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Recovering Artists HIT THE STREET

Two active artists in recent protests tell of mixing painting
with addiction recovery.

by *Pat Samples*

For years, Cybin was deep into heroin and coke. He felt all their effects. On a wintry day, he was on the verge of suicide. He imagined his body slamming onto the ice below the Lake Street bridge.

Eventually Cybin got clean, then relapsed, and relapsed again multiple times. When he first walked into a recovery meeting with the help of his girlfriend, he was awestruck by how people cheered and hugged him as a newcomer.

"I'm was, like, what the hell? I don't know you people, but this feels great," Cybin recalls. He also remembers thinking, "I want that same feeling...so I kept coming back."

An artist from childhood, Cybin says that making art helps to keep him from using drugs. In 2006, he immersed himself in the graffiti culture, especially enjoying the beauty of typography. He would happily hang out for long hours under bridges and in other public settings shaping words into dynamic, flowing, bold designs. It made him feel good, he says.

But Cybin's break-up with his girlfriend in the early part of 2020 felt unbearable, and once again he got on the

using and withdrawal cycle. "I overdosed a handful of times, ended up in the hospital once," he says, "because the stuff that I was doing was heavily laced with fentanyl."

OFF DRUGS AND INTO THE STREETS

Just over a month before George Floyd was killed, Cybin latched onto sobriety once again, after his sponsor drove him to detox. The days in withdrawal, he says, "were the worst days of my life."

He was just getting his bearings again at the time of Floyd's death, and then he watched as protests arose and fires were set, destroying buildings on Lake Street near where he lived. Before long, he found himself creating art for reasons that went beyond self-calming and self-expression.

"I remember sitting at home being so depressed because of the riots," says Cybin. A friend called and mentioned all the windows getting boarded up and asked, "Can you come over and write 'Justice for George Floyd' in cool letters?"

RECOVERING ARTISTS to pg 6

JOHN H. DRIGGS, LICSW

What Can We Learn From All This?

"Those who don't learn from history are condemned to repeat it."
— CARLOS SANTAYANA (1863-1952)

Like it or not, we're living in a historic era with all its suffering and promise. And what an era we're living in! Most of us have feelings of unreality, worry, sadness and disbelief about what is happening, and uncertainty about the future. We are suffering from collective grief and angst. Many of us are isolated and lonelier than ever due to the quarantine. We didn't choose to be in this historic time. We can't believe our eyes and don't know what to make of it now. It's not very often that we live through both a pandemic and massive racial justice unrest at the same time. We may ask, *"What did we do to deserve all this?"*

In the last pandemic of the Spanish Flu in 1918 many people thought they were being punished by God for their wrong doings. Many of us have gone through other periods of racial unrest and violence, say after Martin Luther King was assassinated. Each time we told ourselves, *"This will never happen again."* But happen again it did. Healing 400 years of historic trauma related to slavery is quite an undertaking.

Let us not lose hope. Despite the suffering, there are many positive aspects of these times. We would be well- advised to not just survive this period but to reflect on ourselves and our culture to gain wisdom and self-acceptance. Let us not just make the best of it but also grow from the lessons of what this ordeal is teaching us. Then we can take action to lessen the likelihood of pandemics and act on behalf of true racial equality.

Though I am not a believer in the sin and punishment theory I do think that this current challenge is a real opportunity, one we can learn and grow from, lest we repeat our ordeals down the road. Ask yourself, *"What will I tell my great grandchildren?"* when they, with pleading eyes, ask, *"Did you live through the Pandemic and the Racial Justice Protests of 2020?"* Let us not disappoint our progeny. How we answer this question will determine the course of history. It is an opportunity of a lifetime.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN to pg 14

BULLETIN BOARD

UPCOMING

Art-A-Whirl: Open Studio Tour of Northeast Minneapolis

Due to COVID-19, Art-A-Whirl moved their operations online, showcasing over 1,000 artists, galleries, bands, businesses and restaurants through their online experience. Visit nema.org/art-a-whirl/ to learn more.

Roseville in Bloom

Running from July to October 31 in the city of Roseville, "Roseville in Bloom" is a free public art event featuring 20 seven-foot-tall rose statues throughout Roseville in the summer of 2020. Local and regional artists have transformed each rose into a unique work of art. Artists include Adam Turman, Shakun Maheshwari, and Kristi Abbott. To learn and view maps, visit www.visitroseville.com/roseville-in-bloom/

Powderhorn Art Fair

August 1-2. Art enthusiasts and supporters of artists can shop the event at powderhornartfair.org. There will also be a small market experience at 35th Street and Chicago Avenue South from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on August 1st & 2nd featuring community arts.

Uptown Art Fair Heals Mini-Event

August 8-9. Saturday 10:00 am to 7:00 pm and Sunday 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. Approximately 50 artists will be located in the surface lot at Calhoun Square in Uptown Minneapolis (enter off Lake Street). Other happenings all over the Uptown community will be taking place at various businesses and locations including sidewalk sales, artist demonstrations, musicians, food and drink specials. Participating businesses at this time include: Calhoun Square, Granada Theater, Amazing Thailand, Kitchen Window, Local Motion Boutique, Daymark Uptown Apartments (Sons of Norway space).

Minnesota Fringe: Virtual Festival Presentation

July 30-August 9. There will be live and recorded events online. Nightly Fringe (schedule opens 7/16) and the Digital Hub (button purchases of \$5 required to access). More information can be found at www.minnesotafringe.org/2020/shows.

NE Dog Parade

Friday, July 24 from 4:30 to 5:30 pm. More information can be found at heartofnortheast.com/events/nedogparade2020.

Mpls.StPaul Restaurant Week

July 20-26. Distance socially, eat locally. Celebrate the best of Twin Cities dining with a week's worth of deals from the Twin Cities best restaurants. Participating restaurants will serve two-course lunches for \$10-\$25 and three-course dinners for \$15-\$35 (beverage, tax and gratuity not included). *Mpls.St.Paul* Magazine's Restaurant Week started in 2007 in an effort to connect Twin Cities food enthusiasts with the best in Twin Cities dining. Since then, Restaurant Week has become a tradition embraced by Minnesotans. More info: mspmag.com

Using Intuitive Painting to Explore the 12 Steps

Online class, Wednesdays, September 2-November 8, 2020 at 1:00 pm CST. www.fullmooncreativearts.com donna@donnawebb.com 612-518-2378.

Addiction Intervention: When It's Needed and How It Works

Wednesday, July 22 at 1:30 pm CST. Webinar for professionals. Join Hazelden Betty Ford clinician Jeff Stuhmer and interventionist Mark Rose for this information-packed webinar. You will learn how intervention works and what types of resources are most effective. For more information, visit www.hazeldenbettyford.org/events.

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

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

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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.

**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

The Arts: Writing

by Louise Elowen

"I can shake off everything as I write; my sorrows disappear, my courage is reborn."
— ANNE FRANK (1929-1945)



Photo courtesy of Louise Elowen

The art of writing is imprinted on my soul. I am entranced by the written word. How it flows, how it sounds, where it leads you. Even when I am not writing on paper, or the keyboard, I am writing in my head. Processing thoughts which later may formulate the basis for a new article, book, journal, or course. Words are indelible on my heart, as well as in my mind.

As part of my own healing journey, I combined two of the things I love the most: Writing and scent. As an aromatherapist, herbalist, gardener, and perfumer, I have long understood how scent heals. So, I created a workshop devoted to these two arts: *Aromatic Journaling*™.

Aromatic Journaling tracks the seasonal life of an aromatic plant for one year. During that year, you learn as much as you can about the plant, record your thoughts and feelings about that plant, make aromatic blends with it, and create, what I like to call, your *warrior blend*. This aromatic blend is a work of art in itself and may change as you change. It can be as simple or complex as you want it to be, depending on your skill level. But, essentially it should be a blend that makes you feel *stronger*, *centers* you, and *brings you back to the present*, when you either smell the aroma, see your plant, or can bring it to mind to calm you in a moment

As part of my own healing journey, I combined two of the things I love the most: Writing and scent.

of anxiety or panic. *Aromatic Journaling* is an emotional healing tool, which journaling itself often is.

"I want to be like a sunflower; so that even on the darkest days I will stand tall and find the sunlight." Unknown

I often turn to my warrior blend in times of crisis, overwhelm, or when I feel a panic attack developing. My chosen plant is the sunflower because it's bright and sunny with, surprisingly, a green top note essential oil. It grows tall, supported by a sturdy stalk. And it is always facing towards the sun, perhaps the most optimistic flower in the garden because of this. In essence: *Turn towards the light, not away from it. Be strong and tall. Have the courage to shine again. And always be happy!*

I encourage you to be your own sunflower and create the strongest, happiest, and healthiest version of yourself, even in tough times. After all, no one can resist a sunflower.



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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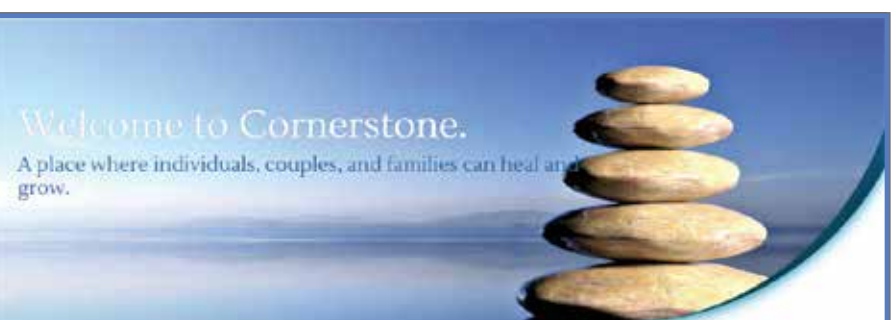
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COVID-19 MESSAGE

We are seeing current patients and accepting new patients and intakes. All appointments and sessions are being done by phone or video until it is safe to do so in person.



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SUPPORT GROUPS / SOME MAY BE NOT BE MEETING DUE TO COVID

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

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.daminnnesota.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.daminnnesota.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.

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.

Living Proof MN: Eating disorder online support group. 5:30-6:30pm CST, every Wednesday. Virtual with Zoom app, email for link: info@livingproofmn.com.

Transitions: 7:30 to 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

Co-dependents Anonymous (CoDA): Thursdays pm, Crown of Glory Church 1141 Cardinal St. Chaska 55318. Open to men and women. For more info contact Rita 952-334-9206; www.MinnCoDA.org

Co-dependents Anonymous (CoDA): Thursdays 7pm, Immanuel Lutheran Church 16515 Luther Way, Eden Prairie 55346. Open to men and women. For more info contact Judy M 612-400-2323; www.MinnCoDA.org

Co-dependents Anonymous (CoDA): Thursdays 7pm, NE Recovery Room at 520 NE Lowry Ave., Mpls 55418. Open to men and women. For more info contact Deirdre 612-619-7595; www.MinnCoDA.org

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 LaTosia 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.ldaminnnesota.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 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.

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.daminnnesota.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/tcocdsg. 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.southsidemensgroup.org.

SUNDAYS

Co-dependents Anonymous (CoDA): Sundays 6pm-7:30pm. Located at Unity Hospital 550 Osborne Rd. Fridley 55432. Held in the Boardroom on the lower level. Enter through main doors and take the West elevator down one floor. Open to men and women. For more info contact Aaron 763-670-4894; www.MinnCoDA.org

Big Red Book ACA: 11:15am-12:45pm at the Cavalier Club. 7179 Washington Ave S., Edina, MN 55439, voicemail: 507- 312-9423, aca1115sunday@gmail.com.

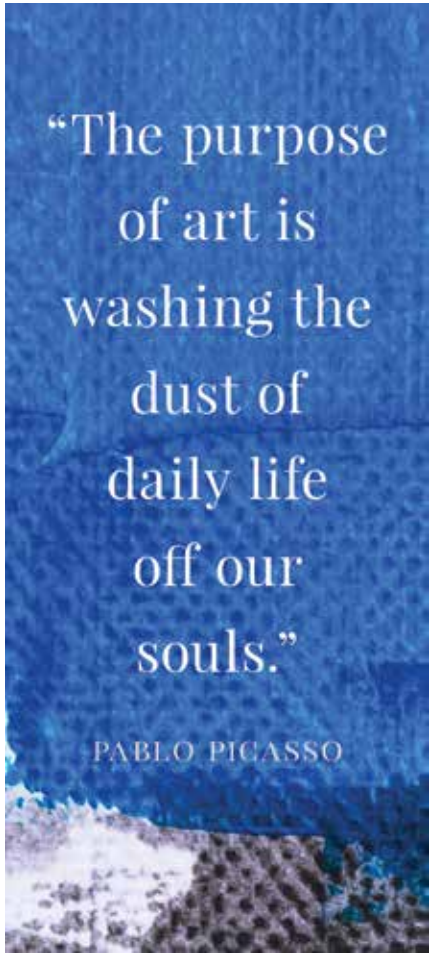
Calix Society: A group of Catholic Recovering Alcoholics and their family/significant others who desire to strengthen their spiritual growth, meets the 3rd Sun. of the month at Cathedral of St. Paul. Mass at 8am., breakfast/speaker meeting at 9am. Call Jim B. at 651-779-6828.

Eating Disorders Anonymous: 5-6:30pm in Eden Prairie at Wooddale Church, 6630 Shady Oak Road, 55344. Room 291. Contact Nikki: nikkihaven@gmail.com or call 612-227-4079.

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.



To Love Than be Loved

by Sarah KP

When I was ten years old, my mother gave birth to my youngest sister. Afterwards, she was dead for about eight minutes until the doctors brought her back to life. I was there for my sister's birth and there afterwards, through all the pain and frantic decisions my parents made following that day. When I was eleven years old, I was diagnosed with Crohn's disease. Up until that diagnosis I was blamed for my illness by my childhood doctor. He suggested time and time again that I had an eating disorder, that I was an anorexic, and this was to blame for my 57 lb. weight at the age of eleven. My junior high school years were plagued with steroids and self-loathing.

I fell in 'love' with a boy at age fourteen who barely knew who I was. I pretended to be okay, I laughed, I succeeded academically and in extracurricular activities, but I felt so ugly and so sick. At eighteen years old, I decided I was sick and tired of being good and trying to do the right thing. So, I went to my first high school rager, and raged I did. I drank, blacked out, and then drank some more. People told me how fun, how smart, and how pretty I was. I felt loved, euphoric, and joyful instead of nervous, anxious, and scared.

College came and I doubled down on my new favorite hobbies: Drinking, smoking pot and partying. If drinking wasn't involved, then I wasn't interested in whatever that dull activity was. I continued to be sick; with increased drinking came more Crohn's symptoms and worsening flare-ups. I took a semester off and discovered painkillers. At that time, my gastroenterologist prescribed them to me because nothing else seemed to help. I was in constant pain, and none of the immunosuppressant drugs, which do wonders for others, ever did anything for me. In retrospect, this was probably because of my drinking and partying. But the pain meant getting painkillers and being sick had become part of my identity. Throughout my college years I continued to be sick and was plagued by the feeling of being unloved. I had many crushes and flings, but never was I earnestly asked out on a date. My high school love continued to haunt me; why didn't anyone want me? I was fun and smart, sometimes I felt pretty, and I knew how to party unlike anyone those around me had seen before.

When I was twenty-two years old, I had one class remaining to complete my college degree. But I gave up. I chose a life of sickness and partying over a degree, which at the time meant nothing at all to me. Truth was, I was tired. Truth was, I wanted to die.

At twenty-three, I met a boy who told me he loved me and introduced me to heroin. I had found what I had always been looking for: Love and a life free of pain. At twenty-four, I went to treatment for a whole five days before I convinced them that I was too sick with my Crohn's disease to stay at a facility that only fed us hot dogs. In reality, I did not want to get sober.

Over the next year I fell in love with another boy who had no idea that I was using large amounts of heroin every day. I lied to him, stole from him, and was cruel to someone who did not know



how sick I was. The cool thing was that I had Crohn's disease. I felt sick? Blame it on the Crohn's! I hid or passed out in the bathroom for hours? Blame it on the Crohn's! I stole money, weed or valuables to buy more heroin? Blame it on the roommate because I was just sick from Crohn's!

This chapter of my life ended when my boyfriend's roommate's cat was found playing with a dirty needle that it had dug out of my purse. He ended things, and I broke down and went to treatment... well it was not nearly as neat and simple as that, but that's what happened.

Through all of this, I burned bridges and hurt innumerable people. Most significantly though, I hurt my family. My mom and dad, and my two younger sisters and younger brother, who had never done anything but love and support me, were hurt by everything that I had done. But sadly, through this treatment and all this heartbreak, I still did not find sobriety.

After going to a 30-day inpatient treatment and three-month long outpatient treatment, I decided to drink again. I told myself, just drinking wouldn't be a problem for me after once again finding myself in a position of feeling desperately unwanted. If I drank, I would have the courage to tell people how I felt, and I could feel like I was me again. That 18-year-old me again who felt fun, smart, pretty and loved. I never used heroin again, but the four years that I drank and partied and pretended to be okay were by far the loneliest of my life. I constantly felt as though I were in a room full of people but was somehow painfully, agonizingly alone. I felt like I kept trying to speak up, but that someone was always a little bit quicker, wittier, and they always spoke over me.

Over the course of those four lonely years, my Crohn's also got to be the worse it had ever been. I was hospitalized multiple times. The last time I was hospitalized, they said I needed emergency surgery and that meant I would likely live with a colostomy bag for the rest of my life. I was 28 years old at the time and I had never heard a worse prospect. I was faced with a decision to get surgery or to try another medication. I tried the medication and decided that it was also time to get sober because I knew that nothing would ever work if I continued to self-sabotage and self-destruct. It took a few slips, but on January 13th of 2019 I had my last drink and I have been in remission for my Crohn's disease for about the same amount of time. As for the loneliness and self-loathing, I am still working on these things and I probably will be for the rest of my life. Sobriety does not solve all of the emotional trauma that existed before the drugs did, but I can face these things now and try to make them a story from my past as well. Besides, it's more important to love than to be loved.

Please send your 1st Person story to phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com.

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

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

Narcotics Anonymous Helpline

Drug Problem? We Can Help! Call Now 24-hour 877-767-7676. Also, check out www.namiminnesota.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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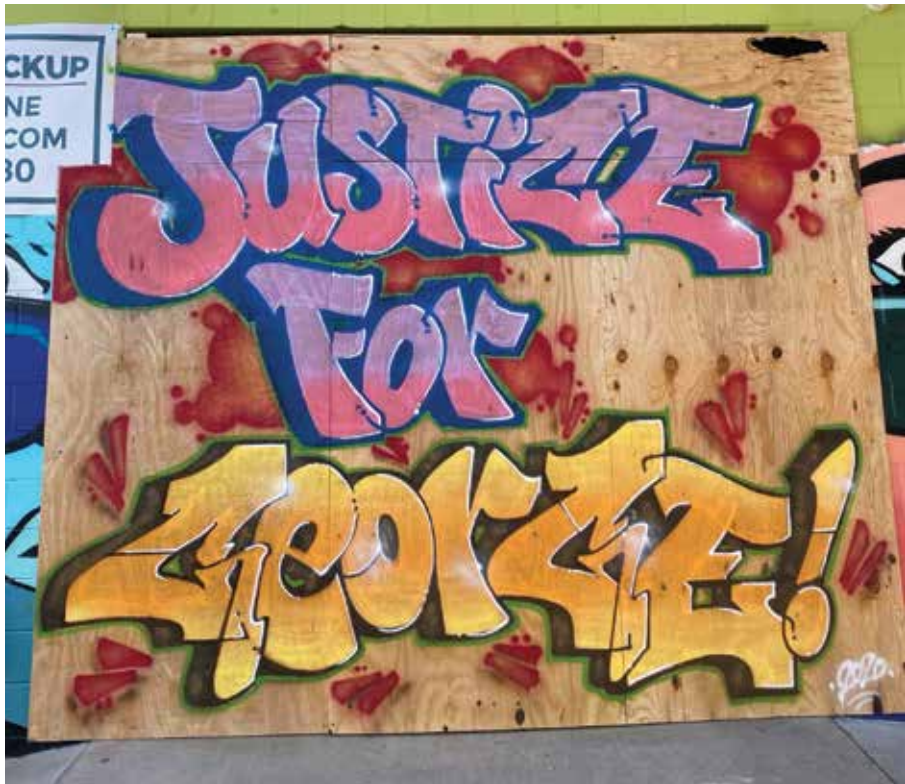
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from page 1

Recovery Artists Hit the Street



“It was a great feeling,” he says. “I felt like I was doing something positive for the community.” And, he adds, “I wanted to keep painting to stay off heroin.”

“I said, ‘Sure.’ So, I grabbed my spray paint and I rushed over there, and I did it, and everybody loved it.” Cybin was quickly invited back and he was painting four to six window boards a day.

“I was covering up profanity,” Cybin says. He didn’t want the kids in the community to have to see that.

Cybin was paid for some of his work, although he also did plenty of paintings for free after sending out an offer to do so on his Facebook page.

“It was really cool. Everybody was taking pictures of me. They would come shake my hand, and they’d say thank you for doing it.

Cybin was still feeling the aftereffects from his withdrawal, barely sleeping only an hour or two per night. “I used to wake up and not want to live,” he recalls, but the messages kept showing up on his phone inviting him to paint. Those messages gave him a reason to get out of bed.

PAINTING FOR A CAUSE

“I would paint from maybe 10:00 a.m. until the sun went down,” he says. At the end of the day, the depression returned. But knowing he had a purpose revived his spirits. “It was a great feeling,” he says. “I felt like I was doing something positive for the community.” And, he adds, “I wanted to keep painting to stay off heroin.”

The pains of life still bring Cybin down and put him at risk for relapse. “I wake up every morning still heartbroken pretty much,” he says. But he’s continuing to do art to help keep himself on track and off heroin.

“Art made me happy as a kid and it makes me happy now,” he says.

FROM FIGHTING FOOD TO CREATING DESIGNS

For Rick, another artist with a passion for doing good, food was his drug of choice. Back in high school, he pushed himself to gain weight in hopes of playing football. Over the years, the push to eat got him to where, he says, “I’d inhale a blueberry pie in a minute.” Yo-yo diets

didn’t work, and he finally found his way to Overeaters Anonymous (OA).

What Rick noticed at his first OA meeting, he says, was that “people were happy. They had glistening eyes and were very vibrant. They were taking weight off and happy about it. I walked away with a sponsor.” Though he’s had a few slips over the years, he says, “I’m always committed to getting back on the wagon.” Rick talks to his sponsor every day, stays off sugar and wheat, and measures and weighs whatever he consumes to avoid overeating.

MAKING ART THAT GETS ATTENTION

Rick got encouragement for drawing as a kid and eventually found his most passionate interest to be designing – especially designing protest signs. Like Cybin, he likes the power of making words stand out in attention-grabbing shapes and colors. His massive-sized, often reusable signs have appeared around the world and have showed up in *The Washington Post* and in a Michael Moore movie. You can spot them often at major demonstrations. Sometimes he creates the signs completely on his own. Other times he does the lettering designs and other people come in to paint them.

At one point, Rick traveled around Minnesota with Vets for Peace in a bus carrying a large sign he had made decrying the use of military spending. The sign was mounted on the rear of the bus with magnets.

These days he hangs out a lot at the Activist Center on 42nd and Chicago Avenue in Minneapolis. There he finds good company with other social activists for a variety of causes. “Being in a group, I don’t feel powerless,” says Rick. “I come back home fired up.” He’s also taken part in several recent protests in the Twin Cities.

THE SATISFACTION OF SERENITY AND PURPOSE

Rick says he does the protest art “be-



Cover photo and spread photos courtesy of Cybin



Photo courtesy of Rick

cause I have empathy for other people. That’s how I show it.”

“These things can be very emotional,” he says, “and we have to be careful to not get too high or low. Art is a good way to settle down. It helps a lot in recovery, gives me something to do, keeps me on an even keel.” When doing protest art, he says, “I feel like I’m being useful, serving humanity. Expressing how I feel.” It’s easy to get depressed in the face of injustice, he says, and art “gets me out of negativity.”

Art is a recovery anchor for Rick. So is optimism. “There are so many more good people out there than bad ones,” he says. “We outnumber them.”

Pat Samples is a Twin Cities writer, writing coach, and champion of creative aging. Her website is patsamples.com

Songwriting for Recovery

by Katy Vernon



My name is Katy. I'm a singer songwriter, a ukulele player, a mother, a wife, a dual citizen of the US and UK and I'm an alcoholic.

In my Twitter bio I say I'm a 'Singer of sad songs on a happy instrument.' It took me a while to even realize what that meant to me rather than just a fun throwaway line about being a ukulele player. As a songwriter I was always a little embarrassed or insecure about how sad many of my lyrics were. I often write about grief, drinking, disability, and other topics I had found hard to talk about but feel compelled to sing about. Once I discovered the ukulele it seemed to make the music more palatable for an audience. I like the balance of heavy words with a jangly instrument. The more that I think about it though, I realize that I'm the happy instrument. I've always loved singing and dancing and being a goofball and that balances out the intense stuff I write about.

I have always used songwriting as my way to process life. It's my diary, my friend, my therapy. Often, I write a song and when I'm done, and I sing it, I realize it's about an issue I'm trying to resolve. It's also soothing to me to sing. It's a mix of breathing exercises and a creative outlet. A way to calm my busy mind.

SO WHY AM I LIKE THIS?

I lost both of my parents in my teens. This created such a profound sadness in me that the grief just seemed to take hold and change every part of me. I spent so many years trying to numb the pain of that loss, I felt very sorry for myself and pretty angry with the world. I couldn't express either of those feelings in polite society, so I tried to swallow them. Swallowing red wine was the quickest way. I recently heard the term "Poor me, pour me a drink" and it's annoyingly relatable.

May 1st, 2016 was the day I finally gave up drinking. I told myself I could maybe drink again if I wanted, if I could control it, contain it, enjoy it, but I wasn't sure I would have a marriage, a career, a relationship with my kids, or anything else I wanted in life if I did. Even with all of this in the balance I still wasn't sure what choice to make, or if it was even a choice.

For so many years I would minimize and joke about whether I needed to cut back and control my drinking, but all of these excuses were suddenly inadequate. It wasn't funny anymore. I needed to wake

the hell up and get in control of my life.

After a lost night that served as my personal turning point, I made the choice to stop drinking. That felt huge but was only the first step in learning to be sober. I thought I'd be happy and healed and in control of everything without alcohol (and I am now for the most part) but at first it just made me feel everything in a massive wave of emotions and my only crutch was gone.

After three months of trying recovery alone I went to my doctor. For the first time ever, I answered all of the questions about alcohol usage and depression honestly. It felt scary but amazing to admit the truth and to have a professional listen without judgment. I was diagnosed with clinical depression.

I had spent so many years since losing my parents trying to navigate my feelings and my place in the world that my mental health issues crept up on me. I always had a million reasons to feel sad, and I didn't know that depression had taken hold. It was probably always there, and it helped me realize that I was literally self-medicating.

I am now on medication for clinical depression and can finally feel the difference between sadness and depression. It's a profound difference that I am still getting acclimated to.

As a performer I am used to feeling vulnerable out in public. Alcohol had always helped to put me at ease. People often ask me if I'm OK being around alcohol. I know it's really hard for many, and you should always listen to your gut and avoid stressful situations, but for me being in a bar, pub, or club is work. So, I can separate in my mind the place from my addiction.

All of this upheaval and awakening led me to knowing that I wanted to write an album that would document what I was learning. I knew I would have to dig deep in order to get there. I wanted to make myself (and listeners) feel better and see that light at the end of the tunnel.

I used my songwriting to really work through all that stuff that I was suppressing. I already thought that I was pretty self-aware. I had written all of my life about feelings and being present—*Present* is literally the name of my previous album. I'd done a lot of work on myself, but I was kind of missing the big picture, which

was that there was something wrong with me that could be fixed, or at least helped.

When I stopped drinking, I couldn't see any light at the end of the tunnel I was in. I had to hold on to the hope that many other people have survived this and if I listened and followed their lead I maybe could too. Ultimately, I just tried really hard not to give up on myself. If you can put that feeling on hold (I have also had to face the ultimate lows of hating myself and not wanting to go on) and stay close to people that are in active recovery, then you'll hopefully understand that it's never too late for anyone.

No one can truly be controlled, policed, or saved by someone else into recovery. Yes, we need the support of others, but we also need to build the motivation to save ourselves.

"But you're not broken, Just a little rearranged." From *Suit of Hearts*

The first song I wrote for the new record was about this. It was initially called 'Save Me' (it became 'Catch Myself') and was written on the floor of a borrowed apartment in Brighton, UK, in floods of tears. As I wrote the words "*kept thinking someone else would save me, I've been making myself crazy*" I let all of my feelings of worthlessness and regret pour out of me. I have always tried to find the truth when I wrote. It's easy to find a cute phrase or a clever rhyme. It's less easy to completely dig into the honesty of what you're trying to say. I dig into parts of myself that were not likeable and laid myself raw in a way I'd never done before. It was cathartic. I didn't want every song on the record to be like this, but I knew as soon as I'd written it that it was special. I knew that feeling ashamed and vulnerable as I sang it was a signpost that I had done something important to my growth as a musician and as a person in recovery.

RECOVERY IN WRITING SUIT OF HEARTS

The title track, *Suit of Hearts*, is the first time I have written such a deliberate song to set the tone of a record. I was at a point where I felt so emotionally exposed on social media and on stage. Like I had shared everything of myself except the deep shame and pain I was still trying to hide. Instead of wearing my heart on my sleeve I was laying myself bare in an entire suit of hearts.

Once I thought of that I liked the idea of vulnerability as strength. That my naked raw feelings could also be a suit of armor. We are all afraid and unsure of ourselves and sharing that and shining a light onto it gives us all a shared strength.

"You wear your suit of hearts/You tear yourself apart/But you're not broken/Just a little rearranged/And none of us get out of here/Without a little change."

Embracing my newfound sobriety and my lack of control allowed me to feel braver with my songwriting. We can only respond to life as it happens. Once we're able to internalize and practice that wisdom, then we can start to forgive ourselves. You

are not your addiction. You have value. It's never too late to change your life.

The song *Latest Disaster* was written about my very bad, *awful* time during 2016 when every single thing seemed to go wrong. The year that everything seemed to break. My only coping skill was to choose to get up every day and try again. Reaching a personal rock bottom and facing my own faults was the beginning of things getting better. So, why not put that to a disco beat!! My band laughed when I introduced the song but we all dug in and had so much fun making it. It's received the most radio play of any song I've ever released.

The song *Undertow*. I knew that as low as I got with my personal depression and anxiety, there would hopefully come a time where I came out the other side. I

didn't know how or when, but I knew I had to trust that. I just had to let go and allow life to drag me for a while and then push me back when I had learnt some hard lessons. The imagery of an un-

dertow was a powerful one. I was literally caught in one once. Learning not to fight it and allow it to take you and spit you back out was a perfect metaphor for life. I sat by the sea and the words finally came to me. The sounds at the beginning of this song are from that day in Brighton. I sat and watched waves. I recorded the soothing sounds they made and realized that I didn't want to drown. I wanted to live.

The last song I write specifically about recovery on the record is *Pink Cloud*. This song popped into my head as I was in a happy mood driving to perform at the MN State Fair. I felt so happy that I was giddy. This isn't my natural state and it was so over the top that I just started singing. Early in recovery I had this feeling and expressed it to a friend also in recovery. He said 'That's just the pink cloud you're feeling. It will wear off.' After what felt like a lifetime of depression, I was determined to enjoy every last moment of that feeling and celebrate it. The last thing a person who's finally feeling happiness wants to hear is that it will wear off. So, I wrote a song celebrating that. It's tongue in cheek and combines rather dark reality alongside a jangly happy tune.

Kind of like a sad song on a happy instrument!

Katy Vernon is a Minneapolis / St. Paul based singer songwriter. She grew up in London, England and has been writing and singing as long as she can remember. You can discover her music at katyvernon.com and on Spotify.

Art Gallery



Lost by Darniece



Freedom after Change by Malissa



Key bracelet by Elizabeth

Special Thanks

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Affirmations by Beth



Sweet Dreams by Angela



Hope (2019, ink on paper, 18x24\") by Members of the Avivo Community Support Program during ArtWorks Open Studio group.

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Creating a daily journaling practice can be challenging – but, creating healthy, daily habits is worth the effort! Consider these tips for adding journaling to your daily routine. **Make It Easy to Journal!** Are you more likely to write with pen and paper or via computer? If you are using a journal, leave the journal and pen out in a place you are apt to see and use it. **Choose a Time that Works for You.** Will journaling become part of your morning routine, lunchbreak, or bed-time ritual? Choose a Journaling Style. You might choose a simple lined journal to write in a stream of consciousness style or use a bullet journaling style. Maybe your daily practice will be in the format of a prayer, gratitude, or list-making journal. **Know Your Why.** What made you want to start journaling? Are you writing to relieve stress, to create a safe space to vent, to express more gratitude, or to foster positivity? **Find an Accountability Partner.** Ask a friend or therapist to be a journaling or accountability partner. Ask them to check in with you to ask how your journaling practice is going. **Think in Possibilities!** In my work, I share various practices for well-being that have been helpful to my growth and development. I encourage and support my blog-readers, coaching clients, and social work supervisees to integrate journaling into their personal growth work and add journaling to their professional development toolkits. If you are interested in an accountability partner or coach to support your journaling practice, reach out to me at www.thinkinpossibilities.com.

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Practicing the Pause

Writing and Publishing with Spiritual Intention

by Marleen Pasch

Chances are, if you're a writer with spiritual inclinations, you'll recognize this quote from Thomas Merton's *New Seeds of Contemplation*:

"If you write for God you will reach many men and bring them joy. If you write for men--you may make some money and you may give someone a little joy and you may make a noise in the world, for a little while. If you write for yourself, you can read what you yourself have written and after ten minutes you will be so disgusted that you will wish that you were dead."

Okay, so maybe that last sentence sounds a tad extreme. I'm not quite willing to admit that sometimes, when I write for myself, I wish I were dead. *This is not to say I don't occasionally feel that way, only that I'm not willing to admit it.* But I know what it's like to re-read a draft penned when my ego was doing the writing and feel plenty disgusted. *This is so shallow. Maybe I should stop writing altogether. Is Trader Joe's hiring? Whole Foods?*

That said, I also know what it's like to connect spiritually before putting fingers to keyboard. I know what it's like to pray, when writing a novel, an article or an essay: *Please, help me help at least one person.* And I know what it's like to have that prayer answered.

Here's an example. After my first novel was released, I lectured to college students who had read the book. Many had jobs and took classes at night. No easy feat. They made a terrific audience, eager to learn, not just about the book, but about the writing life and how they might improve their own writing.

When I gathered my things after the presentation, a woman approached. She diverted her eyes. At first, I thought she was shy. But when she started talking, she choked on her words, then cried openly. "When I read your book," she said, "it was the first time I knew my son's overdose wasn't my fault."

Prayer answered! One woman's life changed because she read the book, heard the message of forgiveness, and felt free. Testimony to how writing with spiritual intention can liberate at least one soul. Does it get any better than that? Not much.

If you want your work to be guided by God or whoever/whatever you call your guiding creative force, you may already know the following premises (and promises) of writing as spiritual practice:

Committing to the page every day. Just like praying/meditating every day, just like asking (as people in Twelve Step programs often do) to be "relieved of the bondage of self" on a twenty-four-hour basis—daily writing establishes discipline that can foster both spiritual development and creativity.

Some days I ask for guidance and receive it quite boldly. Mostly this hap-

pens on my pre-dawn walks. When no other people, or very few, are out and about, when appreciating the moon or Orion or the clouds is almost effortless. It's easier, then, for me to wonder—*How does Daria (or any other character) get herself out of this mess? Or, why is Quinn hell-bent on ruining his business?*—then release those questions while I walk, in the dark, waiting.

The forward movement, my feet on the pavement, "kissing the earth" as Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh would say, assures me I'm getting somewhere, even if I'm, literally and figuratively, still in the dark. As long as I don't demand an answer (*Yes, the answers come on God's schedule*), I either get clarity right then, or when I wake up the following day, or the next week, while I'm washing dishes or grocery shopping. And if no answers come on my schedule, I know to ask: *What's doing the asking? If it's my desire or my ego, if I want it too badly, what does that say about my spiritual condition?* I'm thinking here of A.A.'s Seventh Step, in which people in recovery "humbly ask" rather than demand relief from shortcomings.

Learning to listen. This is easier when I'm writing nonfiction than fiction. Why? If I'm writing (or teaching) spiritual memoir, for example, I feel dishonest if I don't practice the process I preach: Practice the pause. But when writing fiction, I sometimes (think I) know where I'm going. This character needs to say this in order for that character to do that. Then, seemingly out of the blue, I hear The Voice: "She wants a divorce," or "He wants to die." Sometimes, I keep writing for a paragraph or two. If I'm feeling particularly defiant (No one's going to question my plan!) I continue for a couple pages, even a chapter.

Then I read what I've written. The dialogue sounds flat. Or the tone is so disingenuous my ears hurt when I read the work aloud. Begrudgingly, I return to the chapter or paragraph where I heard The Voice. I don't question; I just write. Maybe I'm annoyed that my plan has been interrupted. But, hopefully, that day I'm humble enough to remember that what I write isn't mine, anyway. It belongs to the God who graces me with the willingness to sit at my keyboard, day after day, learning to listen more intently. Getting back to that Merton quote, If I write for God, I just may help someone find some joy, some release.

Then I keep going. That's not to say I won't need an attitude adjustment before going back from chapter 17 to rework

PRACTICING THE PAUSE to pg 12

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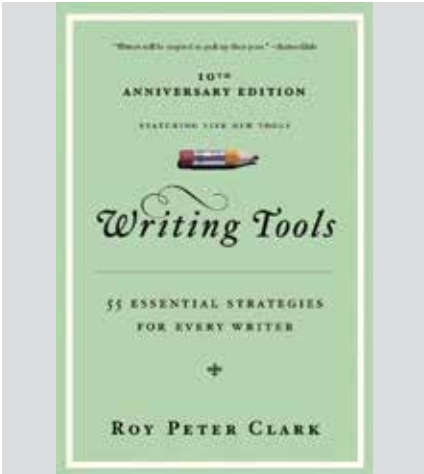


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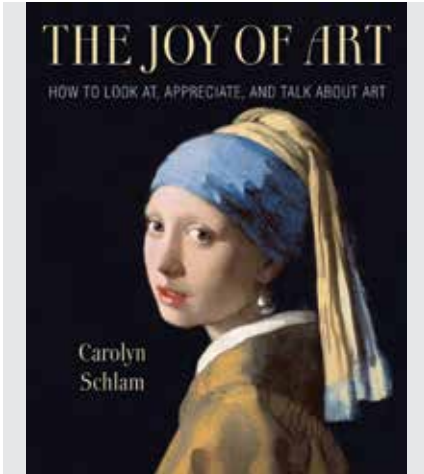


Books



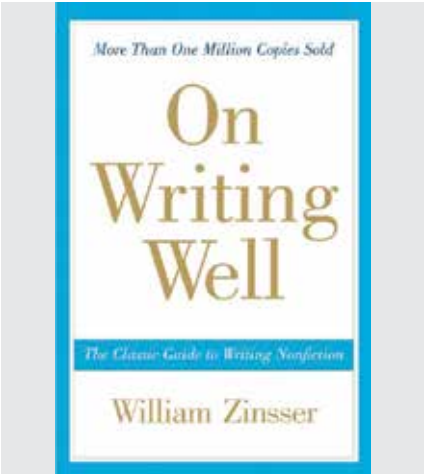
Writing Tools
55 Essential Strategies for Every Writer
By Roy Peter Clark
LITTLE, BROWN SPARK

Ten years ago, Roy Peter Clark, whittled down almost thirty years of experience in journalism, writing, and teaching into a series of fifty short essays on different aspects of writing. In the past decade, *Writing Tools* has become a classic guidebook for novices and experts alike. Organized into four sections, "Nuts and Bolts," "Special Effects," "Blueprints for Stories," and "Useful Habits," *Writing Tools* is infused with more than 200 examples from journalism and literature. This new edition includes five brand new, never-before-shared tools.



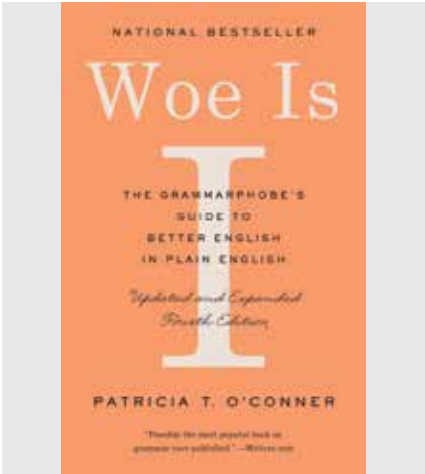
The Joy of Art
How to Look At, Appreciate, and Talk about Art
By Carolyn Schlam
ALLWORTH

Written by a practicing artist, this book decodes and maps the basic elements of visual art, leading the reader to a greater understanding and appreciation. Not an art history lesson per se, this illustrated guide is rather a tool kit to make the study of art and a visit to the museum truly rewarding. *The Joy of Art* contains 150 color photographs and insights from an artist-author who takes readers behind the curtain and into the studio to uncover what actually goes into making a work of art.



On Writing Well
The Classic Guide to Writing Nonfiction
By William Zinsser
HARPER PERENNIAL


With over a million copies in print, *On Writing Well*, grew out of a course that William Zinsser taught at Yale. It has been praised for its sound advice, its clarity, and for the warmth of its style. It is a book for anybody who wants to learn how to write or who needs to do some writing to get through the day, as almost everybody does. Whether you want to write about people or places, science and technology, business, sports, the arts, or about yourself in the increasingly popular memoir genre, *On Writing Well* offers you both fundamental principles as well as the insights of a distinguished practitioner.



Woe Is I
The Grammarphobe's Guide to Better English in Plain English
By Patricia T. O'Conner
RIVERHEAD BOOKS

In this expanded and updated edition of *Woe Is I*, former editor at The New York Times Book Review Patricia T. O'Conner unties the knottiest grammar tangles with the same insight and humor that have charmed and enlightened readers of previous editions for years. With fresh insights into the rights, wrongs, and maybes of English grammar and usage, O'Conner offers in *Woe Is I* down-to-earth explanations and plain-English solutions to the language mysteries that bedevil all of us.

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.



1:2

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

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Jes Reyes, MA

Jes Reyes (she/her/they/them) is a multidisciplinary artist, filmmaker, and arts administrator, having exhibited her work throughout the Twin Cities. She is the founder of the Altered Esthetics Film Festival and coordinates programming for Moonplay Cinema, a microcinema supporting women/nonbinary/trans filmmakers. As an Artist Career Consultant for Springboard for the Arts, she provides one-on-one support to artists and teaches the Work of Art: Business Skills for Artists. You can also find Jes leading a team of service providers at Avivo ArtWorks, a multi-faceted art program for artists living with mental illness.

In 2005, Jes moved to the Twin Cities from Southern California, a year after graduating from California State University, Long Beach with a double major in Women's Studies and Film and Electronic Arts. Jes now holds a Master of Liberal Studies degree (focusing on creative writing, feminist theory, and film studies) from the University of Minnesota, with a minor in Museum Studies (focusing on curatorial studies and community arts). Her mission is to support and build community among artists. This is often through community-based projects, career support, and presenting artwork. You can learn more about Jes by visiting her website: www.jesreyes.com

ON MAKING ART

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

Q How does creating art help with the overall healing and recovery process?

Art is healing because it can be a powerful tool for engagement with one's self. Not only are you creating something when making art, but you are also building a sense of presence and space for yourself. Art can bring you into the moment, and though it's an alternative form of communication, you can process, think, feel, and reflect through the expression of creativity. This can be important for recovery as it can introduce discovery and change, and possibly transform something difficult into something new and positive. I know this first hand, as I have used art to recover from long-term grief and anxiety.

Q What are some examples of different types of art that people can engage in to help with the expression of emotions? In other words, are there other forms of expression other than painting and drawing?

Many artists I know are also poets! I think this is because poetry is another excellent way to explore emotions and thoughts. Getting words, ideas, and feelings out and writing them down is a form of release as it brings the inside out. Rainer Maria Rilke once said, "To write poetry is to be alive," which I agree with immensely.

Q Do I need to have any specific skills to be able to start creating?

All you need is the inspiration to try. No skills or experience necessary! All artists or people trying art out for the first time start as beginners. We build skills over time, depending on certain goals or interests. So, embrace the beginning as a form of exploration. Get to know what art forms are out there and then discover what you are drawn to or what you prefer

to create with. If you don't like drawing, you might like fiber art instead!

Q What are some different mediums that are simple, fun, and affordable for a beginner?

First, I want to say that most artists work with a budget in mind when making art, no matter where they are in their practice because art materials can get expensive! This can be especially true when you are just starting and are curious. My advice when buying art supplies is to only buy what you need at the moment, paying particular attention to the projects you have on hand. Once you are done you can move onto something else, possibly buying new materials for what you will work on next.

You should have some staples on hand though like a sketchbook so you can quickly get thoughts down in the moment. This practice can develop into a daily habit, kind of like journaling. Think of it as doodling with intention or a drawing mindset! Many artists, like myself, use drawing to get into a flow state, ready to expand into more concentrated art making such as painting. So having or reusing paper on hand is essential. I think paper is the most readily available and affordable art material. It's the primary surface I work with.

If you decide to venture into other mediums, I always suggest watercolor painting as an affordable option. I have found that the paint can last a long time and you can buy watercolor paper in packs that will last you a while. Also, you wouldn't think of it right away, but ceramics can be affordable, too, particularly when shaping and forming simply with your hands, water, and air-dry clay. Once hardened, it can be painted on with tempera or acrylic.

Q How is creating art as an individual different than creating art with other peers while in a group setting?

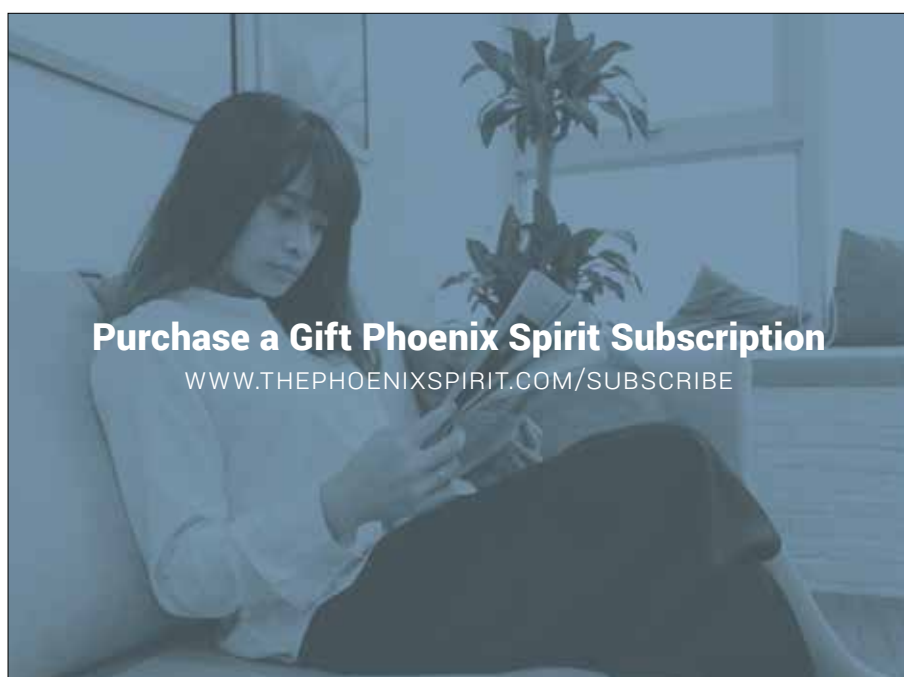
One thing I have learned over the years

is how important it is to connect with other creatives. Usually, making art is a solitary experience so developing social time with peers who also want art in their life can be validating and liberating. I think this is because when you are in a group setting you are relating with others, receiving and giving feedback, supporting one another, and possibly collaborating on art together.

Q How has helping others develop their skills as professional artists helped your own journey as an artist?

My work in supporting other artists has only confirmed my ideas around art being more than a noun. I see it as a verb and a lifestyle. If it's part of your life and you make room for it, it gets easier to show up and create things. I see that in myself and I see that in others that I have assisted over the years. Our voices matter. Our lives matter. And art can help us communicate that, each day as we commit to making.

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



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from page 1

What Can We Learn From All This?

WHAT IS THERE TO LEARN?

Each of us needs to answer this question for ourselves. There are as many answers as there are people. Allow me to describe what I have discovered in this process.

At the onset of this experience I knew that my anxiety level was rising because I am older and have more vulnerable health issues. So, I needed to find a safe place that restores my faith in beauty and promise of life. I took a long walk with my wife in a woodsy area north of St. Paul. Along the walk we discovered an eagle's nest way up in the trees. We peered up to the nest and found two young eaglets with their parents watching over them. They were very cute and had dark coloring common in immature birds. The mom and dad birds were completely devoted to their progeny and kept an eagle eye on what was happening. The dad bird swooped down in the lake to catch fish to help feed the birds and the mom bird distributed the fish between her eaglets. Many people gathered around to witness the nesting family. These birds were our birds!

The majesty of the eagles soaring and tending their young was a sight to behold. They were completely oblivious to the tensions of the pandemic and peace marches. Life just went on for them. My wife and I got so much solace from the eagle family that we retreated from our own worries and found great hope.

We partly marveled at the birds since they had no problem providing for their young despite many dead fish lying near the lake due to pollution. We worried if this family would make it. We visited this

nest often until the youngsters gradually left the nest. Often, we saw the eaglets getting bolder and bigger in flapping their wings. We marveled how their parents were teaching them to fish and maintain balance despite howling winds. It was a piece of cake for them. The parents were totally devoted to their young birds. Overall, my wife and I drew much hope from the eagle family.

Finally, one day we came back to visit the nest, we saw that it was now an empty nest. How disappointed we were to not see the birds! Yet in our hearts we really knew that all had gone well for the eagle family. That even in the utter uncertainty and challenges of life that love had conquered all. Our hope was restored.

I learned much about epidemiology related to the COVID-19 virus and the science of surviving this lethal and contagious infection. Terms like social distancing, hand washing and staying in quarantine, despite my natural tendencies to do the contrary, became my daily routine. The good news is that science does make a difference and that getting accurate updates is part of the survival process. Gradually, over the following months, my fear of getting infected did lessen to a good extent. I also learned that my strong need to socialize and be in touch with others could partially be satisfied by staying in regular phone contact with a plethora of close friends. The mere chatting with others on a regular basis lessened my feelings of emptiness, gave me joy, enriched the depth of friendships and helped me realize just how important we are to each other. I



found purpose and meaning in supporting my friends through their ordeals.

Also, I discovered many new friends I never knew I had! The isolation of my aching heart made me more open to people I never dreamed I could be, as many did the same with me. The daily walks in my neighborhood helped me make many new friends. I often felt surrounded by friends even while not being able to hug and embrace those close to me. Real intimacy was possible even at a distance! Of course, these new experiences will endure beyond this current pandemic and into the future. I became less afraid of those aspects of myself that kept me distant from others. I accepted myself more. Also, I took up daily reading from the Bible with my wife, not because I am a religious fanatic but because I wanted to embrace something bigger than myself and accept my mortality. Finally, I became determined to exercise daily, get adequate sleep and improve my diet, all to bolster my immune system. All of these efforts significantly improved my mood and stamina. There was something I could do to help my situation. I learned to thrive, not just survive.

Although I have always seen myself as anti-racist, I was thrown through a loop when I unexpectedly witnessed the turmoil and anger of African American people who felt degraded and unsafe in this racist culture. Their complaints are utterly valid. I was unaware of my own oblivion. I was very moved by protest messages and keep it close to my heart. It is a gift to us privileged white people to hear this message. My heart goes out to the myriad of black families that have had to suffer from the legacy of racism in its current form of police violence. No one deserves to live in fear, degradation, and needless loss. No one deserves to lose a loved one due to poor police judgment. What hurts one sector of our culture hurts us all. We have so much to gain if we live up to the "liberty and justice for all" part of our Constitution. I look forward to seeing more people of color in positions of power and receive the full gifts of their presence in our beloved Country. I look forward to more disciplined, safer and effective policing. The times are changing in a very positive direction if we learn from this era. My words in no way give complete solace or tribute to the numerous black families

whose hearts have been broken by racial violence. Let us hold the wronged in our hearts and listen to them. It is a process we are going through together.

WHAT STOPS OF US FROM LEARNING?

There are many ways to maintain willful blindness to this era. Some of us have little ability to put ourselves in other's shoes or fully understand the connections we have to another. We see no need to wear masks in crowded spaces and don't see how not wearing masks is disrespectful to others, especially vulnerable adults in our own families. Safety for some is an individual matter and if other people get sick due to our insensitivity that is not our problem. We may be reluctant to give up our self-centeredness for other people's sake. We lack the ability to love in a mature way. Others turn their backs on racial injustice. We are too comfortable with our dominant position in society. We live the good life in our safe neighborhoods and see no connection to other people's pain. We may occasionally numb ourselves through alcohol, drug abuse and other addictions. We fail to see that "their problem" is "our problem."

Some people have a different approach to resisting learning. Some of us view ourselves as saints. Perhaps we have an exaggerated view of our own virtue and cannot even identify our own racist tendencies. This self-righteousness is especially common for progressive-thinking people who see themselves as "beyond all that." They feel that they have nothing to learn from people of color. They are the sainted helpers. They become fanatical in their concerns for people of color and are willing to commit illegal acts on their behalf. Frequently they are driven by their own need to save and speak for people of color in a veiled version of hidden racism. They have little awareness of how they are trying to save themselves through others, and at their own expense. They cannot learn anything in this era when they are lost in a fog of their own boundary confusion. The thinking parts of their brains are just not on-line, and they become extreme. Any of us can fall into these categories if we are unaware of our own woundedness.

The odd part of all of these faulty methods of learning is that if people give up their superiority, even for a brief while, and embrace humility, they will realize



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Continued from page 14

No one deserves to live in fear, degradation, and needless loss. *What hurts one sector of our culture hurts us all.* We have so much to gain if we live up to the “liberty and justice for all” part of our Constitution.

that learning is a lot easier than they are making it. People of color are spelling out for us as to what they need. They are not asking us to solve their problems. They simply want us to listen, take seriously what they are saying, and legally support their ideas of a more just society, while also respecting ourselves. We need to have more faith in, and gratitude for, people of color because they are inherently very much like ourselves.

Thurgood Marshall, the preeminent Supreme Court Justice, had a vision of what heals racial injustice. He believed in his soul that racial injustice could be healed if black people and white people just hung out with each other and got to know each other in a personal way. He courageously defeated “Separate but equal” legislation and replaced it with integration in the school system by being an integrationist himself. His wisdom applies to today’s times. If we stepped back from being the dominant culture, listened to people of color and connected with them in personal ways we would all have a lot to learn from each other. We are all very much like each other and we are all in the same boat. There is no “them” in “us.”

Very much the same can be said regarding this pandemic. Clearly, we need to weigh the costs and benefits of exposing ourselves to others, often led by our need to support our families. Nevertheless, it’s wisest if we defer to the scientists in guiding us through this process and realize the bigger picture. Science in a pandemic does matter even if we don’t like what we are being told. Not getting our way and deferring to trusted experts will save lives, allow us to practice humility and help us accept our mortality.

STEPS FOR GROWTH

Perhaps the greatest danger in this period is apathy, passivity, and pessimism. We could all easily fall back into defeatism and give up. This is not a time to fall back; it is a time to fight. Clearly, we have much to feel overwhelmed by and are in fact powerless over much of what is oc-

curing in our pandemic. We can’t stop the virus on our own and we can’t provide instant justice even with the best arguments. However, we can choose to be proactive and be growthful. Not doing so will leave us even more disempowered and traumatized by this period. Let me suggest:

1. **Take a small amount of time each day and reflect on yourself and what you are learning about yourself.** Focus on your body’s sensations, dreams, and transitory thoughts. Consider keeping a daily journal and ask yourself, “What is coming up for me today?”, “What am I learning about myself?” and “What are some acts I can do today that honor what I am learning?” Notice when you have threatening thoughts and feelings, take a deep breath and let them just be. You don’t have to do anything that you are not ready to do. Just notice your reactions and let them just be, like singing birds outside your window. Perhaps if you have a trusted friend you can call that person, share your reflections, and listen to theirs.

2. **Make a list of people’s phone numbers and call a few of them each day.** Check on their health, how they are doing and see what is cooking with them. Most of what’s cooking is going on the inside of people, not the outside, as many of us are quarantined. It’s most important to listen with genuine interest and ask follow-up questions, remembering what they said. Don’t instantly cheer people up, as others may read this as you have discomfort with their feelings. Don’t assume that others have nothing to say when they say nothing. Try at least one probing question. Just the fact that you’re calling an acquaintance is support enough in itself.

3. **Do something different to get out of yourself, something that’s not part of your usual routine.** Do some drawing, play some music, write some poems, take some long walks in nature, learn to quilt, or read the great books you have never had time for. Notice how all this changes you and grows your identity, especially if you don’t do it perfectly. Perhaps you can write to us here at *The*

Phoenix Spirit and let us know what you are discovering. Godspeed!

“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, 525-456BC)

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.

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The Art of Feeling

by **Mary Lou Logsdon**



"I found I could say things with color and shapes that I couldn't say any other way—things I had no words for." — GEORGIA O'KEEFE

How are you? How do you feel? How do I feel? I am not sure. I come from a long line of people who avoided feelings—or at least conversations about feelings. My grandfather would answer those questions with, "I feel with my fingers."

Given her father's avoidance, it is no wonder my mother thought I had way too many feelings. I was a teenager at the time and I probably did—unnamed feelings spilling out like an overflowing rain barrel—running willy-nilly with no destination.

Knowing how we feel is rarely easy to answer—especially when the feelings get trapped behind a dam of no-talk-rules. But when I don't know how I feel I act out of them rather than delve into them as a form of self-discovery.

How do I know how I feel? I try to listen to my body. Feelings are not head items—I think from my head, I feel in my body. I train myself to pay attention to my feelings. It's not something I do naturally.

When I notice an unease within, I immediately want to get busy, find a distraction, run away. I'm uncomfortable. I don't have time to deal with it now. I don't know exactly what the feeling is, I do know it's unsettling. Instead I can choose to sit with it and see what it has to say to me. First, I notice and name what I am sensing and where. An image helps me identify what the feeling is like. It might be like a whirling fan in my belly. Or like a bottle with a woven basket squeezing it and getting increasingly tighter around my neck. Or like a stampede of horses running over me. Whoa!

Then I pay attention to where my energy is. When I'm angry, I feel it in my gut, a fist clenching and releasing. I feel fear in my throat—closing off the air, my voice caught in a dry well. I feel love in my heart, where it expands and overflows. Sorrow is in my chest, pressing down on me. Hurt pierces my heart and spills out in tears. When I connect with something absolutely true it is an electric charge that radiates up and down my spine.

I understand sorrow, love, fear, anger as first tier feelings. They are loud, quick, full. Other feelings are more nuanced: Feelings like insecure, smug, shame, mischievous, bored, lonely. These take longer to tease out.

My feelings remind me of an insistent three-year-old who keeps talking until you sit down to listen to her. When I sit down and listen to my feelings, they gradually make themselves known, felt, and heard.

One way to be with these feelings is through art. Art opens me to feelings I didn't realize I had or have long forgotten. How quickly a familiar song can bring me to tears or lift me out of a slump. Listen to Beethoven's *Ode to Joy* and feel the joy rise within you—a masterpiece he wrote when he was completely deaf. Monet's *Waterlilies* calm while a Calder mobile delights. Art carries us into another place, mood, or season.

Before life screeched to a halt, I visited the Minneapolis Institute of Art exhibit *Artists Respond: American Art and the Vietnam War*. How quickly that art pulled me back into those challenging times.

We were all so certain of our position, so righteously angry, so ready to blame. The raw art of protest signs, acrylics dripping blood red, editorial cartoons' sharp satire harpooning the Washington establishment brought me right back to the late '60s. We didn't necessarily recognize it as art then, but 50 years later we see the creativity forged in the furnace of war and social unrest. The exhibit came with a playlist of songs—*Proud Mary Keep on Burnin'*—swiftly returning me to my early 20s. This is the power of art.

An artistic expression that helps me engage with my feelings is collage. I collect images from magazines, newspapers, even old pictures, or tour books. I include background designs, words, letters. When I decide to create a collage, I take my collection and spread it across the dining room table. I look through it until I am drawn to an image, shape, or color. I set it aside and see what else calls me. I soon have a small stack of what looks like unrelated pictures, words, colors, patterns, people.

I use cardstock or cardboard as backing. I place a larger image as the base layer. Then I arrange and glue pieces on and around it until I have something that hangs together. I might add a piece of raveled cord, a bent wire or some other found object.

Once the collage feels close to completion, I set it on a table so I can see it as I go about my day. I might need to add another layer, hide part of something that doesn't quite fit, add a new border. After living with it for a few days I give it a name. Hope. Peace. Fury. Joy. Loss. Grief. I let it speak. What does it want to say? How does it see the past? Where is the future? How does it feel?

A collage is an appropriate expression for this time of novel virus and social unrest. My life feels cut into pieces with fragments and shards combined in new, haphazard ways, like puzzle pieces that don't quite fit. I reroute my weekly trip to the St Paul Farmers Market to accommodate the single entry and exit points connected by a new one-way flow. My city's streets have whole blocks burned out. I see colleagues in square images on my computer screen. This new assemblage requires me to look at my life from an altered perspective. I feel twisted into knots and lonely for a simpler time. *[Ed. note: To view Mary Lou's collage, visit our website at thephoenixspirit.com.]*

Once I recognize, name, and accept my feelings, I can befriend them. Now I better understand what drives me, how my sadness and fear entwine, what triggers my anger. Art in its many manifestations helps me translate those feelings into a language that serves me better than denial ever has. How about you? How do you feel? What does it look like? How do you know?

Mary Lou Logsdon, is a Spiritual Director and retreat leader in the Twin Cities. She teaches in the Sacred Ground Spiritual Direction Formation Program. She can be reached at logsdon.marylou@gmail.com.