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RETREATING INTO THE NORTH SHORE

## Hiking Her Way to Healing

by Mary Berg / Photos by Tracy Walsh

The entry point into our best selves, as addicts, starts with sobriety, but it doesn't end there. *The Phoenix Spirit* interviewed Kara Frahm, Director of Business Development at Horowitz Health, to capture her story of how the Superior Hiking Trail healed her. In her words, "Hiking has given me back so much of myself. I've figured out who I am, what I stand for, and what I'm capable of doing. Whether you find deep healing in the woods, with a therapist, or your spirit says, 'I have to start my own band,' go do that, because there's a life that's more than just being sober." (The interview has been edited for brevity.)

TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOUR RECOVERY JOURNEY

I got sober a little later in life than many women – at 45. My drinking had escalated to cope with what was, I now

know, a very abusive marriage. Afraid for our one-year-olds' safety, I got divorced. With support from family and friends, I raised the twins on my own, too busy to think about the pain I carried from that trauma.

So fast forward a bit, I met and married someone without doing any work on myself. I wasn't sober but wasn't yet in dire trouble. When the marriage didn't fix that pain for me, which of course it couldn't, I upped my alcohol intake until the scales flipped. I became a daily drinker. Instead of addressing the abuse, I went deeper and darker into that pain.

I agreed to go to treatment at Hazelden – my family's choice – for 30 days. I felt relief at having a break from feeling suffocated by all the things of life. At Hazelden, doctors diagnosed me with severe depressive disorder, but I didn't

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NEW MENTAL HEALTH COLUMNIST

## Spotlight on Mental Health

In recognition of Mental Health Awareness Month, *The Phoenix Spirit* is pleased to welcome new columnist Seth Perry. Perry will be writing about mental health issues. He is also a pastor, blogger and mental health recovery educator.

Read Perry's article on page 4

JOHN H. DRIGGS, LICSW

## The Mistake of Choosing a Person Who Doesn't Have a Conscience

Some of us are not aware of people who lack a conscience—those who lack empathy for others and cannot tolerate differences between themselves and others. Our lack of awareness is sometimes prompted by a misguided fear of being judgmental of others and an over willingness to give others the benefit of the doubt. The fact is that some people simply lack the capacity to be compassionate to others, just like some people cannot see what their vision does not allow them to see. Some people are morally blind to others and their incapacity can cause major problems in a relationship. There are big differences between rattle snakes and garter snakes. Neither creature deserves to be hated but we would be well advised to know the differences between these two reptiles. So, it is OK to be judgmental if we are trying to protect ourselves from major injuries and it is wise to know how to handle different creatures in God's creation.

*We all need to learn the differences between rattlesnakes and garter snakes and Easter Bunnies.*

You may wonder how people without a conscience can be compared to rattle snakes. Actually, the brain of a reptile is significantly different from that of a mammal. Snakes can be cold blooded and typically lack the capacity to have nurturing relationships with others. They don't nurture their young and typical look at other creatures as either prey or predator. As mammals, we do have close relationships simply based on emotional affiliation with others. When we look at the world like a rattlesnake we simply use others to benefit ourselves with no regard how others are affected by our behaviors. We lie and cheat for our own self-gain. Those of us with reptilian brains simply act without compassion for others. We are still part of God's plan but lack compassion in terms of hurting others. This

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

# There's No Place Like Home

by Louise Elowen

*"Oh, but anyway, Toto, we're home. Home! And this is my room, and you're all here. And I'm not gonna leave here ever, ever again, because I love you all, and - oh, Auntie Em - there's no place like home!"*  
DOROTHY IN THE WIZARD OF OZ (1939)

When I was younger, I loved to travel. So many different places and so many different experiences. Life got in the way and my travels had slowed in recent years – a lot – when I decided to take a trip last fall that was part work/part leisure. I drove a round trip of 1200 miles, through two states, and enjoyed once again the freedom of travel and all the experiences that came with it.

When I got home, I found it hard to settle. *Was it perhaps time for a more major move in my life? Like moving house?* I decided to investigate. I spent the next couple of months searching and ultimately finding what I thought was going to be the “perfect” house move. I was confident that this was the new start that I needed, and it was all going to be just fabulous.

As I prepped my current home for the move and readying it on the market, I packed boxes of memories and cleaned house – literally. Years of clutter got discarded. On a cold day in January which should have been “the” day, the offer I had made on my potential new home got rejected, just as the real estate agent pulled into my driveway to stage my current home for sale. However, I forged ahead with the afternoon even though my gut was telling me to take a breath. As the afternoon wore on, my whole body was overcome by pain and fatigue. In his quest to stage the “perfect” home, my realtor literally tore up years of work in my garden, despite my feeble attempts to both question and slow the process down.

By the end of the afternoon, as I closed the door on him and the world, I sat in the middle of my half-empty living room and sobbed solidly for fifteen minutes. This felt *wrong*, so wrong. My beautiful home and gardens, after years of literal blood, sweat, and tears, had been ripped apart before my eyes in what, I was led to believe, “was what buyers wanted.” If

this was what buyers wanted, I wanted no part of it. I wouldn't, *couldn't*, let my home (and the environment) be destroyed like this through ignorance of the natural world, or greed for a “better price.”

Needless to say, I fired my realtor (although probably not as strongly as I should have done). I spent the next month or two retreating inside myself, as I tried to escape the black cloud that had uneasily settled over me. My realtor's actions reflected all that was wrong with the world: *We need to scrape clean all the dead leaves as they are messy.* Umm, they protect the plants through winter and are home to vital pollinators sleeping through the colder months. *We have to rip up the irrigation as it looks ugly, and all people see is hard work.* Umm, how do they water the plants? *Is this a weed?* Well, actually, it's an herb...too late, he's ripped it up. *We need clean, no clutter.* Like no personality?

After I emerged from my cocoon of darkness in the warming spring months, I resolved to rebuild my garden, and my home. Not only that, but to educate the world on the importance of nature, plants, the environment, you know, the *basic things* that we need in order to survive on this planet. I had been through trauma, but I was ready to educate those who didn't know better, or who did know better, but needed reminders.

Those winter months were a retreat inside of myself, going inward, retreating from the world. It wasn't easy. It wasn't pretty. But I emerged realizing that there really is no place like home – and sometimes you're already there without realizing it.

“And I'm not gonna leave here ever, ever again...”

*Louise*



# 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.*

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The Phoenix Spirit 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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## SPOTLIGHT ON MENTAL HEALTH

# The Skill of Vacation: Reclaiming Relaxation in Recovery

by Seth Perry



Caribou Falls (MN) / Photo by Josh Hild / Unsplash

Taking a vacation should be easy. Many Americans struggle to truly get time away. A 2022 study by Qualtrics uncovered that nearly half of Americans polled still worked one hour a day while on vacation. That doesn't sound like a real holiday. In fact, some Americans seem to avoid taking vacation in fear of falling behind at the office. According to a 2023 Pew research study, 46% of Americans do not take all of their allotted vacation time each year. Many careers demand constant connection and attention from their employees. This practice is detrimental to our collective mental health.

Vacation is a skill. Some people are really good at setting aside time to relax and create a space free of career and personal responsibilities. I wish I could say that I was one of those people. Respite,

retreat, and downtime typically come as an afterthought for me. Like any skill, I have had to develop vacation habits, practices, and methods over a long period of time to ensure that I am maintaining good mental health.

My life is a balancing act between my vocation and my complex mental health needs. I am a Pastor, I live well with bipolar disorder, and I have been clean and sober for fourteen years. For a decade and a half, I struggled with addiction and mental health. Between the ages of fourteen and twenty-nine, I was living with an untreated mental health condition and was in active addiction. During that time, I was never truly capable of giving myself any time off. In my experience, if my using and mania were active, I would be unable to truly take a break from life. I realize now that vacation is not only ben-

*I realize now that vacation is not only beneficial to my mental health but is vital for my recovery.*

eficial to my mental health but is vital for my recovery.

Over the past fourteen years, I've gradually discovered and learned three essential practices that shape my ability to take vacations effectively. While I don't employ these three vacation skills on every single holiday, and I'm far from being an expert, I do acknowledge that I have had moderate success. The following vacation skills are incredibly life-giving and restorative when I carefully follow them.

#### ADVOCATE FOR YOUR VACATION NEEDS

I encourage everyone to patiently and confidently normalize taking time off. Workplaces can be chaotic, confusing, traumatic, and full of power differentials. Navigating employment in recovery has been something I have done with the assistance of a support network. Friends, recovery peers, co-workers, human resources, and even management have all become people to whom I have communicated my needs and been supported by. With the encouragement of others, I slowly gained enough confidence to ask for the time off that I need to recuperate and refresh my body, mind, and spirit.

#### PLAN AHEAD: CARVE OUT TIME

Careers have a peculiar ability to make time go by incredibly slowly on a daily basis yet surprisingly rapidly on a monthly basis. For this reason, I sit down with a calendar and map out vacation time months in advance. There are two benefits to this practice. First, when I submit my vacation time and get approval, I can confidently plan all of the details that lead up to a vacation. Specifics like accommodations, rental cars, and even my workload in the week leading up to vacation all need to be considered. Preparing for vacation is labor and I have discovered how that needs to be part of the equation. Second, as soon as the date is set and the travel details are arranged,

you can enjoy the benefit of anticipating time off. The psychological relief in looking forward to vacation can transform how you view the day-to-day drudgery of vocational life. Instead of wandering aimlessly through your work week, you can look forward to rest and relaxation.

#### CHECK YOURSELF OUT OF THE OFFICE

Leaving the office on your last day of vacation should be a formal process with your employer and a mental process for yourself. Make sure your vacation responder is set for your emails and you have silenced all email notifications. If you need to send out an email to your co-workers and management updating them on the status of your work, give yourself time to do that on the morning of your last day before vacation. Spend some time intentionally saying goodbye to people that you work with regularly as you prepare for vacation to remind them of your pending absence. The moment you are ready to leave, update your voicemail with your out-of-office message. Take a deep breath and acknowledge that you are now officially on vacation. Use your "do not disturb" setting on your phone and leave it in a drawer or suitcase as much as possible. Checking out of work in this manner is responsible professional behavior, good communication, and excellent self-care.

Never forget, skills take time to be honed. I have been developing my vacation skills for fourteen years. Sometimes I leave the office and embrace peace, rest, and serenity. Other times I fumble my way through my time off by checking my email, answering my phone, and ruminating about my first day back in the office. My support network, mentors, and peers have always encouraged me to go easy on myself when learning how to recover. If vacation doesn't go as planned, give yourself a break, hit the reset button and try again.

*Seth Perry (he/him/his), an ELCA Pastor, devotional blogger, and mental health recovery educator, embraces his journey of living well with Bipolar Type 1. He works to reduce stigma where faith, mental health, and personal growth intertwine. Pastor Seth currently serves Elim Lutheran Church in Scandia, MN. His website is: [www.ourstigma.com](http://www.ourstigma.com)*

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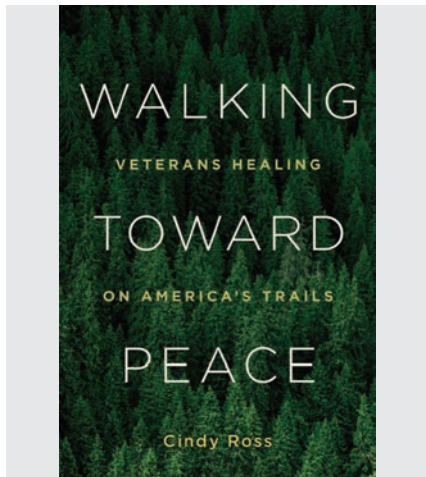
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# Books



## Walking Toward Peace

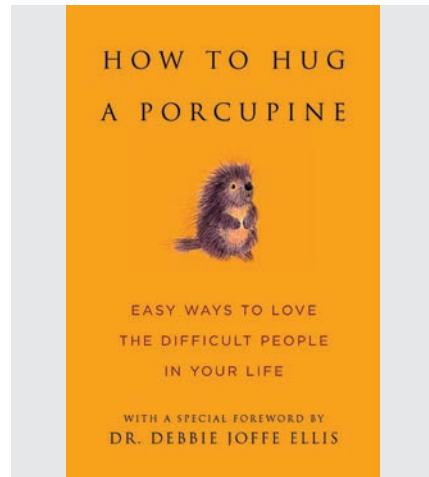
Veteran's Healing on America's Trails

By Cindy Ross  
MOUNTAINEERS BOOKS

An inspiring narrative about finding purpose in the outdoors, healing in nature, and hope for veterans

*Walking Toward Peace* shares the intimate stories of veterans who, post-deployment, have wrestled with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Through a process called "ecotherapy," spending time in nature to promote healing and mental health, they have found new tools to deal with issues that have resulted from combat experiences: survivor's guilt, nightmares, lack of trust, depression, hypervigilance, thoughts of suicide, and lack of purpose. Some veterans profiled here have gone to extremes, spending months on long-distance expeditions, like hiking the 3,100-mile Continental Divide Trail or canoeing the 2,320-mile Mississippi River. For many others, however, brief excursions in the outdoors offer an opportunity for healing. Author Cindy Ross examines current research and perspectives of professional therapists and provides information on organizations devoted to healing veterans in the outdoors. Each featured veteran is depicted in an illustrated portrait.

Veterans share their stories, frequently as they sit by a campfire, describing wartime traumas and their present lives. Through their collective voices what becomes clear is that anyone suffering from any form of PTSD may discover the powerful comfort and healing that can be found in the outdoors.



## How to Hug a Porcupine

Easy Ways to Love the Difficult People in Your Life

Edited by June Eding  
HATHERLEIGH PRESS

Most of us know someone who, for whatever reason, always seems to cause problems, irritate others, or incite conflict. Often, these people are a part of our daily lives. The truth is that these troublemakers haven't necessarily asked to be this way. Sometimes we need to learn new approaches to deal with people who are harder to get along with or love.

*How to Hug a Porcupine* explains that making peace with others isn't as tough or terrible as we think it is—especially when you can use an adorable animal analogy and apply it to real-life problems. Whether you want to calm the quills of parents, children, siblings, or strangers, *How to Hug a Porcupine* provides useful tips for your encounters with "prickly" people, such as:

- Three easy ways to end an argument
- How to spot the porcupine in others
- How to spot the porcupine in ourselves

With a foreword by noted psychotherapist Dr. Debbie Ellis, widow of Dr. Albert Ellis, *How to Hug a Porcupine* is a truly special book.



## American Madness

Fighting For Patients in a Broken Mental Health System

By Alice Feller, M.D.  
ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD PUBLISHERS

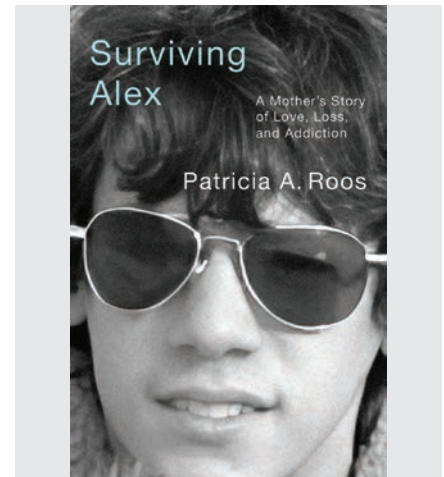
Dr. Feller tells the story of her struggle to help her patients in our broken American mental health care system. In this clinical memoir, Dr. Feller brings the reader into the world of serious mental illness using patient vignettes and personal accounts of her five decades of work, drawn from medical school, hospital wards, private practice, public clinics and beyond.

Individual chapters of *American Madness* are devoted to cases describing the impact of homelessness, substance abuse, racism, family involvement and early intervention for schizophrenia cases, on treatment outcomes.

Dr. Feller's perspective is as professional as it is personal, as she's not only a clinician, but grew up with a father with serious mental illness, giving her a unique and empathetic approach to patients. In *American Madness*, she describes patient experiences in harrowing and heartbreaking detail.

"My patients with serious mental illness suffer horribly: They live in a delusional world where their closest family members often seem to be imposters bent on killing them. They're tortured by hallucinations that sound like real voices, putting into words their worst fears. Often the voices order suicide," she explains. "Good treatment of serious mental illness like bipolar disorder and schizophrenia requires immediate attention, starting at the first psychotic episode, but unfortunately this treatment is rarely available, and most people go on getting sicker and sicker."

Examining the roles of medical professionals, families, the for-profit American healthcare system and Medicaid (to name a few), Dr. Feller identifies specific barriers to care and advocates for reparative strategies that would make the most meaningful and immediate improvements. *American Madness* is meant for anyone whose life is touched by mental illness, whether a patient, in the family, or as a professional, and it is a must read for policy makers in this field.



## Surviving Alex

A Mother's Story of Love, Loss, and Addiction

By Patricia Roos  
RUTGERS UNIVERSITY PRESS

In 2015, Patricia Roos's twenty-five-year-old son, Alex, died of a heroin overdose. Turning her grief into action, Roos, a professor of sociology at Rutgers University, began to research the social factors and institutional failures that contributed to his death. *Surviving Alex: A Mother's Story of Love, Loss, and Addiction* (Rutgers University Press, May 17, 2024) tells her moving story—and outlines the possibilities of a compassionate and effective approach to addiction treatment and policy.

Weaving together a personal narrative and a sociological perspective, *Surviving Alex* movingly describes how children from "good families" fall prey to addiction, and recounts the hellish toll it takes on families.

Drawing from interviews with Alex's friends, family members, therapists, teachers, and police officers—as well as files from his stays in hospitals, rehab facilities, and jail—Roos paints a compelling portrait of a young man whose life veered between happiness, anxiety, success, and despair.

As she explores how a punitive system failed her son, she calls for a community of action that would improve care for substance users and reduce addiction, realigning public health policy to address the overdose crisis.

from page 1

hear, or couldn't absorb, information about where the pain came from. I did well for a few months, then relapsed for another year. When an incident happened that scared me, I realized that there could be horrible consequences if I wasn't sober. I chose Fairview Lodging Plus for 30 days. On May 19th, almost 10 years ago, I walked into the most amazing women's group. They taught me about the pain, the trauma, how to tap into it, and how to look at it. They held me up until I could stand on my own. I owe that group of women my life. I haven't had a drink since.

**HOW DID YOU START HIKING?**

I was never a hiker. In high school, I was in choir, debate club, and a cheerleader. At that time, the message was still "girls will be girls and boys will be boys." Physical Ed classes were horrific; if you weren't a winner, you got benched. One day, six years ago, recently divorced, when the twins were off doing whatever high school seniors do, I said, "I'm going to drive to Mankato state park, see the waterfall, and hike." A half-hour into the trip, crawling out of my skin and in tears, afraid of being by myself, I called my sisters. They said, "You're going to do this. You don't have to walk. Look at the waterfall, get in your car, go home, or stop for ice cream." I drove down there. I didn't hike, but I saw the waterfall. It shouldn't be a big thing to go look at a waterfall, but that moment was big, because I did it by myself.

I fell in love with hiking! I went on a mission to chase every state park waterfall. Later, I got bored with the little parks and little hikes. I had this burning desire to find a bigger challenge, to get into the guts of the woods, something with more elevation. I've always loved the North Shore, which is probably how my brain found the Superior Hiking Trail, or maybe it was on Facebook or Google.

**DID YOU TAKE A FRIEND, OR GO BY YOURSELF?**

A friend went with me to the state parks during the pandemic. However, since starting the Superior Hiking Trail, I've done it 100% on my own! It's not easy to hike 8 to 10 miles alone on the trail. I'm proud of myself because it's an accomplishment. I've done over 200 miles with 100 to go.

I hiked popular sections first, like Gooseberry and Tettegouche State Parks.



Next, I ventured out on other trails. My family said, "We're really worried about you, being up there alone." So, I got great tools. I use both the Avenza Superior App and AllTrails, a live, interactive app that tracks your location. Avenza lets you buy the whole Superior Hiking Trail map. It keeps me on course. Plus, my daughter follows my location all day, every day.

At times, the hair sticks up on the back of my neck when I hear a sound or get in my head. I carry bear spray; not that I think I'll ever see a bear, but having it helps my brain to settle. I bought good boots. I bring plenty of water, the right amount of protein and snacks. I learned that the hard way, by making mistakes, as we do in life. I got dehydrated hiking Ely's Peak, a big climb. I'd already done 10 miles that day, it was hot, and I finished with the peak, a big mistake. I ran out of water. I was lucky. Someone at the peak gave me water. I finished, but never

again. Now I always take double water and electrolyte packets.

**DOES SOMEONE BRING YOU SUPPLIES OR MEET YOU AT CERTAIN POINTS?**

I don't camp on the trail. I car camp at state parks where there'll be other people. My average hike is 10-to-13-miles. I drive up early in the morning, do a Saturday and Sunday hike and come home, but I've done one-day and four-day trips. Plus, I've made friends with the shuttle drivers. They pick you up at your camping location, take you to your beginning spot, and you hike back to your car. They're angels because they always say, "If something happens, if you get stuck out there, text me, or call me, and I'll get help to you."

**HAVE YOU HAD ANY PHYSICAL IMPACTS: GOOD OR BAD?**

A bad car accident two years ago damaged my neck and back. It's still heal-

**Hiking helps my recovery because for me it wasn't just about the drinking. It was about pain, low self-worth, not being content, the depression and darkness. Hiking is the opposite of that.**

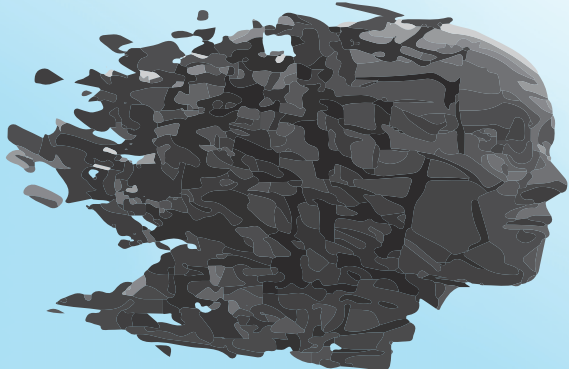

ing. Because of the nerve damage from that accident, I hurt my knee. Last year, six miles was the most I could tolerate. I kept hiking, listened to my body, slowed down, took deep breaths, and kept going. If my knees aren't feeling well, I do shorter hikes. I use hiking poles now, too, which I swore I wouldn't, until I realized that these knees are not twenty anymore. Hiking poles distribute the weight. You can get over boulders, logs, and up ravines without worrying about falling and breaking your arm, wrist, or hand.

**HOW DID HIKING THE SUPERIOR HIKING TRAIL IMPACT YOUR SOBRIETY?**

People ask me "Why are you hiking all the time?" Being sober and going to meetings are wonderful foundation builders; but I needed deeper healing. I did therapy. I went to treatment. I take antidepressants. But something was still missing. I found a correlation between hiking and deeper healing of my heart

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A+ rating

from page 6



Kara Frahm (Previous / Current page) / Photos by Tracy Walsh (www.tracywalshphoto.com)

and my spirit. I never had confidence in myself. Hiking built my confidence as a mom, sister, daughter, and an employee.

I've conquered fears. I've gained self-esteem, a positive internal feeling that I can do anything, because I'm proving it by putting one foot in front of the other. Hiking helps my recovery because for me it wasn't just about the drinking. It was about pain, low self-worth, not being content, the depression and darkness. Hiking is the opposite of that. I go hiking to remind myself, "I'm powerful. I have a Higher Power. That's my church."

My Higher Power cared enough about me to push me to go hiking. He or She knew that's what I needed to find peace. I felt led there. In the woods, I rely on two things: myself and my Higher Power. When I get anxious, I let go of control, and rely on God. I can rest easy in the fact that even though I'm alone, I'm never alone. We don't know where our journey is supposed to end. I don't have control over that, even in my house. So, I might as well go out and enjoy life. Staying home, isolated, and drinking killed me a lot more than hiking ever will.

On the ride up, I use a quiet playlist – soft ballads and spiritual music. Then the first mile is always strange. I'm settling in; getting used to being on the trail. There's weird fears, like "What's that noise?" As

soon I get to the second mile, it's almost meditative, I'm in the moment.

At the last mile, I'm a little weary, tired of the walk: "Oh my God, I'm never going to make it!" But yeah, I'm going to make it. I'm going to finish strong. I'm going to check off one more chapter of this trail. There's something so rewarding about the end point – taking off the sweaty boots, getting some ice cream, and celebrating the achievement. On the way home, I roll the windows down, turn the music up in the car to loud 70s and 80s rock, and that's when it's just good living!

**THE HIGHEST PEAK IN MINNESOTA IS EAGLE MOUNTAIN. HAVE YOU BEEN THERE YET?**

Nope. I'm saving it for last. I can't wait for that moment! I try not to put myself too far ahead, but the thought of that last section and it being the highest point is exciting. I'm going to invite family, if they'd like to join me, so that I finish with my loved ones.

*Mary Berg is a retired associate professor of clinical education, a resume writer, published author, and poet. Her first poetry collection, A Mystic in the Mystery: Poems of Spirit, Seasons, and Self will be released in 2024. Her website is: marybergresumewriter.com.*

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superiorhiking.org

**AllTrails App**  
www.alltrails.com

**Avenza Maps App**  
store.avenza.com

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Call Dr. Judith at 651-747-6257

Those who struggle with mental illness are at an increased risk for gambling addiction.



Receive no-cost treatment in Minnesota if you or someone you know is struggling with a gambling problem.

Telehealth services available. Seeing someone for problem gambling treatment is now easier than ever - from the comfort of your own home.

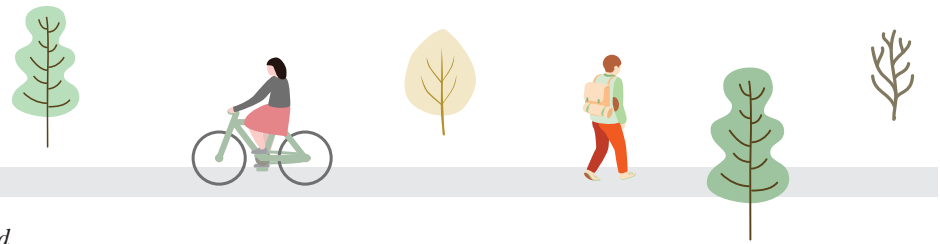
For a list of providers call 1-800-333-4673 (HOPE) or visit [mnapg.org/help](http://mnapg.org/help)



\*Treatment is available free of charge for qualifying individuals throughout Minnesota.

# Retreat Directory

The following is just a partial list of the many retreat centers throughout Minnesota, Iowa, and Wisconsin. We recommend doing your own research to find the get-away that fits your needs.



## ARTS RETREATS

**Anderson Center**  
Red Wing, MN  
651-388-2009  
[www.andersoncenter.org/visit/rentals](http://www.andersoncenter.org/visit/rentals)

Rooms available from November-April in historic house on 330 acres in the bluff-land region of the upper Mississippi.

**The Grand Marais Art Colony**  
Grand Marais, MN  
218-387-2737  
[www.grandmaraisartcolony.org](http://www.grandmaraisartcolony.org)

Began in 1947 as a summer refuge for artists seeking study in the wilderness. Workshops in print-making, book arts, sculpture, drawing, and watercolor, acrylic, oil, and sumi-e painting.

**Tofte Lake Center**  
Ely, MN  
218-365-7769  
[www.toftelake.com](http://www.toftelake.com)

A creative retreat center for artists, scholars and thinkers of all disciplines located on the shores of Tofte Lake, a beautifully secluded lake near the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. From June through September, TLC offers creative residencies for individuals, artistic groups, and organizations.

## FAMILIES COPING WITH AN ILL CHILD OR LOSS

**Faith's Lodge**  
Danbury, WI  
612-825-2073  
[www.faithslodge.org](http://www.faithslodge.org)

A unique retreat center for families who have a seriously ill child or have suffered the loss of a child. Located on 80 acres, about two hours from the Twin Cities.

## NATURE RETREATS

**Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center**  
Sandstone, MN  
320-245-2648  
[ospreywilds.org](http://ospreywilds.org)

In January 2020, the Audubon Center of the North Woods formally changed its name to Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center. Osprey Wilds is a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) residential environmental learning center and conference & retreat center nestled on the shores of Grindstone Lake in east-central Minnesota.

**Boundary Waters Canoe Area**  
Northern MN  
218-626-4300  
[www.fs.usda.gov](http://www.fs.usda.gov)

The BWCA is a 1,098,000-acre wilderness area in northern Minnesota.

## SPIRITUAL / RECOVERY

**ARC Retreat Community**  
Stanchfield, MN  
763-689-3540  
[www.arcetreat.org](http://www.arcetreat.org)

Nestled in 90 acres of pine forest and wetlands, ARC is an interspiritual retreat community. ARC's mission is to serve individuals and groups seeking time apart for rest and spiritual renewal. ARC is nurtured on sacred land, promoting environmental sustainability, and exemplifying a just and inclusive world where every voice is valued and respected. ARC is a powerful place to do your healing work. Labyrinth, fire circle, library, chapel, meeting rooms.

**Benedictine Center of St. Paul's Monastery**  
St. Paul, MN  
651-777-7251  
[www.benedictinecenter.org](http://www.benedictinecenter.org)

For over thirty years the Benedictine Center has been helping guests find their way to quiet, prayer, and renewal. Contemporary monastic environment of Benedictine Sisters.

**Center for Spirituality and Enrichment / McCabe Renewal Center**  
Duluth, MN  
218-724-5266  
[retreatduluth.org](http://retreatduluth.org)

The Center for Spirituality and Enrichment provides opportunities for holistic spiritual and personal growth grounded in the Catholic Benedictine tradition of St. Scholastica Monastery.

**The Christine Center**  
Willard, WI  
715-267-7507  
[www.christinecenter.org](http://www.christinecenter.org)

For over 40 years the Christine Center has provided a spiritual home to visitors of all spiritual paths. A woodland sanctuary with a beautiful circular meditation hall, chapel, library and bookstore. Programs offer healing and personal development. Private hermitages and group housing, always open Art Studio, great home cooking, hiking trails and sauna.

## SPIRITUAL / RECOVERY

**Demontreville Jesuit Retreat House**  
Lake Elmo, MN  
651-777-1311  
[www.demontrevilleretreat.com](http://www.demontrevilleretreat.com)

Demontreville Jesuit Retreat House welcomes men of all Christian faiths and denominations.

**Jesuit Retreat House on Lake Winnebago**  
Oshkosh, WI  
920-231-9060  
[www.jesuitretreathouse.org](http://www.jesuitretreathouse.org)

The Jesuit Retreat House is located on 20 acres of beautiful lakeside property offers six 12-Step retreats among its 30 weekend retreats each year. Weekend retreats start Thursday evening with dinner and end with lunch on Sunday. 5-day and 8-day directed retreats based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola are available in the summer. Retreats include daily Mass, private reflection time, devotions, spiritual direction, reconciliation, and a healing service. All guests stay in private bedrooms with their own bathroom. A small 6-bedroom farmhouse can be reserved by individuals or small groups making their own retreat.

**Lakeplace Retreat Center**  
Bovey, MN  
218-245-1395  
[www.lakeplacecenter.com](http://www.lakeplacecenter.com)

Northern Minnesota location provides a serene environment where participants learn to live a chemical free life influenced by a strong sense of fellowship, along with freedom, trust, and dignity to make responsible choices.

**Minnesota Humanities Event Center**  
St. Paul, MN  
651-772-4242  
[www.mnhum.org/eventcenter](http://www.mnhum.org/eventcenter)

Surrounded by parkland yet minutes from the downtown St. Paul. With private overnight lodging, flexible meeting spaces, and onsite catering staff preparing every meal, consider the center for your next retreat.

**Healing doesn't mean the damage never existed, it means the damage no longer controls our lives.**

**Recovery Cafe Frogtown**  
499 Charles Ave.  
St. Paul, MN 55103  
651-207-5119

[www.recoverycafefrogtown.org](http://www.recoverycafefrogtown.org)  
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— ST. ANTHONY —  
**spiritualitycenter**

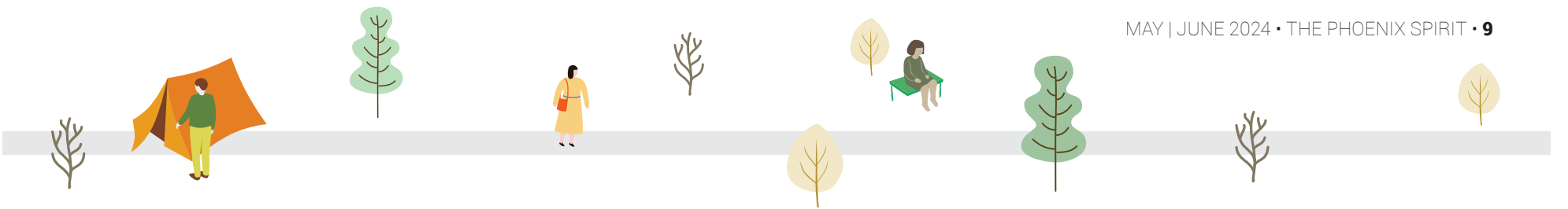
715-443-2236  
**sarcenter.com**  
300 E. Fourth St.  
Marathon, WI 54448

**unplug & recharge**

**Mount Olivet Conference & Retreat Center**

Farmington, MN  
952-469-2175





**SPIRITUAL / RECOVERY**

**Mount Olivet Conference & Retreat Center**

Farmington, MN  
952-469-2175  
mtolivetretreat.org

Surrounded by 150 acres of woods, wildlife, and water, guests are nourished by connecting with nature, others, and themselves. Our modern and adaptable meeting rooms and lounges welcome groups and individuals for day retreats or overnight stays. Comfortable and fully renovated overnight accommodations offer solitude and rest. Professional chefs serve homemade, nutritious meals daily. Amenities like the pool, sauna, labyrinth, trails, and campfires enrich your renewal. Spiritual care and programming support are available.

**Pacem in Terris Hermitage Retreat Center**

Isanti, MN  
763-444-6408  
www.paceminterris.org

Pacem serves both individuals and groups amidst a 240-acre wilderness, including oak woodlands, wetlands, native prairie, and a lake.

**The Dan Anderson Renewal Center**

Center City, MN  
1-800-262-4882  
www.hazeldenbettyford.org

Retreat participants will enjoy a variety of group and speaker sessions, recovery yoga, evening fellowship, healthy meals and access to the pool, fitness center, meditation center and more (including Legend, the therapy dog).

**The Retreat / McIver Center**

Wayzata, MN  
952-476-0566  
www.theretreat.org

The McIver Center is available for use by private groups and is also available to Twelve Step Groups, outside groups, and organizations. Staff is available to work with each group to help shape and personalize their retreat experience.

**SPIRITUAL / RECOVERY**

**Shalom Spirituality Center**

Dubuque, Iowa  
563-582-3592  
www.shalomretreats.org

Shalom Spirituality Center has various options available if you are looking for a quiet space or considering time away for a private overnight retreat.

**St. Anthony Spirituality Center**

Marathon, WI  
715-443-2236  
sarcenter.com

Continuing our Franciscan roots we welcome all seeking healing, hope and transformation through deeper connection with the Divine, Self, Others and Creation. In the heart of Wisconsin, St. Anthony's offers themed retreats, recovery retreats and private, individual retreats. Come experience peace and tranquility in our historical building and acres of beautiful grounds, woods and trails.

**St. John's Abbey Guesthouse**

Collegeville, MN  
320-363-2573  
www.abbeyguesthouse.org

Benedictine monks offer 30 rooms in their guesthouse that also has a meditation chapel, library, meeting rooms, and dining room. Located in central Minnesota on 2,740 acres of woodlands and lakes, the Abbey Guesthouse provides monastic hospitality to all who call.

**Waldheim Resort**

Finlayson, MN  
320-321-9096  
www.waldheimresort.com

Vacation destination in Minnesota's Northwoods on the sandy shores of Big Pine Lakes, halfway between the Twin Cities and Duluth. Cabins, RV camping, events. Two lakes are known for crappie, bass, northern, walleye and both sunfish and bluegills. Local proximity to trails, rivers, state parks and forests offer an extension of activities to the resort.

**MINNESOTA HIKES**

**Banning State Park**

Sandstone, MN  
320-216-3910  
shorturl.at/fgiGH

Banning State Park is filled with gorgeous scenery, historic significance and recreational adventure. The park was created in 1963 to protect a unique landscape along the Kettle River. The Quarry Loop Trail holds something for everyone. Discover ruins of a quarry that once operated in the area, experience scenic river views, and watch Hell's Gate Rapids as they rush downstream.

**Frontenac State Park**

Frontenac, MN  
651-299-3000  
shorturl.at/dtFU7

Trails range from easy to challenging, and pass through forested areas, along the bluff edge, through wooded ravines, across old fields and restored prairies, and through wetland riverine forests. Good places to see spring wildflowers and prairie flowers. Take the flat, paved trail at the picnic area to sloping, unpaved sections further on. Hike through hardwood forest, savanna and bluff-top prairie with excellent views of Lake Pepin at Eagle Point Overlook.

**Minneopa State Park**

Mankato, MN  
507-386-3910  
shorturl.at/AGRUY

Established in 1905, Minneopa State Park is the third oldest state park in Minnesota. It is best known for the double waterfall that thunders during high water. The upper falls drops 7 to 10 feet and the lower falls tumbles another 40. This feature is the result of water cutting into layers of sandstone over time. Take the Mill Road to look for the bison, reintroduced in 2015. These animals will naturally manage the prairie ecosystem, just as they did over a hundred fifty years ago. Follow a trail along the forested Minnesota River Valley and through a tallgrass prairie. Look for bald eagles nesting in cottonwood trees. Fairly level with some hilly sections.

**MINNESOTA HIKES**

**Superior Hiking Trail**

North Shore (MN)  
218-834-2700  
superiorhiking.org

The Superior Hiking Trail is a tour of the unique features of Lake Superior's North Shore. The trail is characterized by ascents to rock outcroppings and cliffs where sweeping vistas of Lake Superior, the Sawtooth Mountains and inland woodlands can be enjoyed. The trail also features stunning descents along rivers, streams, lakes and ponds where thousands of years of rushing water has cut into layers of ancient volcanic rock. In total, the SHT is over 300 miles of main trail and 16 miles of spur trail.

**William O'Brien State Park**

Marine on St. Croix, WI  
651-539-4980  
shorturl.at/uvKXY

This area has drawn people for centuries, including: Dakota and Ojibwe tribes utilizing local resources; European trappers drawn by the fur-trade industry; and lumberjacks seeking to harvest the "endless stands" of white pine. The era of timber harvesting began in 1839 and flourished until lumber companies had cleared the St. Croix River valley of pines. The park now protects 1,880 acres of prairie, oak savanna, river floodplain and hardwood forest. Trails range from easy to difficult, and pass through wooded areas, wetlands, and restored oak savanna areas. Mostly flat, with some hills, mowed grass. Riverside Trail is 1.6 miles, winds by St. Croix River.

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A time to talk about God in your life and in your relationships



**Benedictine center**

651-777-7251  
www.benedictinecenter.org

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**Fran Bieganek**  
MS, LP, BCN

*Fran is a licensed psychologist, Board Certified in Neurofeedback by the Biofeedback Certification International Alliance (BCIA) and an active member of the International Society for Neurofeedback and Research. She has a private psychotherapy practice in Edina, MN and is Co-founder/Co-owner of Bhakti Brain Health Clinic. Fran is also a retired tenured track Professor of Psychology in the Minnesota State College System.*



**Guy Odishaw**  
NFP, CST, CTO

*Guy is a Healthcare Entrepreneur, Bioelectric Medicine Practitioner is the Founder of Bhakti Wellness Center, Co-founder of the first integrative student health clinics in the country at the University of Minnesota and Co-founder/Co-owner of Bhakti Brain Health Clinic. He is also co-founder of several other wellness clinics.*

**Q** What is neurofeedback, and what specific changes occur in the brain as a result of undergoing neurofeedback training?

Neurofeedback training is biofeedback for the brain. Neurofeedback employs operant conditioning to train your brain to behave in a more regulated way. During neurofeedback training your brainwave activity is monitored and provided with immediate feedback, through visual and/or auditory cues. When your brain demonstrates regulation, it's rewarded. The brain responds to the reward by repeating the desired (regulated) brainwave patterns. Over time and continuous repetition, the brain learns how to behave in a regulated manner on its own (without the need for feedback from the training). When the brain regulates symptoms, functional impairment tends to improve.

## NEUROFEEDBACK IN RECOVERY AND MENTAL HEALTH

# Ask the Expert

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

**Q** What are the potential benefits of incorporating neurofeedback into a comprehensive treatment plan for substance use disorders and mental health recovery?

Think of it this way. If a person has a broken ankle and they want to develop endurance skills so they can run a marathon, you wouldn't recommend they just start running. You would advise them to heal the broken ankle so that they could optimize their training. The same concept applies to neurofeedback. This type of training clears up dysregulated brainwave activity, resulting in optimized brain functioning – for example, better focus, more cognitive flexibility, improved emotion regulation or better sleep quality. Improvements in these areas will facilitate a person's ability to engage in other therapeutic interventions.

**Q** Can you explain the process of conducting a Quantitative Electroencephalogram (QEEG) assessment and how the results are used to inform neurofeedback treatment plans for individuals in recovery?

In our clinic we use both QEEG (quantitative electroencephalogram) and ERP (evoked response potential) to obtain a comprehensive assessment of a client's underlying brain mechanisms. These assessments allow us to identify brainwave dysregulation that may be causing a particular set of symptoms or functional impairments.

A quantitative EEG is a brain map. It provides valuable insights into resting-state brain activity. This is an electrical measurement, analysis, and quantification of the brainwaves, which control the brain's tasking mechanism. We first gather the raw EEG data, and then we process it through a normative database, which is a database of healthy individuals' brainwaves. This gives us a comparison of the client's brain relative to neurotypical brains.

An Evoked Response Potential measures electrical activity in the brain in response to stimulation of sight or sound. This allows us to measure how quickly the neurons in your brain respond to certain stimulation. ERP complements the QEEG by revealing real-time cognitive processes and brain responses to specific stimuli.

Once we've collected the data, we conduct an extensive analysis that will be used to inform us about what interventions we will recommend.

The QEEG and ERP (brain mapping) are just one component of our comprehensive assessment process. We also include a neurocognitive assessment, a mental health diagnostic assessment and genetic testing. This allows us to get a



well-rounded understanding of what factors might be contributing to your current level of functioning.

**Q** What specific brainwave patterns or abnormalities are typically identified through QEEG assessments?

QEEG assessments give us information about cortical electrical activity in your brain, which can help us identify irregularities in brain functioning. For example, it can show us if brain wave activity is too high or too low in a particular area of your brain, and it can reveal how your brain cells are communicating with each other. Our brain mapping process can reveal brain wave patterns that are associated with functional impairments such as cognitive inflexibility, impulsivity, anxiety, focus and attention issues, as well as many other symptoms.

**Q** Which areas of the brain are typically targeted during neurofeedback sessions?

The targeted brain areas in neurofeedback are determined specifically by the analysis of your QEEG assessment. So, neurofeedback sessions are unique to the individual. In our clinic we have equipment that allows us to train full brain networks. For example, the QEEG analysis may show that your reward network is not working efficiently. So, we might target that network with neurofeedback training. In addition to neurofeedback, we also do neurostimulation (transcranial electrical and magnetic stimulation). We also have neuromodulation devices, such as audio-visual entrainment and photobiomodulation (red/infrared light), that you might use at home to supplement your in-clinic training.

**Q** What are some common misconceptions about neurofeedback?

Several come to mind. The first is that neurofeedback will change a person's personality. That is a myth – we are focused on regulating the brain, not changing the qualities that form your distinctive character.

Another misconception is that neurofeedback, as an alternative therapy, can't be used if someone is taking psychiatric medication. Again, this is not true. As neurofeedback begins to regulate the brain, it's possible you might be able to reduce dosage, titrate medication use. But it can also complement the mechanisms of medication.

The other misconception is that neurofeedback doesn't have scientific research to back its efficacy. This is simply not true. A recent search for research on neurofeedback and substance use disorder in Google Scholar produced over 10,000 results. That number points to the prolific nature of the research. A 2023 meta-analysis, including articles selected from a total of 58 databases, provided strong evidence for the efficacy of neurofeedback in treating substance use disorders (SUD).

**Q** Can neurofeedback therapy be integrated with other treatment modalities, such as medication-assisted treatment or cognitive-behavioral therapy, to enhance overall outcomes in substance use disorder recovery?

Definitely. In fact, neurofeedback can regulate brain functioning, facilitating other types of therapy. When brain functioning is optimized through neurofeedback training, it's much more able to do the tasks we might ask of it in cognitive-behavioral therapy or another ther-

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apeutic modality. I have seen this firsthand in my psychotherapy practice.

**Q** Can neurofeedback therapy lead to lasting changes in brain function and behavior, even after sessions have concluded?

Yes. The research in this area is exciting! Research is showing that changes that occur in the brain during neurofeedback training have long-lasting effects. This makes sense when you consider we are tapping into the brain's neuroplasticity.

**Q** Are there any potential risks or limitations associated with neurofeedback therapy that individuals in recovery should be aware of?

The potential risks of neurofeedback training are minimal. Some people may experience mild, temporary side effects such as mental fatigue (brain training is a workout for the brain!). Another possible side effect is a headache during a training session. We find that when our clients stay well-hydrated during training, headaches aren't an issue. It's similar to hydrating while you work out at the gym.

Results with neurofeedback, like any other intervention, can vary from person to person. I don't necessarily see that as a limitation, but rather a realistic perspective on expectations.

**Q** What are some good resources and organizations that people can access to learn more about neurofeedback?

There are two organizations that are engaged in research and oversight of the field of neurofeedback training and neurotherapy.

The International Society for Neuroregulation and Research (isnr.org) is a membership organization. Members come from many countries and various professional disciplines. They all are working on neurotherapy, neurofeedback training and neurofeedback research. The organization supports education and excellence in the field of neurofeedback training and neurotherapy.

Biofeedback Certification International Alliance (bcia.org) is an organization, established in 1981, that certifies neurofeedback practitioners.

And, if you want to read some of the research on neurofeedback, just use the search feature in Google Scholar. It will keep you busy learning for months!

Bhakti Brain Health Clinic has a YouTube channel with lots of informative videos on it, as well. We'd love for you to check it out!

*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.*

**CRISIS TEXT LINE**

TEXT "MN" TO  
741741

**GAMBLING HOTLINE**

1-800-333-4673  
OR TEXT "HOPE" TO  
53342

People raised  
on love  
see things  
differently than  
those raised  
on survival.

JOY MARINO

# In the Heart of the Recovery Community Since 1966



NUWAY Alliance treatment programs and housing support have helped thousands of Minnesotans find recovery, support, and fellowship for over 58 years. A nonprofit mission that launched one of America's first halfway houses is now a multifaceted organization offering high-quality treatment and housing support accessible to adults statewide.

**RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT**

- NUWAY I
- NUWAY II
- NUWAY III
- Cochran Recovery Services
- The Gables

**OUTPATIENT TREATMENT**

- St. Paul NUWAY Counseling Center

**TELEHEALTH**

- Available to all qualifying adults statewide

**HOUSING SUPPORT WITH SUPPLEMENTAL SERVICES**

- Arrigoni East
- Arrigoni West

**INTENSIVE OUTPATIENT TREATMENT**

- 3Rs NUWAY Counseling Center
- 2118 NUWAY Counseling Center
- NUWAY – University Counseling Center
- NUWAY – Rochester Counseling Center
- NUWAY – Duluth Counseling Center
- NUWAY – St. Cloud Counseling Center
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Driggs from page 1

is why it is wise for us to make safety checks when we are relating to others. We all need to learn the differences between rattlesnakes and garter snakes and Easter Bunnies.

#### **DANGER OF PEOPLE WITHOUT A CONSCIENCE**

When we are close to another person, we rely on that person to keep us safe. We don't want our heart broken by our partner through infidelity, financial manipulation, or broken promises. We depend on our partner to know when they're hurting us through our partner having a conscience and doing the right thing even when we are not watching him or her. This ethical rule is what builds trust and safety. Unfortunately, when a person lacks a conscience, they lack healthy guilt and are willing to do bad things to us as long as nobody is watching. They trick and lie to us to maintain the illusion of faithfulness and trust. When caught red-handed they make us feel crazy though denial, intimidation, and anger. This phenomenon is known as gas-lighting. Unfortunately, because we ourselves don't want to know the real truth of our faulty relationship for fear of losing our partner, we go along, sometimes for years, living with a rattle snake and believing our partner is merely a garter snake and is being misunderstood. Unfortunately, hiding from the truth does not make life safe for us. There is an enormous difference between a garter snake and a rattler. Eventually, to our horror, the truth comes out and we are irreparably hurt. Often the hatred we have towards ourselves for being so foolish is even worse than the

hurt of what our partner has done to us. Many of us get traumatized for life from sleeping with a rattlesnake!

#### **WHY ARE WE SO BLIND TO PEOPLE WITHOUT A CONSCIENCE?**

Many of us, about nine in ten of us, do have a conscience. If we see an older person struggling to cross the street while struggling to carry groceries, we might be inclined to offer our services. We may tend to think that nearly everybody else would do the same. Our optimism towards others may discipline us to think badly of others and we may be blind to social indifference in others. Some of us may wish to think the best of others because we are scared to think of all the cold people in the world. Some of us are naïve in this regard—we put the rose-colored glasses on with everybody that we meet. Unfortunately, good-hearted people like this are too frequently the targets of users and manipulators. Being a kind person in itself is no protection from users and abusers. Just like it is always wise to lock your door before leaving your home, it is equally prudent to know when others have a conscience and when they couldn't care less. Indeed, people who are cold to others often have compensatory skills that scam people, trick others into unwisely having favorable impressions of them, and being imposters in their relationships overall. They are masters at charming others and looking good, frequently a lot better than any one of us. Don't be fooled by impressions. Get to know the real person behind the façade. Each of us are responsible for our own safety and taking off our own

*Just like it is always wise to lock your door before leaving your home, it is equally prudent to know when others have a conscience and when they couldn't care less.*

rose-colored glasses. Sadly, some of us are so desperate to have a friend that we keep deceiving ourselves and we keep wearing those glasses.

#### **HOW DO YOU TELL WHEN A PERSON IS A RATTLESNAKE?**

Pay attention to how things are going between you and another person. If you idealize your friend who primarily only talks about himself and almost never asks how you are doing, if your friend continuously wants to impress you and is disinterested in what you're up to, if it's assumed that you will be paying for lunch due to your friend's lack of funds, and if your friend has almost no memory of or is indifferent to close people in your life, then you likely are in trouble as you are in the presence of an uncaring person who will be willing to take advantage of you in a heartbeat. This is especially

true if your friend gives you the feeling that you are lucky to be in the presence of such a special person and that you are lucky to be up to his or her standards. Somehow you may feel that you really don't exist or matter around such a person and you wonder why you even got together with such a person. You also may tire of his pity party and how you should feel sorry for him for all the bad things that happen to him so unfairly. You may be inclined to offer your help to such a friend, but your assistance will regularly be declined by your friend. Overall, you may wonder why you ever got together with your so-called friend.

#### **WHY AM I WRITING ABOUT PEOPLE WHO LACK A CONSCIENCE?**

I am aware from my practice that helping people with their marital problems becomes almost an impossibility

## 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's experienced team provides specialized care for those struggling with an eating disorder and substance use disorder – whether currently in treatment or recovery. Melrose Center has five Twin City metro locations. Visit [melroseheals.com](http://melroseheals.com) or call 952-993-6200.

### **Seniors**

#### **Silver Sobriety** “Rebuilding Lives, One Senior at a Time!”

Silver Sobriety is a treatment facility specifically for seniors over age 55. Getting sober with a group of peers you can relate to is a better treatment option. Based on the twelve step Program, we focus on strategies to handle issues facing seniors, along with abstinence from alcohol and drugs. Contact us for a free confidential conversation. [www.silversobriety.org](http://www.silversobriety.org) info@silversobriety.org. 651-431-8308.

### **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 [mmtc.org](http://mmtc.org)

### **Workaholics Anonymous Meeting**

Burning out? Workaholics Anonymous provides steps and tools to break free from non-stop work and activity — or work avoidance. Meeting is currently online via Zoom. Call Pat for link to the meeting or questions: 763-560-5199. [www.workaholics-anonymous.org](http://www.workaholics-anonymous.org).

Put Your Passion in  
**ACTION**  
Help Others in Recovery  
[MinnesotaRecoveryCorps.org](http://MinnesotaRecoveryCorps.org)

Recovery CORPS

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Driggs from page 12



Photo illustration by Vadim Bogulov / Unsplash

when one or both partners lack the capacity to put themselves in each other's shoes. Heartfelt listening and compassion are the hallmarks of careful marital repair. When couples lack these qualities, they almost have to first learn how to have compassion for each other and for everyone else first. Learning to have compassion is an arduous task best learned in the first three years of life. Trying to do that later in life is like trying to help an illiterate person to read for the first time in adult life. It can be done but not very likely to happen, especially when neither partner has any assurance that it can ever be done successfully. Most marital counseling with partners who lack compassion for each other is a patchwork of incomplete healing and the gains in the work are at best temporary and disappointing. This is exactly why it's best to choose a partner who already has good character in the first place. People of good character who have chronic conflict can much more easily resolve what is broken in their marriage.

Selecting a potential President should be done as carefully as picking a life mate. If your candidate lacks compassion, can never be wrong, and uses the office primarily for self-gain, he will make a very poor candidate. Chances are

that person only cares about himself and would easily feel you are expendable. Such a choice is totally different from the person with a history of public service. It's not how a candidate looks on the outside but who he is on the inside that counts the most. Character is way more important than image. In fact, if you select a self-centered candidate chances are good that our whole country will be turned into a dictatorship of people who don't matter. Choose wisely as the lives of your children and grandchildren will be determined by this coming election.

*"Then sings my soul, My Saviour  
God to Thee,*

*How great Thou art, how great  
Thou art*

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour  
God to Thee,*

*How great Thou art, how great  
Thou art!"*

STUART K. HINE

**John H. Driggs, LICSW,** is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in private practice in St. Paul and co-author of *Intimacy Between Men.*

We honor ourselves when we speak out for recovery. We show the world that recovery matters because it brings hope and peace into the lives of individuals and their loved ones

BETH WILSON

CALENDAR

**30TH ANNUAL SERENITY BREAKFAST**

**When:** Sunday, May 19 / Breakfast at 8:00am to 10:25am / Speaker at 10:30am to noon.  
**Where:** Minnetonka Community Center, Minnetonka  
**Cost:** \$18 advance / \$20 at door

This event will include a breakfast and then speaker at 10:30am. Speaker: Christina G. from Brecksville, OH. Speaker will be ASL interpreted, building is handicapped accessible

**GOPHER STATE ROUNDUP**

**When:** May 24, 25, 26  
**Where:** Double Tree, Bloomington  
**Cost:** \$30  
**Info:** [gopherstateroundup.org](http://gopherstateroundup.org)

This year's theme is "Road to Recovery". Meetings, speakers, fellowship. Scholarships available on-site. Guaranteed special room rates are available. Register early for best rates. Mention Gopher State for a special rate.

**MEN AT WORK GOLF TOURNAMENT**

**When:** Monday, June 17 at noon.  
**Where:** Bent Creek Golf Course, Eden Prairie  
**Info:** Contact Richard M. at 612-670-3898

Men at Work presents this golf tournament to benefit the General Service Office. Shotgun starts at noon, dinner to follow. First 120 golfers. Cost is \$175/player.

**PRACTICING THE PRINCIPLES SERENITY RETREAT**

**When:** June 7-9  
**Where:** St. Anthony Spirituality Center, Marathon, WI  
**Cost:** \$230  
**Info:** [sarcenter.com/event](http://sarcenter.com/event)

Specific topics include: Allowing Interruptions, Venturing into Unknown Territory, Facing Reality, Focusing on the Greater Things and Standing Tall. Presented by Sr. Elise Cholewinski

MAY IS  
**MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH**



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**Lakeplace Guest House and Cabins for AA, NA, Alanon and Associated Couples**

Courtesy of:

**The Lakeplace Foundation Inc.**

*For Current Use*



Imagine you and your friends from your own group being able to share your own strengths, hopes and experiences here in this highly spiritual, north-woods community.

With these three cabins and Guest House, your group can choose from several activities for fellowship, while being provided several areas for your meetings.

**Please consider these many benefits:**

- Advance Scheduling (*for current and future openings*)
- Weekend or Weekly Options
- Available for Groups of From 4 to 20 Persons (*4 to 10 in the winter*)
- On-Site 24/7 Staff for your convenience test
- Use of Lakeplace Amenities
- Summer or Winter Fishing
- Several Meeting and Community Areas
- Stunning "12-Step Wilderness Walk"
- Provided Without Cost (*guest donations appreciated*)

*In the future, exclusive use of the Lakeplace Retreat Center campus may be provided by the Lakeplace Foundation for Alano Societies and independent AA, NA, Alano groups and their associated couples.*

*To review this possible contingency, along with its video presentation, please enter the address indicated below on your search bar:*

**Lakeplace Foundation  
Website**

[www.lakeplacefoundation.org](http://www.lakeplacefoundation.org)

- |                            |              |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| Home                       | Enhancements |
| <a href="#">Video Tour</a> | Services     |
| About Us                   | Information  |
| Accommodations             | Contact Us   |

*We believe this offer by Lakeplace Foundation is consistent with our AA "Traditions" #6 and #7:  
We are an independent corporation, seek no endorsement from AA, NA, Alanon or their financial support.*

**25704 County Road 338  
Bovey, Minnesota 55709  
218 910-0800**

## SUPPORT GROUPS

**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.

**CHOW – Culinary Hospitality Outreach and Wellness**: Monday (also Tuesday & Wednesdays) at 7pm CST. CHOW is an organization led by culinary and hospitality peers. We believe in a future where our community never loses another person to addiction, burnout, or mental health concerns. We create safe and supportive opportunities for the industry to connect and discuss problems they're facing with others who "get it." Working in the hospitality industry is tough. Let's talk about it. Meetings are currently in virtual format via Zoom. Please visit our website or Facebook page for codes to join in or contact: outreach@chowco.org.

**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**: Second Monday of each month, 6-8:30 p.m. The Emily Program staff provides answers to common questions and concerns of families and friends "new" to eating disorders, treatment and recovery. 2265 Como Ave, St. Paul, 55108. Free, drop in. Visit [www.emilyprogram.com](http://www.emilyprogram.com) or call 651.645.5323.

**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**: Offers hope for people whose use of unsecured debt causes problems and suffering. See [www.debtorsanonymous.org](http://www.debtorsanonymous.org) or [www.danorthernplains.org](http://www.danorthernplains.org) to find a meeting online, in person or hybrid (both online and in person).

**Anonymous: Alanon 12-Step Group**. We meet Mondays at 1:30pm in person at Minneapolis United Methodist Church at 3701 E. 50th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55417. Open to men and women. We are a kind, compassionate group and welcome all. Questions? Please contact Susan at 651-587-2356.

**TUESDAYS**

**Recovering Couples Anonymous**: 7pm. We are a 12 step group for couples wanting to find new ways to communicate. The only requirement for membership is a desire to maintain a committed relationship and develop new intimacy. We provide strong couple support and model healthy couple-ships. Currently meeting via zoom only. Contact Allan at 651-295-9268 or Diane at 651-295-8179 for details

**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.

**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**: No Tuesday or Saturday in-person meetings yet. More details: [www.nicotine-anonymous.org](http://www.nicotine-anonymous.org).

**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.

**Adult Survivors of Child Abuse -Anonymous Peer Support Group Online**: Meets 1st and 3rd Tuesday of every month at 7PM CST. Speaker topic and time for discussion. All may listen and/or share. Email [knestingen@earthlink.net](mailto:knestingen@earthlink.net) for the meeting link if you are a survivor.

**WEDNESDAYS**

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

**CHOW – Culinary Hospitality Outreach and Wellness**: Wednesdays (also Monday & Tuesdays for Spanish speakers) at 8pm CST. CHOW is an organization led by culinary and hospitality peers. We believe in a future where our community never loses another person to addiction, burnout, or mental health concerns. We create safe and supportive opportunities for the industry to connect and discuss problems they're facing with others who "get it." Working in the hospitality industry is tough. Let's talk about it. Meetings are currently in virtual format via Zoom. Please visit our website or Facebook page for codes to join in or contact: outreach@chowco.org.

**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 or Tom 651-894-3523.

**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

**Co-dependents Anonymous (CoDA)**: Wednesdays 9:15am and 6:30pm, Macalester Plymouth United 1658 Lincoln Ave, St Paul 55105. These meetings are open to men and women. For more info contact Judith (9:15a.m. group) 651-757-5894 and Joe S (6:30pm group) 612-978-4698; [www.MinnCoDA.org](http://www.MinnCoDA.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)

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

**Workaholics Anonymous**: 12 step group for finding balance between work, activity and fun. Meets

every Thur. 6-7:15 pm. We are currently meeting by Zoom. Contact us for link at Email: [wafindingbalance@gmail.com](mailto:wafindingbalance@gmail.com).

**Red Book ACA/ACOA**: Recovery Church, 253 State, St. Paul, 7-8:30pm. For more info call Jacob at 612-819-9370 or Bruce at 651.407.6336.

**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.

**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.

**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.

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

**Emotions Anonymous** is a twelve-step program for emotional wellness and learning to live with unsolved problems. The meeting is at Twin Cities Friends Meetinghouse, 1725 Grand Ave. St. Paul at 7:00pm on Friday (or by phone at 240-591-0215#, then 722360#). Members attend for various reasons, among them depression, anxiety, relationship problems and other emotional difficulties. Like AA, Emotions Anonymous is led by volunteers, and founded on the principle of anonymity. For information, contact Paul at 651-402-6774. Additional information, including other Twin Cities meetings, can be found at [www.emotionsanonymous.org](http://www.emotionsanonymous.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.

**SATURDAYS**

**Overeaters Anonymous Meeting**: Saturday morning at 9:00 AM at Macallister-Plymouth Church. For those still suffering from compulsive overeating, bulimia and anorexia.

**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 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**: Offers hope for people whose use of unsecured debt causes problems and suffering. See [www.debtorsanonymous.org](http://www.debtorsanonymous.org) or [www.danorthernplains.org](http://www.danorthernplains.org) to find a meeting online, in person or hybrid (both online and in person).

**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 at 10 a.m., St. Philip's Lutheran Church, 6180 Highway 65 NE, Fridley MN 55432-5106 (Enter at Door 3). Please see [www.acafriday.com](http://www.acafriday.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.

**Southside Men's Group**: Saturdays, 8:30 to 10am Support for men working toward positive personal change. Saints Luke & James Episcopal Church, 4557 Colfax Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55419 (2nd floor). Visit [www.southsidemensgroup.org](http://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](http://www.MinnCoDA.org).

**Double Winners Anonymous**: Closed meeting of alcoholic women who combine recovery with Alanon. 5:30pm. Wesley Rm, Lake Harriet United Methodist Church, 4901 Chowen Ave. S., Mpls. Take doors from pkg lot, turn left down the hall. LeeAnn J at 763-234-1054 or Margaret K at 612-823-8279.

**Adult Children of Alcoholic/ Dysfunctional Families (ACA)-Big Red Book**: 11:15am-12:45pm at the Cavalier Club. 7179 Washington Ave S., Edina, MN 55439, voicemail: 507- 312-9423, [aca1115sunday@gmail.com](mailto: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: [nikkiahaven@gmail.com](mailto:nikkiahaven@gmail.com) or call 612-227-4079.

**Debtors Anonymous**: a group of men and women who use the 12-Step program to solve problems of debt and other money issues: [www.danorthernplains.org](http://www.danorthernplains.org), 952-953-8438, 5:30 – 6:30 pm, Oak Knoll Lutheran Church, 600 County Rd 73, Minnetonka, MN, (Hopkins Crossroads, just north of 394, enter in rear of building, the Plymouth 2 Alanon).

**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 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@thephoenixspirit.com](mailto:phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com).

# Retreat Time

by **Mary Lou Logsdon**



*“Life can only be understood backwards but it must be lived forwards.”*

— SOREN KIERKEGAARD

Here at *The Phoenix Spirit*, we take time each spring to reflect on and explore the practice of retreating. Retreats, like most rituals, come with a familiarity and a structure that can mask the magic of the experience. Whether you take a retreat regularly or try it for the first time, a retreat is an experience of surprise in simplicity.

I go on retreat to step out of the ordinary, the routine, the normal. I don't retreat to escape; I retreat to enter. I enter the life I have been living with an eye to where I have been and where this journey is taking me.

I liken this journey to a mountain hike. It begins on level terrain, meandering among thriving trees and lush under-story. The growth is thick and full and my ability to see ahead limited. I trust the trail and venture forth. I hear a rushing stream before I see it, its sparkling water tumbling over rocks and fallen tree branches. Eventually I notice stepping stones that allow me to cross.

The trail begins to climb, challenging my citified body. I keep going. The path takes me up and over boulders, down and under broken trees. I am curious as to why it zigzags this way, doubling back to where I have already been. I keep walking, trusting the trail.

I come to an outcropping where the

vista opens, and I see where I have been. I have come quite a distance! I notice the stream I crossed and how the cascades further along would have been much more difficult to negotiate. The trail had to switch back to avoid a sheer cliff drop. I understand how this was the route I needed to take to get me where I am now.

A bit further, I find another place to look out. I catch a glimpse of where the trail leads. The trees are thinning and the path is rocky. There is a steep climb ahead. I rest a bit, pause to make sure I have the stamina to continue, fortify myself with water and a bite to eat. I move on. While I am still not sure how I will get to the end of the trail, I recognize the outline of a possible way forward.

My life is like that hike. Going on retreat is my stop at the open spaces, a pause to see where I have been, refresh my spirit, and catch a glimpse of where I am being led. It helps me unpack my story, uncover patterns, understand meanings. I see the cascades of grace that have guided me.

At my most recent retreat I drew a timeline of my life. It was my first retreat since I moved. Moving unpacks old boxes and drags up dormant memories—kids' stuff, parents' albums and scrapbooks, decades of photos and journals, tchotchkes too precious to toss and not

valuable enough to pass on.

My timeline was multi-leveled. One line recalled the homes I'd lived in, another, jobs I'd held, a third, time-outs I had taken. It was dotted with births and deaths, turning points, successes and failures, friendships that ebbed and flowed with changes in proximity and busyness. A lot happens in a decade, in a generation, in a lifetime.

I saw stretches of difficult stoney terrain interspersed with periods of tranquility and calm—like mountain meadows after a vigorous climb.

The respite of retreat lets me review where I have been. I notice repeating patterns of behaviors I learned as a child that I keep replicating as an adult. They are the switchbacks on the trail. Questions arise: *Do I avoid conflict so as to never move to resolution? Are there bridges of forgiveness I pass by that would allow me to move onward instead of spinning in an ever-repeating cycle? Am I always looking over my shoulder for something to fear while missing the subtle changes that might lead me to new viewpoints or stunning vistas, places only present in the here and now?*

I look at all of this with gentle self-compassion. I accept the griefs and sorrows that emerge. I sit with them, giving them the time they need, holding them with the tenderness I would give the stories of a good friend. I practice presence. I invite curiosity. I dwell in the love of my higher power, my God, my spirit of trust and goodness.

After this time of quiet presence and patient self-care, I attempt to peek around the corner at what might come next. I check my map to see the choices I

have in the upcoming terrain.

*What are the boulders that could impede my way? What streams and rivers are around the bend? Where is it that I really want to go? How am I going to get there? What do I need to bring along?*

Retreat time is thinking time. *Do I need to make an important decision? Do I want a change in my life?* I can think through how I might do that, develop a strategy, form a plan that moves me in a new direction.

I take stock of my relationships. *Are there people I want to bring along on this journey—friends I haven't seen for a while and miss, a community of people with whom to explore ideas or have fun or support changes I want to make?* Maybe I want a guide to help me navigate what is ahead—a therapist, a financial analyst, a sponsor. Maybe I want a companion—a best friend, a partner, a mentor. Perhaps I decide to connect with my higher power more often.

Though the path ahead might be hazy, where we have been and how we have managed the journey so far is a good indication of how the next leg of the journey will go unless I choose another way. Here I ask myself, *how do I want to live my life forward?*

Retreat time is a time to take stock and consider the options.

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