and harder that work sometimes seems to become. Oftentimes it feels like 2 steps forward, one step back...but at least I am still moving forward. As I continue to “trudge the road of happy destiny” (one of my favorite lines from the *Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous*), the rewards are always worth it.

I share my story with gratitude for the growth I’ve been fortunate to experience through the struggles, and with the hope that it may inspire and help others on their journeys of recovery. After all, it is largely from the honesty and humility of others in recovery that I am sober today...and continuing to move forward, one step at a time.

**Rachel T. Schromen** is an estate planning attorney and owner of Schromen Law, LLC in St. Paul, MN ([www.schromenlaw.com](http://www.schromenlaw.com)). Ms. Schromen speaks frequently on the topic of Addiction Trust Planning, including providing training on the topic to attorneys in the Metro Area.

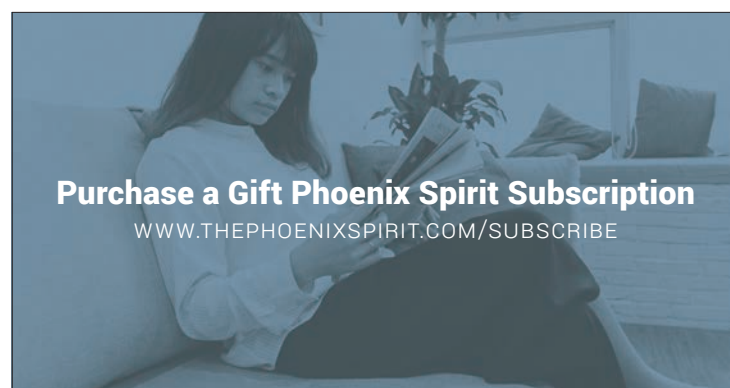
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## PARENTING THE ADDICT

## Ask the Expert

*We'll feature an expert in the mental health and/or substance use disorder fields to answer questions*

*The following is the conclusion of our Q & A with Dr. Joseph Lee, from the January / February issue.*

## Joseph Lee, M.D., ABAM

*Medical director for the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation Youth Continuum and is based at the nonprofit's center for adolescents and young adults in Plymouth, Minnesota. A triple-boarded physician, he completed his Adult Psychiatry residency at Duke University Hospital and his fellowship in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry from Johns Hopkins Hospital. He is a diplomate of the American Board of Addiction Medicine and a member of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry's Substance Abuse Committee. Dr. Lee's experience with families from across the country and abroad provide him with an unparalleled perspective on families, emerging drug trends, co-occurring mental health conditions, and the ever-changing culture of addiction. He is the author of Recovering My Kid: Parenting Young Adults in Treatment and Beyond.*

**Q** How can parents / care-givers maintain emotional objectivity and communicate effectively during times of crisis?

The key is to begin communicating effectively long before the crises come. As a parent, the relationship you have with your children is the most important investment you are going to make in your lifetime. Having conversations about drug and alcohol use is important, but it is not the most important part of building that parent-child relationship. This is a something you build every day, year after year.

Research shows that a positive relationship between parent and child is the most powerful protective factor for limiting future problems with substance use. So, it's important – for example – to teach your kids how to communicate, how to problem solve, how to empathize, how to be resilient, how to be gracious to others, and how to come to you when they need assistance. If you teach them those skills, no matter what problems arise you will have a foundation that will enable you to eventually work things out together.

**Q** What are some tips for setting appropriate boundaries?

Kids expect boundaries, unless they never hear about or see them. Again, as parents, we need to outline norms and expectations early on and be consistent—but also model everything we expect, including safe behavior. What's most important is that the set of guides/ rewards/ boundaries in the home are positive in spirit. You want to guide and teach. You want to be consistent. You aren't trying to be their probation officer.

**Q** Can pharmaceuticals be helpful in some situations?

Absolutely. We use medications to treat withdrawal symptoms for addiction. For some specific addictions like opioids and alcohol, we also have FDA-approved medications that can help patients longer term. Medications aren't a panacea though. Therapy, peer support, family involvement, school and job support – all are typically very important, too. There's no one-size fits all. We have lots of tools, but it's important to personalize care and support so that we can meet individual needs.

Right now, there is too much stigma about medications, especially for opioid use disorder. While it is noble that people want to get sober "on their own," the science says that medications are very helpful and can be life-saving. So don't discourage young people from getting medications from their physician.

*Thank you to Jeremiah Gardner for helping to facilitate this Q&A. The January / February "Ask the Expert" with Dr. Lee can be found at our website ([www.thephoenixspirit.com](http://www.thephoenixspirit.com)).*

*If you have a question for the experts, or you are an expert interested in being featured, please email [phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com](mailto:phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com). Experts have not been compensated for their advice.*

## My Free Gift *by Marjorie Zacharda*

*I sit here by the river of Transformation, quiet, peaceful and extravagant with frosted trees, lots of swans, geese, and ducks bringing about their morning songs, the sun is glistening through the steam on the river.*

*What better way to start a morning than with God's free beauty.*



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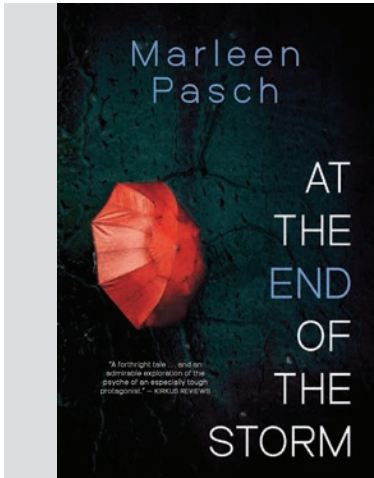


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# Books

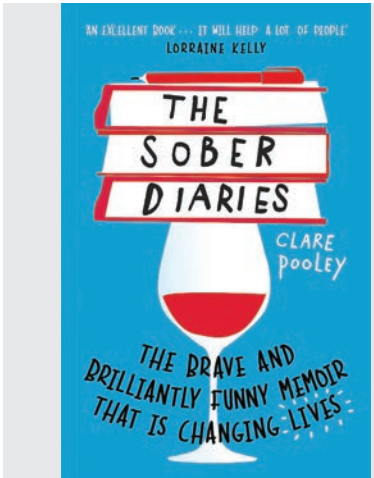


## At The End of The Storm

By Marleen Pasch  
PENMORE PRESS

Daria Demarest abandoned spiritual aspirations in the freewheeling Sixties. But, years later, when she loses her glam network television job, she learns there's money to be made from women seeking spirituality in everything from aromatherapy to mindfulness meditation. When she creates a show called *Awakenings* to reach these women, she's back on top.

But when her teen daughter, Lizzy, announces she's pregnant, Daria relives her own secret past as a young, unmarried mother who surrendered her first child. As her meticulously crafted life begins to unravel, she searches for the same healing she offers her devoted audience. Is releasing her shame and regret even possible? Can she ever repair relationships with family, friends, and the college love who offered her a life she wasn't then ready to accept?



## The Sober Diaries

How One Woman Stopped Drinking and Started Living

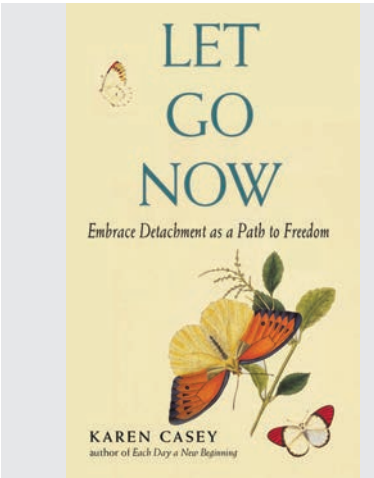
By Clare Pooley  
CORONET

Clare Pooley is a Cambridge graduate and was a Managing Partner at one of the world's biggest advertising agencies, and yet by eighteen months ago she'd become an overweight, depressed, middle-aged mother of three who was drinking more than a bottle of wine a day, and spending her evenings Googling 'Am I an alcoholic?'

In a desperate bid to turn her life around, she quit drinking and started a blog. She called it *Mummy Was a Secret Drinker*.

This book is the story of a year in Clare's life. A year that started with her quitting booze having been drinking more than a bottle of wine every day. It sees her starting a hugely successful blog, then getting and beating breast cancer. By the end of the year she is booze free and cancer free, two stone lighter and with a life that is so much richer, healthier and more rewarding than ever before.

Interwoven within Clare's own very personal and frank story is research and advice, and answers to questions like: *How do I know if I'm drinking too much? How will I cope at parties? What do I say to friends and family? How do I cope with cravings? Will I lose weight? What if my partner still drinks?* And many more.



## Let Go Now

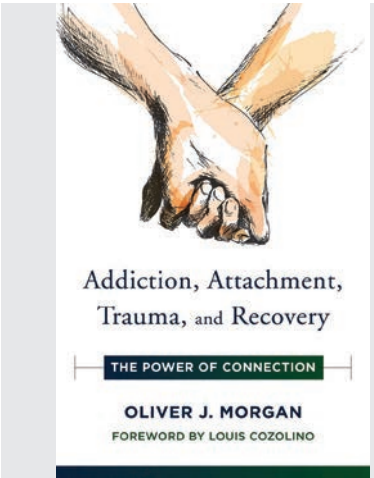
Embrace Detachment as a Path to Freedom

By Karen Casey  
CONARI PRESS

**End codependency now.** Do you ever feel like you might be giving other people too much power over your mood? Do you find yourself feeling immobilized by expectations and demands? The cure for codependency is detachment, says Karen Casey, best-selling author of over forty books that have helped fans around the world.

**Letting go.** When we remove codependent relationships and codependent behavior from our lives, we discover a life of balance and freedom. Detach from emotions and circumstances that are not in your control. Find your balance point and learn how to reach it, whether you find yourself tempted to become enmeshed in other people's problems or rushing to their rescue.

**Letting life in.** Is where we are intentional? Why is every moment an opportunity? Using 200 meditations, Karen reminds us that we cannot control anyone or anything beyond ourselves. *Let Go Now* guides us away from taking care of others, and toward taking care of ourselves.



## Addiction, Attachment, Trauma, and Recovery

The Power of Connection

By Oliver J. Morgan  
W.W. NORTON & COMPANY

Understanding addiction is no longer just about understanding neurons or genes, broken brain functioning, learning, or faulty choices. Oliver J. Morgan provides a new take on addiction and recovery by presenting a more inclusive framework than traditional understanding. Cutting-edge work in attachment, interpersonal neurobiology, and trauma is integrated with ecological- systems thinking to provide a comprehensive picture of addiction.

Humans are born into connection and require nourishing relationships for healthy living. Adversities, however, bring fragmentation and create the conditions for ill health. They create vulnerabilities. In order to cope, individuals can turn to alternatives, "substitute relationships" that ease the pain of disconnection. These can become addictions.

*Addiction, Attachment, Trauma, and Recovery* presents a model, a method, and a mandate. This new focus calls for change in the established ways we think and behave about addiction and recovery. It reorients understanding and clinical practice for mental health and addiction counselors, psychologists, and social workers, as well as for addicts and those who love them.

The synopsis of these books were taken from the publishers or authors. 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](mailto:phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com).

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from page 1

## When You Live Through Another Person

This is the beginning of our independence, especially seen in the years of our “terrible two’s” and adolescence. Our genetically endowed talents and practicing also affects our learning. Essentially, we learn from each other and we learn from ourselves. There is no escaping this learning. If we don’t have mothers and fathers teaching us about life the best we can do is wing it. And we often do that badly. In fact, this imitating of each other goes beyond just learning tasks, it affects our whole identity, sense of self and relational capacity. Most of us learn who we are through others and from an internal sense of self.

It is no wonder that Facebook and other forms of social media are so popular. We are wired from evolution for these types of media sources, especially when they are so instantaneous. We like to compare how we relate or don’t relate to others. These experiences can be affirming or devaluing depending on how we compare to others. If we have a reasonably strong sense of self, we can differentiate ourselves from others and allow others to be different from ourselves. We may say, “Well to each his own.” We all can learn from other people’s experiences. This is the healthy version of mimicry.

However, there is a less healthy version of imitating others that is called “Living through others.” It involves not just learning from others but also being what other people expect of us and gaining success through conformity and people pleasing. When we live through others, we disown our own judgments about

ourselves, we lack self-reflection and we make decisions primarily to please others. Often this pattern of vicarious living is mostly unconscious and strongly driven by social pressures in an attempt to belong to a group. People who live through others rarely examine the cost of losing their identity to others and focus instead on their social standing. They opt for the short-term benefit of stardom and conformity instead of the long-term gain of authentic self-confidence.

\*\*\*

*I was married for twenty years to a good man, the kind that most women would die for. I and my children were well provided for. I was never abused. I conformed to what all my friends expected of me. I was so popular with my own family and the women in my social circle. Many of them wished they had my life. I was doing exactly what my family expected of me. But, in fact, I was terribly miserable and couldn’t understand why. For years I told myself to just ignore my misery and count myself lucky. Then one day out of the blue I met Adie at the local food co-op. She and I connected like magic. We met many times and giggled like two school-girls together. Something came alive in me that had almost died. She was an amazing listener who really cared about me. For once I could be finally be myself. My cloud of misery lifted like sunshine after a rainy day. It took me two years to finally realize that I needed to be more than just successful in other people’s eyes. I really needed to be myself even if it meant losing the benefits of my “good life.” For the first*

*time ever I had a self, not just a self for somebody else. I went through many losses and struggles. I didn’t just make this change to be in another relationship. I did it for myself. Sadly, I had to say goodbye to my perfect husband. At the end of it all, my girls and I have never been happier. We didn’t need to bear the burden of other people’s expectations. And yes, Adie and I still giggle a lot together. Through her and some new friends I finally got a life.*

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### THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN “LIVING THROUGH OTHERS” AND “RELYING ON OTHERS”

When you *live* through others you conform to the way of others and disown your own identity for some external reward. You may not even be aware of your own feelings and thinking. You just try to do what your idol does.

When you *rely* on others you ask for advice and information from others and welcome their support, but you mainly make your own independent decisions about your life. Healthy dependency is where you ask for consultation from others, but you also ask yourself “Now what do I think and feel about this subject?” You own complete responsibility for what you have decided, more so when you are wrong. *Living* through others makes us eternally insecure and immature. *Relying* on others, while getting feedback from them, enables us to be a secure adult.

### WHY DO SOME OF US BECOME CHAMELEONS?

Most of us have learned to be overly conforming and people-pleasing due to massive insecurity in our childhood. If our parents were either absent or frightening to us, then we would learn to be what they wanted us to be or tell them what they wanted to hear for our survival needs. We essentially learned to manipulate others at the expense of our own identities. Or else we would have fantasy relationships with heroic others and live in a pretend world. Many of us may mistakenly deny that our childhood years were insecure and blame

ourselves for being master manipulators. Chameleons are often the “good kids” in the family whom people generally like. They are also the people with the most anger and enjoy passive defiance. Whether we are being successful “yes men” to others or underperforming “rebels without a cause” we are still lacking our own identity and lack real independence. The roles we get into are learned behaviors which can be unlearned. They are not inherent parts of our identity, and can be changed.

### RESISTING MINDLESS CONFORMITY AND HAVING MORE OF A REAL SELF

Being your own person does not happen overnight. It is a process that requires courage, persistence and emotional support. It is ironic but true to say, “You cannot do this on your own.” We need empowering relationships to loosen the grip of our past disabling relationships. Here are some possible guidelines to a more confident self:

1. **Reflect on the costs of you living through others.** Are you often insecure no matter how much you achieve or how much you know? Do you often feel like a fraud in social interactions? Do you feel your primary value is sacrificing for others? Do you have persistent feelings of low self-esteem despite your successes? Are you constantly underachieving in life? Are your friendships primarily utilitarian?

2. **Read some books on personal empowerment.** Melody Beattie’s book *Codependent No More* (Hazelden Press, 1992) is a good one. Michelle Obama’s book *Becoming* (Crown Press, 2018) is another good one. Can you imagine being independent while also being the wife of the US President, constantly in the public spotlight? A good book for men is *The Man In The Gray Flannel Suit* written in the conformist era of the 1950’s by Sloan Wilson.



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Continued from page 14

*People who live through others rarely examine the cost of losing their identity to others and focus instead on their social standing.*

**3. Notice and face the fears you are avoiding by living through another person.**

Take notice of your body reactions if you imagine not conforming to what your hero tells you to do. Do you cringe at the idea of making decisions all on your own no matter how much trouble you anticipate? Can you imagine standing up to someone who you allow to run your life? What are the real and imagined dangers you face? What would it be like if you gave up your current comforts and social supports for the unknown challenges of being independent? Most of us choose known dangers we mistakenly believe we can control over the unknown perils of being happy and on our own. Is that true for you? Do a cost/benefit analysis for which path you are choosing in life.

**4. Be open for surprises.** Most of the time the dangers we fear are like paper tigers. They only exist in our imagination. Particularly when we also realize just how much strength and wisdom we have already to make independent decisions. An example of this is how a friend of mine handled his paper tiger:

*I was like a slave to my wife for decades. There was no pleasing her and I got more and more depressed. Nothing I did made a difference. Counseling never worked with us. My whole identity was built on not get-*

*ting her mad at me. Finally, I left a note on the table and took a long trip to New Orleans all on my own. The note said, "I need to find what makes me happy." I was panicked most of the way on that long car trip down South and thought about turning back. But I had a great time in the French Quarter and listened to a lot of jazz. I was actually quite happy and found no danger there. I couldn't believe how easy it was to do the whole trip all on my own. I knew then that I could be on my own forever and be OK. When I came home, I separated from my wife and moved on.*

\*\*\*

**5. Get support for your facing your fears.**

You aren't a lesser person for not facing your fears. Some of us are in too dangerous a position or are just not ready to do so. But if you decide to go for it, don't do it alone. Get involved in a good Al-Anon group, find a sponsor who can have personal regular contact with you and find a trusted helper as needed to face your unknown fears. You can take small steps or big leaps to be your own person. There is no one way to do it. Be in charge of your life rather than having life be in charge of you. To be fully human it is absolutely normal and necessary to have your own identity. You will also get to have more real friends that way.

**6. Get inspiration and grace from others.**

If you think you have it so bad, imagine being a talented gay, black man in the 1950's who could express his soul to the world. His name was James Baldwin. All of his works are worth reading. He said: "I was not born to be what someone else said I was."

**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.

## John H. Driggs


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## Corona Retreat

by **Mary Lou Logsdon**



*"We must be willing to let go of the life we have planned, so as to have the life that is waiting for us." — PARKER PALMER*

Retreats. I usually schedule retreat dates with care, finding calendar space with little disruption to my life. I aim for a good chance of pleasant weather—Arizona in January, Collegeville in June, Duluth in September. I consider themes and thoughts I wish to ponder. Not this year. This year my retreat scheduled me.

The coronavirus pushed me into retreat—distancing me from the many distractions that fill my days. I am thrust into the present moment. The past seems so very distant. Thanksgiving with its bounty laden tables surrounded by family and friends feels like years ago. I was on an airplane in January, all but impossible to even imagine now. February's lunch with friends had us in the throes of a presidential primary campaign that has all but been decided and now falls far below today's headlines.

Not only is the past long gone, the future is blank. My monkey mind loves to plan, but with so many unknowns, planning looks like a trip to fantasyland.

Distant past. Unknown future. I sit in the present, practicing mindfulness.

The gift of the present is that here everything is okay. The sun rises, a little earlier every day. I attend to daily tasks—cleaning, gardening, listening to birds, noticing cloud formations, greeting masked passers-by—all from a safe distance.

I recall childhood summers where I awakened when I was finished sleeping, slipped into an easy routine and let the new day unfold. I was free to meander through woodlands, create my own adventure, get lost in my imagination. My days were full of just a smattering of tasks and few obligations. There was a peace in that life. I get wafting memories of that now.

I find I am very tired by the end of the day. I fall into bed weary and not sure why. I welcome sleep which had become a fitful companion over the years. Now she enwraps me for 7-8 hours each night. How can this simple life be so exhausting? A friend likened these days to what bikers call a "false flat." The trail looks flat but in reality, there is a low gradient climb that takes more energy than we expect. We are living in a "false flat." The stress of uncertainty is always in the background like an energy draining phone app.

Wonderings, wanderings and worries invade this quiet world. What's next? When will normal return? What is normal? Do I really want to go back to all that was? Might I take something with me? Can I allow what's next to unfold?

How does this corona time mimic retreat time?

When I am on retreat I do not need to look ahead. Each day cares for itself. I have open space to observe—how I feel, where the sun is, which bird songs drift in and out of treetops. I take leisurely walks, delighted with nature's gifts.

During this corona retreat I notice how calm I feel, the quiet city streets, the bright stars of night. My familiar walks are more relaxed. I catch subtle changes. Green leaf buds swell. Tiny maple blossoms prepare for midsummer's burst of helicopter-like seed pods. Eagles circle overhead. I remember when eagle sightings were rare because their habitat was laced with DDT (Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane). Laws banning such poisons have ushered in a healthy supply of these graceful birds. It is a reminder that we can change. We can improve our lives. We can assist nature's recovery.

Here, as in my regular retreats, I braid invocations of gratitude into my day. I pray for dear friends as they come to mind. Now I often couple that prayer with a check-in to see how they are doing.

In my silent retreats, as I encounter fellow companions, I meet their eyes, nod a greeting, move on. I do the same with those I greet now, staying the requisite six-foot distance, acknowledging our shared space, shared care, shared humanity.

Writer and spiritual director, Margaret Silf, in her book *Going on Retreat*, says in retreat "ordinary time is suspended to make a little space for eternity to reveal itself." What might eternity be revealing now? Spring's renewal of the earth is a sign of eternal hope. Each year new life pushes forward out of seemingly dead limbs of trees. Buried bulbs bring colorful tulips and daffodils out of bleak gardens. Robins return yet again to forage for food in the understory of autumn's leaf clutter. Death entwines with life, over and over.

As my annual retreat draws to a close and I reluctantly prepare to leave, I reflect on what to take with me to hold as a reminder of the serenity that I enjoyed. What might I want from this corona timeout, this period of quiet, this unhurried oasis?

I appreciate the regular rhythm of the day, the blending of tasks with natural living—cooking simple meals (some that scent the house with memories of childhood), reading books, cleaning closets, sorting photos.

There is a novel balance to this life. I want to bring that balance into whatever might come next. A balance of quiet and action, joy and sorrow, peace and concern.

Why do I go on retreat? To adjust my life to better reflect who I am, who I am called to be and where I am called to go. If I come back from retreat and return to how things were before I left, I haven't gone on retreat, I've gone on vacation. This is not a vacation we are on. This is a rigorous retreat.

We are retreating to a much more basic life, a simpler life (though it may not always feel simple), a life of cooperative living more than competing. If I come out of this retreat exactly the same, we will have squandered an incredible opportunity. Who of us, when we look at our life, cannot find an area where we want and even need to change?

Franciscan priest and author, Richard Rohr, describes life as a repetitive pattern of order, disorder, reorder. I see that pattern in the worldwide COVID-19 chaos. The old order has exploded. We are winding our way through a great disorder that will eventually transform into a reorder. We do not know what that will look like. I fear we may be in too much of a hurry to return to that which for much of the world was not very good. Even in our own lives there are places I am sure that were not good. The earth is laboring to bring forth new life. Can we join her? What do we need to let go of so as to have the life that is waiting? It is a question for all of us, individuals and communities. What is yearning to come forth? 🌱

*Mary Lou Logsdon, has a Spiritual Direction practice and leads retreats in the Twin Cities. She is a member of the Sacred Ground Spiritual Direction Formation Program faculty. She can be reached at [logsdon.marylou@gmail.com](mailto:logsdon.marylou@gmail.com)*